

NOTES FROM THE ED FOR JULY (AND THE FIRST PART OF AUGUST!)

My apologies for the delay in sending this latest edition of the *Notes from the ED*, but I wanted to capture the full technicolour gloriousness of the Business Council's Business Mission to Indonesia this week! In numbers: 4 days; 3 Events; 17 Meetings; 42 Companies; and, 95 Delegates, making this the Council's biggest ever Business Mission to any ASEAN Member State. Tiring, exhausting, but ultimately exhilarating and worthwhile given the flood of congratulatory and thank you message the team received from our wonderful members. I would like to thank all of them, and the team at Vriens & Partners who assisted, for making this trip a huge success. Those events and meetings in full:

- Co-ordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartarto
- Minister for Finance, Sri Mulyani Indrawati
- Minister for Trade, Zulkilfi Hasan
- Minister for Foreign Affairs, Retno Marsudi
- Minister for Tourism & Creative Economy, Sandiango Uno
- Minister for Energy & Natural Resources, Arifin Tasrif
- Deputy Minister for National Development (BAPPENAS), Amalia Adininggar Widayanti
- Deputy Minister for Investment (BKPM), Nurul Ichwan
- Chairman of the Financial Services Authority (OJK), Mahendra Siregar
- Chairman of the Nusantara Capital City Authority, Bambang Susantono
- Director-General for Customs & Excise, Askolani
- Ministry of Environment & Forestry, Director-General Laksmi Dhewanthi
- Ministry of Agriculture, Secretary General Kasdi Subagyo
- Ministry of Cooperatives & SMEs, Secretary Arif Rahman Hakim
- Ministry for Communications and Informatics, Director-General Samuel A Pangerapan
- Ministry of Industry, Director-General Eko S A Cahyanto
- Alternative Chair of ASEAN BAC 2023, and Vice Chair of KADIN, Bernardina Vega
- Health Roadshow with Minister of Health, Budi Gunadi Sadikin
- Launch of the EU-ABC's Business Sentiment Survey and Networking Evening with EuroCham Indonesia
- European Green Deal: Perspectives for Business with Astrid Schomaker, Director, Green Diplomacy & Multilateralism, European Union Directorate-General for Environment

That is a pretty impressive list! The meetings allowed our delegates to get valuable insights into future policy direction, updates on existing policies, and clarifications of a range of key issues pertinent to the trade and investment environment in Indonesia. Next up? Our Business Mission to Malaysia from 11 to 13 September. Registrations are open now for this one here: <https://www.eu-asean.eu/events/malaysia-mission-trip-2023-11-13-september/>

Beyond the Indonesia Business Mission, July was another busy month for the Council. With the help of APCO Worldwide, we organised the first in a series of closed-door health briefings for our members on 14th July. I also took part in a panel discussion on health and innovation at the opening ceremony for Reckitt's new R&D lab in Singapore and spoke at the IMDA's Data Privacy event. Later in the month I also had the honour of giving the key note address, alongside the Philippines Commissioner for Customs, Bienvenido Rubio, at the Asia Security Conference where I also moderated a panel looking at the need for greater private-public collaboration on tackling illicit trade in the region.

The Council has also just published the ninth edition of our annual [EU-ASEAN Business Sentiment Survey](#) which provides valuable insights into the sentiments and expectations of European businesses operating in Southeast Asia. The findings from this year's survey, which had nearly 600 responses from the European private sector, indicate an overall optimistic outlook for ASEAN, as demonstrated by the following key highlights:

- 80% of respondents believe that ASEAN markets will become more important in terms of worldwide revenues over the next two years, highlighting the region's growing significance in the global economy – a 15% jump from 2022.
- A significant 84% of respondents expressed their intention to boost levels of trade and investment in ASEAN, a 7% increase from 2022.
- 65% of respondents anticipate an increase in profits in ASEAN for 2023, showing a continued positive trend in the region's business landscape. This percentage remains robust despite a slight decrease from last year's figure of 69%.
- The survey also reveals that around two thirds of respondents view ASEAN as the region for best economic opportunity over the next five years, reflecting a consistent perspective compared to the previous year.

Finally, a quick look ahead to the remainder of August. We will have a meeting with the European Parliament's Delegation to Southeast Asia next week in Jakarta, before moving on to Semarang for our annual consultation with the ASEAN Economic Ministers and from there on to Bali for events around the ASEAN Energy Ministers Meeting. In the meantime, we are already working our work plan for 2024, alongside preparing for Mission Trips to Cambodia (October), Thailand (November) and Brussels in (December), as well possible involvement with ASEAN Agriculture Ministers and ASEAN Transport Ministers before the end of the year.

Deep breath, recharge the batteries at the weekend, and the off again!