

Quarterly newsletter from the Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki.

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BERSEKUTU

Quarterly Newsletter Issue 1/2016 (October-December 2015)

Happy New Year from the Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki!

With the start of a new year, 2016, we wish to give you an update on the Embassy's activities and developments from the final quarter of the past year and a glance at what is coming up.

The fourth quarter of 2015 included a mix of activities, the highlight being the visit of the Chief Secretary to the Government of Malaysia, Tan Sri Dr. Ali Hamsa to Finland in October, as well as the two seminars we organised; one on doing business in Malaysia and the other one on ASEAN.

The Embassy's quarterly newsletter was launched last year. The new format contributes to improved information sharing with our cooperation partners, the Malaysian community and Friends of Malaysia in Finland as well as other Malaysian Embassies globally.

Please read on for a more detailed account on our activities, bilateral relations, upcoming events, and current affairs in Finland as well as the two accredited countries, Estonia and Latvia.

We will be happy to hear your feedback and ideas on the newsletter as well as the Embassy's events and activities generally, please do not hesitate to be in touch with us.

Kind regards,

H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery
Ambassador of Malaysia to the Republic of Finland
accredited to the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia

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1. Quarterly events and visits review

The final quarter, October-December 2015, included a host of activities ranging from a significant Malaysian government official visit to seminars organised by the Embassy, which kept us busy through the dark period in Finland. In December we enjoyed celebrating the Little Christmas together with the Malaysian community in Finland.

Visit by the Chief Secretary

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Malaysia, Tan Sri Dr. Ali Hamsa visited Finland to attend the OECD 34th Meeting of Senior Officials from Centres of Government hosted by Finland on 28-30 October 2015.

In conjunction to his visit the Chief Secretary attended a Townhall Meeting with the Embassy staff and some Malaysian students in Finland. This was an occasion for him to learn about the situation in Finland from the bilateral affairs perspective as well as to brief the participants on latest developments within the Malaysian government. Tan Sri Dr. Ali Hamsa together with his wife Puan Sri Rohani Abdullah also visited the Embassy chancery.



Townhall Meeting at restaurant Borneo with the Chief Secretary of the Government of Malaysia



Visit by the Chief Secretary of the Government of Malaysia to the Embassy chancery

Seminars on business and ASEAN outreach

The Embassy of Malaysia organised a seminar in Helsinki on 28 October with presentations from relevant agencies for **doing business in Malaysia**. The speakers included Ms. Sanna Haarala, Finnpartnership, Ms Roslina Othman, MIDA Stockholm, and Ms. Amilatun Fazlina Zakaria, MATRADE Rotterdam. Seminar discussion topics included the possibilities to employ the matchmaking services for Finnish and Malaysian companies provided by both Finnpartnership and MIDA. MATRADE introduced some of the big trade fairs held in Malaysia that could be of interest for Finnish companies, such as the greentech and eco products conference IGEM 2016, to be held in October.

The second seminar of the quarter was the **ASEAN outreach seminar** organised under Malaysia's Chairmanship on 17 December 2015 jointly with the ASEAN Helsinki Committee (Embassies of Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand) in cooperation with the Ministry for

Foreign Affairs of Finland. The seminar provided information on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its recent developments to the Finnish public.

The seminar began with opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Kimmo Lähdevirta, Director General for the Americas and Asia, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and a speech by H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia, followed by country perspectives by ASEAN Ambassadors H.E. Mr. Elias Ginting, Ambassador of Indonesia; H.E. Mr. Rachanant Thananant, Ambassador of Thailand; and Ms Quang Xuan Uyen Tran, 1st Secretary, Embassy of Vietnam. The second session included presentations from the economic perspective by Mr. Risto Huhta-Koivisto, Director, Head of Industry, Finpro; Dr. Erja Kettunen-Matilainen, Adjunct Professor, Aalto University School of Business; Mr. Jani Kaulo, CEO, Asia-Finland Law Consulting Ltd., Board Member of Finland-Asean Trade Association; and Ms. Sanna Haarala, Programme Analyst, Finnpartnership. Participants included representatives from the business, education and government sectors.



