



PRESS RELEASE: EU-ASEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL SEEKS EASING OF CUSTOMS PROCEDURES AND INCREASED TRADE FACILITATION IN ASEAN

MEETS ASEAN DIRECTORS-GENERAL OF CUSTOMS

- The EU-ASEAN Business Council today met ASEAN Directors-General of Customs in Bali, Indonesia, and presented a number of short-term and medium-term recommendations aimed at easing Customs procedures across ASEAN - a key tenet of the AEC Blueprint 2025.
- Measures presented, if adopted by ASEAN, would ease the movement of goods in the region; help meet ASEAN's key objective of reducing the cost of trade by 10% and greatly help MSMEs and the development of e-commerce.
- ASEAN remains an important region for European businesses with Europe still the lead source of FDI funds to ASEAN and Europe remaining ASEAN's second largest trading partner
- The EU-ASEAN Business Council, as the voice of European businesses in the region, looks forward to continuing to work together with the all of the ASEAN Member States and in particular to working closely with various ASEAN groups tasked at implementing the AEC.

Commenting on the EU-ABC's recommendations which were presented to the ASEAN Directors-General of Customs, EU-ABC Chairman, Mr Donald Kanak, said:

"We are pleased and encouraged to hear ASEAN's leaders reiterate the need for more to be done on trade facilitation, including on customs procedures, and believe this can have a powerful effect on intra-ASEAN trade. According to a 2013 World Economic Forum report¹, improvements in border administration and transport and communications infrastructure in Southeast Asia could increase GDP by 9.3% and exports by 12.1%. This is a key topic in the AEC Blueprint 2025 and will also greatly help MSMEs across the region."

Commenting further the proposals contained in the EU-ABC paper *Trade Facilitation in ASEAN: Modernising Customs Procedures and Helping MSMEs*, Chris Humphrey, the EU-ABC's Executive Director, said:

"The EU-ABC is very pleased to have met the Customs DGs today. We had constructive discussions regarding customs and trade facilitation issues and looked at ways that customs procedures could be modernised to benefit all. We believe that the collaborative ideas between Europe and ASEAN for modernising customs procedures will facilitate more trade and reduce the cost of trade, whilst at the same time help customs authorities meet their own objectives. Our paper presents several ideas on how trade in ASEAN can be facilitated more through the modernisation of customs procedures and we look forward to working closely with the authorities in the region on these issues. We are sure that implementing our ideas will foster greater economic growth, higher investment into the region and the boosting of government revenues."

END

¹ World Economic Forum "Enabling Trade – Valuing Growth Opportunities" report in 2013



Notes to editors:

1. EU-ASEAN Trade and Investment Relationship

The commercial, trade and investment relationship between the European Union and ASEAN is strong and growing. The EU is the largest economy in the world, and is ASEAN's largest source of foreign direct investment. The EU is also ASEAN's second largest trading partner, after China.

2. About the EU-ASEAN Business Council

The EU-ASEAN Business Council (EU-ABC) is the primary voice for European business within the ASEAN region.

It is recognised by the European Commission and by the ASEAN Secretariat. Independent of both bodies, the Council has been established to help promote the interests of European businesses operating within ASEAN and to advocate for changes in policies and regulations which would help promote trade and investment between Europe and the ASEAN region. As such, the Council works on a sectorial and cross-industry basis to help improve the investment and trading conditions for European Businesses in the ASEAN region through influencing policy and decision makers throughout the region and in the EU, as well as acting as a platform for the exchange of information and ideas amongst its members and regional players within the ASEAN region.

The EU-ABC's membership consists of large European Multi-National Corporations and the nine European Chambers of Commerce from around South East Asia. As such, the EU-ABC represents a diverse range of European industries cutting across almost every commercial sphere from car manufacturing through to financial services and including Fast Moving Consumer Goods and high-end electronics and communications. Our members all have a vested interest in enhancing trade, commerce and investment between Europe and ASEAN.

The Executive Director of the EU-ASEAN Business Council is Mr Chris Humphrey, and its Chairman is Mr Donald Kanak. The Council is led by an elected Board consisting of corporate leaders representing a range of important industry sectors and representatives of the European Chambers of Commerce.

Media Contacts

Brenda Lee Xin
External Communications Manager
EU-ASEAN Business Council
E-Mail: brenda.lee@eu-asean.eu
Tel: +65 9880 2261