

EMBASSY OF MALAYSIA

Brussels, Belgium

e-Newsletter

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Dear Readers,

Bonjour from the capital of the European Union.

2020 has been an unusual year, to say the least, with COVID 19 becoming a pandemic, sparing no nation. What was perceived as a distant threat soon became a harsh reality as Europe quickly turned into the epicentre of the pandemic in March 2020.

Many European countries, including Belgium imposed restrictions to curb the pandemic. Such restrictions exist till today in Europe and other parts of the world, changing the way we live, work, play, travel and interact with each other. It was been quite the journey for everyone, coping and adapting with the evolving situation, including Malaysians in Belgium and Luxembourg, as well as us at Malawakil Brussels.



The challenges are far from over as we continue to see surges in new cases around the world. This too we shall overcome together.

Stay safe!

Prisheela Prakas
CDA a.i.



NEGARAKU

Activities & Events

ASEAN-EU SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING (SOM) 10-11 FEBRUARY 2020



YBhg. Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, Secretary General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia, represented Malaysia at the ASEAN-EU Senior Officials' Meeting which was held in Brussels, Belgium from 10 to 11 February 2020.

The Meeting was attended by officials from all 27 EU and 10 ASEAN Member States, as well as by representatives from the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Gunnar Wiegand, Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific, European External Action Service and Mr. Stanley Loh, Second Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore.

During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on recent developments in the EU and ASEAN. Central to the discussions were prospects for strengthening ASEAN-EU cooperation. Both sides acknowledged the importance of enhancing a rules-based multilateral system in particular in the face of challenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic. ASEAN and EU have many shared aspirations and interest, making us natural partners.

2ND ASEAN-EU DIALOGUE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 10 FEBRUARY 2020



The second ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development: Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals was successfully convened in Brussels on 10 February 2020. It brought together senior representatives and experts of the ASEAN and EU, the EU Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat.

Malaysia was represented by YBhg. Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, Secretary-General Ministry, of Foreign Affairs Malaysia

The Dialogue opened with a high-level segment with statements by Ms. Jutta Urpilainen, European Commissioner for International Partnerships, and H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand as the ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation. The subsequent thematic discussions were co-chaired by Mr. Koen Doens, Director-General for the European Commission Department for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), and Mrs. Busaya Mathelin, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand.

The Dialogue reiterated the importance of continued policy dialogue to promote cooperation on sustainable development in line with the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action 2018-2022, among others.

ASEAN Brussels Committee (ABC) Activities

ASEAN Day in Luxembourg



ASEAN is the world's sixth largest market and is the EU's second largest trading partner, as well as the largest provider of Foreign Direct Investment (€337 billion). The EU and its Member States therefore have a strategic interest in deepening their relations with ASEAN countries, and trade relations is the main pillar of the EU's relation with ASEAN.

Following the first successful edition of ASEAN Day in Luxembourg in 2017, the Luxembourg Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of the Economy and ASEAN Brussels Committee (ABC) organized the second edition of ASEAN Day on 3 March 2020.



Malaysia was represented by the team at Malawakil Brussels which also included MITI, MPOB, MPOC, KDRM. MATRADE (The Hague) Tourism Malaysia (The Hague), MIDA (Frankfurt) also lent their support to this event.

Just like in 2017, the 2020 edition brought together stakeholders from government, finance institutions and the private sector with seminars on how to strengthen relations between Luxembourg, the EU

and ASEAN as the main highlight.

As a founding member of the EU, Luxembourg continues to support ASEAN community-building efforts and is further committed to deepen its relations with the 10 ASEAN Member States. Trade volume between Luxembourg and ASEAN Member States have more than four and a half times between 2009 and 2019, rising from €1.38 billion to €6.26 billion in goods and services during this period.



3rd ABC Meeting



Work is almost as usual in Brussels despite of movement control due to COVID-19. Even with the COVID 19 pandemic, it has been business as usual under unusual circumstances in Brussels. As with all businesses, our working methods had to adapt to the circumstances. The ABC had its third meeting via video conference on 28 May 2020, chaired by Ambassador of the Philippines.