Representatives of MIDA Stockholm, Embassy of Malaysia and MATRADE at the business seminar



Speakers of the ASEAN outreach seminar

SLUSH 2015

H.E. Dato Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia had the pleasure of attending the Finnish vibrant start-up conference [Slush 2015](#) in November as an observer. Slush is a non-profit event organised by a community of entrepreneurs, investors, students and festival organisers.

Among the 1700 participating start-ups at Slush 2015 was also Malaysian Peripio games, attending the event under the Gamefounders platform, an Estonian accelerator program focusing on game studios and start-ups. Gamefounders Asia is supported by MDEC in Malaysia.

The gaming industry is an area of potential cooperation between Malaysia and Finland.

Female Ambassador's perspective

A noteworthy characteristic of the Finnish society is its high level of gender equality. The final quarter included a few activities highlighting the gender perspective. One of these was the [Women in Tech forum](#) held in Helsinki on 5-9 October 2015, aimed at promoting the role of women in the technology industry.

On Friday 16 October 2015 Ambassador H.E. Dato Blanche Olbery had the pleasure of attending the first '**Golden Women Awards**' organised by WODESS where she gave a speech highlighting the importance of education and giving examples of successful women in Malaysia and Finland. She also had the honour of handing over the WODESS Woman of the Year award.

The Women Ambassadors' Group in Helsinki provides a meaningful platform for exchanging views in the diplomatic arena. The group's luncheons have included prominent Finnish political

guests such as Ms. Anne-Mari Virolainen, Chair of the Grand Committee, H.E. Ms. Anne Berner, Minister of Transport and Communication/Minister for Nordic Cooperation, and Speaker of the Parliament Ms. Maria Lohela.



The Women Ambassador's Group with the Speaker of Parliament Maria Lohela.



Wodess Golden Women Awards

Little Christmas celebration

The traditional Embassy Little Christmas celebration for the Malaysian community and Friends of Malaysia was held on 19 December 2015 together with the Finland-Malaysia Association. The event included a speech by H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia, Christmas carolling, a visit by Santa Clause, as well as a variety of delicious food.



Ambassador's speech at the Little Christmas party



Santa Clause at the Little Christmas party

2. Bilateral affairs news

In Finland-Malaysia bilateral affairs, the fourth quarter included news items in the spheres of business, education and tourism.

In business news, Finnish company [Valmet's turbine automation](#) was commissioned at Tenom Pangi hydroelectric power plant in Malaysia, which is owned by Sabah Electricity Sdn. Bhd. (SESB).

In the sphere of education, Finnish Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and Malaysian Disted College [signed a joint venture agreement](#) concerning a Bachelor of Hospitality Management -programme beginning in autumn 2016 with a specialisation on Food and Beverage Management.

In travel news, Terengganu was featured in the November issue of the [Finnair inflight magazine \(page 44\)](#). The author of the article has also compiled [a travel guide blog on Malaysia](#).

3. Finland current affairs

Recent topics in Finnish current affairs have included concerns over the national economy and the government budget, the pan-European refugee crisis, and security concerns as a follow-up of the Paris attacks in November 2015.

Finland's recovery from the economic decline has been slower than in the rest of Europe. The Finnish economy and society are in the midst of a phase of notable changes, which has included tense negotiations on reforming the labour market practices and standards between the employers and employee organisations.

On a lighter note Finland was the first country to come up with its own set of [national emojis](#) and recently celebrated the victory of [the Junior World ice hockey championships](#). Congratulations to the Young Lions team!

4. Estonian overview

Estonia is aiming to continue on its current economic path to catch up with Scandinavia, [as stated by Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas](#) in December. As elsewhere in Europe, dealing with the migrant crisis has been at the foreground of current affairs.

