

## **Notes from ED – October 2023**

The EU-ABC is wrapping up the spooky month of October with a real scare! Our dear Executive Director Chris Humphrey has unfortunately been hospitalised, but he's okay(-ish). He's still checking emails, so it means he's still of sound mind... we hope... so this month, the Secretariat – Liyana, Jenn, and Annabel – is taking over! Jokes aside, please join us in wishing Chris a speedy recovery.

A brief summary of the Council's activities in October: At the beginning of the month, with the endorsement from the Royal Malaysia Customs and the Philippines' Bureau of Custos, Liyana conducted an extremely fruitful Product Identification Training with ASEAN Customs Officials in Davos to identify illicit and counterfeit goods for medical products, tobacco, as well as spirits and wines. The session received positive feedback from our members and customs officials alike, so much so that we are planning to conduct a couple more in 2024, along with other events like roundtables on tackling illicit trade on online platforms. If you're interested to be part of this important work, please reach out to us!



Liyana then flew 12 hours from Davao to Kuala Lumpur (ask her how her journey went – we really need better flight connections in the ASEAN region) joining Chris at the 45th ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry Meeting (AMAF). The EU-ABC raised the importance of uplifting the lives of farmers in Southeast Asia, and the need to modernise the agricultural industry to transform it into a more sustainable sector to meet the demands of a growing population without having a detrimental on the environment. Now, after the former Agriculture-lead (Liyana) has sat on it for a whole year, we are glad to announce that our agri-food paper will soon be released (thanks Annabel). Do keep a lookout for that!



The Council wrapped off the month with an extremely fruitful business mission to Cambodia. We were honoured to be the first large-scale international business delegation to meet with the Royal Cambodian Government since the transition to the new government earlier this year. While this may not have been our first business mission to Cambodia, it was our largest one yet with more than 70 delegates from over 20 companies. We kicked off the business mission with a meeting of an old friend of the Council's – H.E. Igor Driesmans, EU Ambassador to Cambodia. We then had excellent meetings with 11 ministerial meetings, 2 government agencies and 1 head of government meetings, including with Cambodia's new Prime Minister H.E. Hun Manet.



Clean. Green. Sustainable was a running theme across all meetings and it is clear to us that the Government of the Royal Kingdom of Cambodia is determined to bring just and sustainable development to the country, creating significant opportunities for European businesses. A gem in ASEAN it truly is.

#### Events in November

While Chris is recuperating... we elves don't (can't) stop working. We're busy preparing for our last mission of the year to an ASEAN country – Thailand – scheduled for 29 November to 1 December. Confirmed meetings with Ministry of Tourism, Bank of Thailand, and the Board of Investment, but not to worry, we'll get more confirmations in the next few weeks. If you've signed up for the business mission, Jenn and Annabel will be with you shortly with more updates soon.

We're also going to Brussels – in the dead of winter, but at least during the Christmas season! If you're keen to join us, please register [here](#). We have a super packed schedule already – meetings with DG Trade, DG Taxud (in charge of CBAM), DG Environment (in charge of the EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products – EUDR), the Chief Foreign Policy Advisor of EU President Charles Michel, and many others have been confirmed. We're also making this business mission more exciting with events like a networking night with key Brussels stakeholders and a briefing on EU matters (jointly organised by our member APCO Worldwide). You'll get more information on that soon. For our members, we are organising a breakfast meeting with the ASEAN Ambassadors to the EU! A lot of things happening in Brussels, so if you're keen to join, please register or write to Liyana and Jenn.

Apart from that, two health events in November. First, a launch webinar to uncover the insights of the whitepaper published by the Council with support from Sanofi. The report will discuss the proposed framework for Southeast Asia to progress Life-Course Immunisation in the region. If you have yet to register, do so [here](#). We will also be organising our final roadshow for 2023 in Thailand on 17th November. More details [here](#).

If health is not your cup of tea, the Council will be organising an in-person event, in partnership with the EU Delegation in Singapore, on the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). More details to come. If you are interested to find out more, please keep a lookout on our [LinkedIn page](#).

And that's it from the Secretariat! Stay hydrated, eat your fruits and vegetables, and slow down...