All 10 ASEAN Heads of Missions attended the “new-norms” meeting. The meeting went well and was fruitful as usual. The only missing was the scrumptious Philippines’ post-meeting lunch, which has been replaced by Malaysian potluck-lunch representing our diverse culture which we shared during our Chairmanship from January to June 2019.



Handover of ABC Chairmanship



The ABC Chairmanship passed from the Philippines to Singapore in July 2020. Respecting local restrictions, ASEAN Ambassadors met without any officials from respective Embassies present. Social-distancing has now become a norm in all physical meetings, including the wearing of face mask.

Engaging the EU

ABC-DEVCO Meeting



On 4 February 2020, the Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) met with the ASEAN Committee in Brussels as preparation for the convening of the second ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development which will be held in Brussels on 10 February 2020, back-to-back with the ASEAN-EU Senior Officials Meeting, 10-11 February.

The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Koen Doens, Director General of DEVCO and H.E. Mr. Eduardo de Vega, Ambassador of the Philippines to the EU, in his capacity as the then Chairman of ABC.

The Meeting was attended by all ASEAN Ambassadors in Brussels while Malaysia, Cambodia and Vietnam were represented by their CDA a.i. Besides DEVCO, the EU side was also represented by several Directorates-General of the Commission including for Energy (ENER), Transport (MOVE), Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (FISMA), Trade (TRADE), Environment (ENVI), Maritime and Fisheries (MARE), Climate Action (CLIMA), as well as the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Working Visit of the Ministry of Primary Industries Malaysia



From 9 to 14 February 2020, YB Teresa Kok Suh Sim, the then Minister of Primary Industries Malaysia led a Palm Oil Economic and Promotion Mission to the United Kingdom and several of the EU Member States (Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands).

On 13 February 2020, YB Teresa Kok Suh Sim had a bilateral meeting with Ms. Kadri Simson, European Commissioner for Energy, in Brussels, Belgium.

The main objectives of the meeting was to communicate the facts and information related to sustainability of the Malaysian oil palm industry; to counter the negative perceptions towards palm oil; to ensure continued market access to the EU; to strengthen cooperation between Malaysia and EU in this respect.



PERWAKILAN

AGM PERWAKILAN 2020



Much was planned for 2020, unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic got in the way of activities including our annual food bazaars due to restrictions.

PERWAKILAN convened its Annual General Meeting on 29 January 2020 chaired by Mdm. Prisheela Prakas CDA a.i.



COVID-19



Malawakil Brussels helped our fellow Malaysians in Belgium and Luxembourg to obtain scarce personal protection material such as face masks, gloves and hand sanitizer via coordinated bulk purchases from a Malaysian-owned factory, Sluys International NV at cost price. These essentials were unavailable to public at the outset of the pandemic.

Sluys International NV Founded in 1931, is a Belgium-based manufacturer of flavour,



drink concentrate and beverage emulsion. It is a private company that had

diversified its business into producing sanitizer, importing face masks and gloves during the critical time when these items were hard to come by at the open market. The company also supplied some of our Missions in Europe.

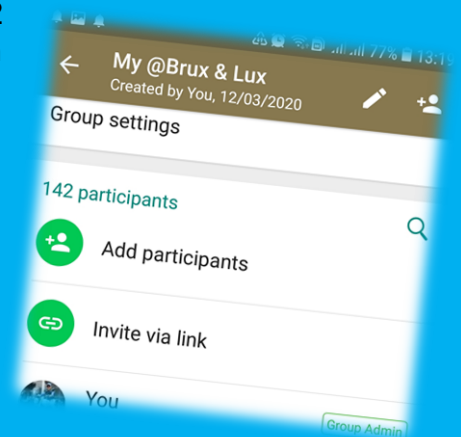


Officers of Malawakil Brussels also made rounds at airports and the town centre during the earlier phase of soft lockdown in Belgium to check and ensure the welfare of Malaysians travellers in Belgium. True enough we met many Malaysians who were rushing to exit Belgium as lockdown measures were imposed.