From the Malaysian perspective, Estonia is an interesting country to observe as a forerunner in the ICT industry with a highly developed e-governance and electronic services as well as being a breeding ground for technologically advanced companies.

Estonia celebrated the first anniversary of its [e-residency programme](#) on 1 December 2015. Estonia was the first country in the world to start a supranational e-residency scheme, offering foreigners e-residency in Estonia.

In November, the founders of Transferwise, an Estonian developed company, Mr. Taavet Hinrikus and Mr. Kristo Käärmann were [named European Web Entrepreneurs of 2015](#). The title was presented by the Vice President of the European Commission Jyrki Katainen, and the President of the European Committee of the Regions Markku Markkula during the Slush

Conference in Helsinki.

5. Latvian overview

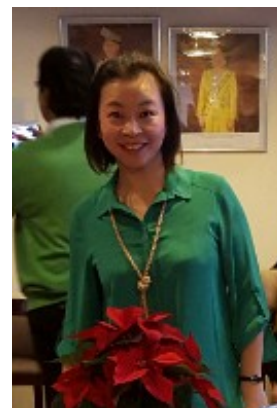
Prime Minister of Latvia Laimdota Straujuma announced her resignation on Monday 7 December 2015. On 13 January 2016 President of Latvia Mr. Raimonds Vējonis [named Saeima MP Māris Kučinskis from the Union of Greens and Farmers as the candidate for the post of the Prime Minister.](#)

H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia, accredited to Latvia attended the National Day reception hosted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edgars Rinkēvičs and programme commemorating the 97th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia on 18 November 2015.

6. Introduction of the local staff at Embassy of Malaysia, Helsinki

This section of the newsletter includes introductions of the local staff at the Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki. The local staff bring added value with their local understanding and language skills as well as improving communication and connections with the host country.

This time we introduce Ms. Jerlene Lee Wallenius, Economic & Consular Officer. Jerlene is currently responsible for consular as well as trade and investment promotion matters. She first joined the Embassy in 2005. After leaving the Embassy to further her Finnish studies, Jerlene returned to the Embassy again in 2009.



Jerlene has previously handled a variety of tasks at the Embassy ranging from accounts, administrative duties and acting as the Residence Manager to Rumah Malaysia. Her current role involves, among others, assisting Malaysians in consular matters such as passport renewals, registrations of births and marriages, as well as processing visas for foreign visitors to Malaysia. From the economic perspective, she is involved in promoting Malaysia as an investment destination to Finnish and Baltic companies, cooperation with Finnish companies and assisting delegations from Malaysia during visits to Finland.

Jerlene has a background in international business. She holds a diploma in computer studies and private secretaryship from Malaysia, as well as a degree in International Business from Finland. She moved to Finland together with her Finnish husband and family after his work contract ended in Malaysia. The first couple of years after moving here were somewhat of a cultural shock, but she now enjoys the quietness and safety of Finland.

Feel free to be in touch with Jerlene concerning consular, economic, tourism or education related matters and she will be pleased to assist you.

Contact details:

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7. Upcoming events

This section provides an overview of some of our activities and events in the first quarter of 2016.

Matka 2016

Malaysia will be represented at the [MATKA 2016](#), the largest travel industry event in Northern Europe 21-24 January 2016.

Investment Seminar

The Embassy of Malaysia is planning a seminar together with MIDA and MATRADE in spring 2016. For more information, please contact Ms. Jerlene Lee Wallenius, consular@malaysianembassy.fi.

Friends of Malaysia gathering

In spring 2016 we are planning an informal gathering for bloggers and former Finnish exchange students in Malaysia. For more details please contact Ms. Satu Spratley, interpreter@malaysianembassy.fi.

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This concludes Issue 1/2016 of our newsletter. The next issue will appear in April 2016.

We wish you all the best for your endeavours in 2016!

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