On 12 March 2020, in order to stay connected with Malaysians in Belgium and Luxembourg, Malawakil launched a WhatsApp's group. This has been the platform to disseminate crucial and accurate information, especially on COVID 19 in Belgium and Malaysia. There are 142 participants/heads of families in this group.

On a lighter note, the WhatsApp group is also a medium for Malaysians to socialise, chat, share exchanges on many things. It somehow brought us closer... "virtually".



Picture Gallery



EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen



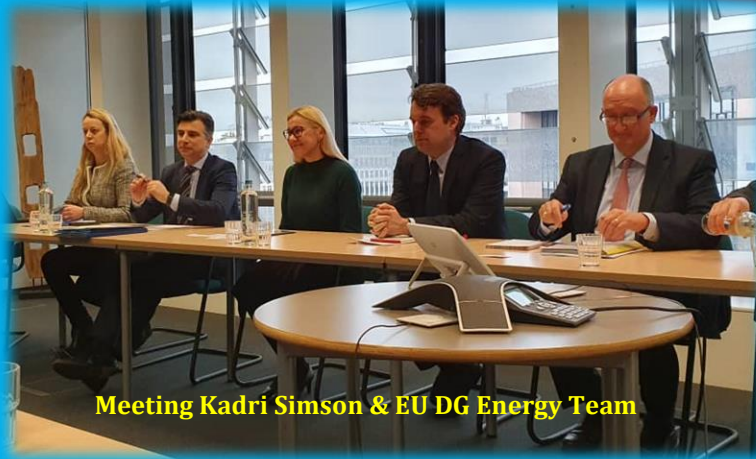
With Kadri Simson, EU Commissioner for Energy



With Frans Timmermans
European Green Deal, EU Commissioner Green Deal



Meeting EU Parliament VP



Meeting Kadri Simson & EU DG Energy Team



PERWAKILAN AGM



Forest & Park Traekking



Forest & Park Trekking



Mw Brussels COVID 19 Task Force



Malaysia Honorary Consul in Luxembourg



World Customs Day

Visit Belgium



THE AUTOMIUM

The Atomium is one of the famous landmark building in Brussels located only about 15km from the Chancery. It was originally constructed for the 1958 Brussels World's Fair (Expo 58). It is located on the Heysel Plateau, where the exhibition took place. It is now a museum.

Designed by the engineer André Waterkeyn and architects André and Jean Polak. The monument, built in the shape of a body-centered cubic iron crystal, was intended to honor the metals industry and celebrate the atomic age. Each of the metal spheres is 18 meters in diameter; the entire structure stands 102 meters tall.

Tubes of 3 m diameter connect the spheres along the 12 edges of the cube and all eight vertices to the centre. They enclose stairs, escalators and a lift to allow access to the five habitable spheres, which contain exhibit halls and other public spaces. The top sphere includes a restaurant which has a panoramic view of Brussels.

Due to its unique structure in the world, its emblematic character and its resolutely futuristic aspect: the Atomium enjoys international recognition at an institutional, cultural and artistic level. This strong brand image offers many opportunities for collaboration, ranging from renting a part of the building to co-branding and filming.

Must Try in Belgium

MOULES-FRITES



Moules-frites is a traditional comfort food item consisting of mussels paired with Belgian fries on the side. The dish is commonly found in Belgium, the Netherlands, and northern France. The condiment of choice accompanying the dish is mayonnaise, providing an additional note of richness.

Mussels are a Belgian staple - cheap and abundant, they were originally considered a poor man's meal, and have been paired with fried potatoes for a long time at the country's famous friteries (fry shops).

It is believed that the dish is originally from Belgium, because Belgians were the first to pair the mussels with fries, commonly eaten

throughout the country in wintertime, when no fish was available. Today, the dish is found in most restaurants where it is often shared amongst groups of consumers.

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