

[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate](#)

Quarterly new sletter from the Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki.

[View this email in your browser](#)



## **EMBASSY OF MALAYSIA HELSINKI NEWSLETTER**

### **Quarterly Newsletter Issue 2/2016 (January-March 2016)**

Spring greetings from the Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki!

As days are getting longer and sunnier in Finland, we are enthusiastic about the new momentum in the bilateral business relations between Finland and Malaysia.

This year's focus areas for the Embassy include active trade promotion, higher education cooperation promotion, public diplomacy as well as ASEAN community cooperation. We are also continuing with developing our external communications and social media activity.

The first quarter of the year saw activity in Malaysia with the visit of the health sector delegation to Finland and business partnership promotion seminars by Finnpartnership and MIDA. In Helsinki we have been building connections and collaborating with different bodies with mutual interests to further Finland-Malaysia affairs in our focus

areas.

In this newsletter you can read about our activities, bilateral relations, upcoming events, and current affairs in Finland as well as the two accredited countries, Estonia and Latvia. We are also beginning a new feature introducing Malaysian professionals in Finland to further enhance our connections with the local diaspora.

Please do not hesitate to be in touch with us in case of any feedback on the newsletter or the Embassy's events and activities generally.

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

*NB: If you would prefer not to receive the newsletters in the future, please click the link to unsubscribe from the list at the end of this message.*

## **1. Quarterly activities review**

The first quarter of the year, January-March 2016 included a host of collaborative meetings and activities to prepare for this year's upcoming ventures. In the business promotion domain, cooperation at the ASEAN platform is being further explored with the momentum of the formal establishment of the ASEAN Community last year. The Embassy also welcomed the arrival of the Chinese New Year at the traditional annual occasion with the Malaysian community in Finland.

## **Matka 2016**

Malaysia was represented at the Matka Nordic travel fair in Helsinki 21-24 January 2016. This year the stand included a striking Malaysian traditional dance performance. A cocktail reception was also held with Deputy Director General of Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board Dato' Haji Azizan Noordin, the Embassy of Malaysia and Tourism Malaysia to Nordic and Baltics Director Noriah Jaafar.



Tourism Malaysia and Embassy of Malaysia at Matka 2016.



Malaysian dance at Matka 2016

### **Indonesian Ambassador Farewell Dinner**

A Farewell Dinner was hosted by H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia, in her capacity as the ASEAN Chairman, for H.E. Mr. Elias Ginting, Ambassador of Indonesia on Wednesday 27 January 2016. Ambassador Ginting, a close colleague and fellow ASEAN cooperation partner returned to Indonesia in February after his four year posting in Helsinki.



Indonesian Ambassador Farewell Dinner



Indonesian Ambassador Farewell Dinner

### **Chinese New Year and Farewell event**

The Malaysian community in Finland gathered at the Embassy on 13 February 2016 to celebrate the arrival of the year of the Monkey, to enjoy Malaysian food and to spend time in good company. In her speech at the event H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia gave an update on current affairs in Finland-Malaysia affairs, as well as the Embassy's activities and priorities. The event also included the ritual Yee Sang tossing, also known as the Prosperity Toss.

In addition the event was a farewell reception to Second Secretary to Mr. Hussain Musa and his wife Ms. Asimah Zakariah who are returning back to Malaysia at the end of their posting. At the event the Embassy and Perwakilan presented farewell presents

to Mr. Hussain and Ms. Asimah as a sign of appreciation. Members of the Embassy of Malaysia wished both of them the best in the next chapter of their journey.



Speech by H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery,  
Ambassador of Malaysia



Chinese New Year Yee Sang tossing

### **Change of Personnel at the Embassy of Malaysia**

Mr. Hussain Musa, former Second Secretary at the Embassy completed his assignment in Helsinki and returned to Malaysia on Wednesday, 17 February 2016. His new successor, Ms Fatimah Said, Third Secretary, started her duty at the Embassy on Monday 21 February 2016. Any future queries regarding consular matters can be forwarded to Ms Fatimah Said.



Welcome of Third Secretary Ms. Fatimah Said



Farewell of Second Secretary Mr. Hussain Musa

## **2. Bilateral affairs news**

HE Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia to the Republic of Finland hosted a lunch in honour of HE Mr. Petri Juhani Puhakka, Ambassador-Designate of the Republic of Finland to Malaysia on 25 February 2016. Mr. Puhakka is replacing the outgoing Ambassador, HE Mr. Matti Pullinen and will also be concurrently accredited to Brunei

Darussalam and the Philippines. The lunch was an opportunity to informally share and discuss Malaysia-Finland bilateral relations, international cooperation as well as other areas of mutual interests.

A Team Finland healthcare sector delegation visited Malaysia 28 February –1 March 2016. The FinlandCare delegation trip to Singapore and Malaysia was led by Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The FinlandCare maiden visit to Malaysia indicates there is indeed scope for business in the Malaysian market for Finnish companies in the healthcare sector. Read more details from the article in Finnish by [the Embassy of Finland in Kuala Lumpur](#).

Business partnerships between Finland and Malaysia were also recently promoted by Finnpartnership and MIDA in a series of seminars held in Malaysia (Johor Bahru, Ipoh and KL) in March with the goal of connecting Malaysian companies with matching Finnish counterparts.

Also in business affairs, Finnish company, [Sofia Digital Ltd](#), provider of interactive video and TV solutions, was chosen to provide HbbTV (Hybrid Broadcast Broadband Television) solutions to Malaysian public broadcaster, Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM).

### **3. Finland current affairs**

The Finnish Government has decided to introduce a minimum annual tuition fee of 1500€ for non-EU/EEA students, starting from August 2017 at the latest. This means that non-EU/EEA students who start their studies in autumn 2017 or after that, are subject to tuition fees. The tuition fees concern Bachelor's or Master's degree programmes offered in English. Doctoral level studies, or degree programmes offered in Finnish or Swedish, will not include tuition fees. The annual set minimum fee is 1500€. (Source: [StudyinFinland](#))

We were happy to note that Finland has recently ranked well in many of the annual rankings such as the [greenest country in the world](#), among [the happiest places in the world](#), and [number one in the world for literacy](#).

Amid the country's economic struggles, positive news were heard of a sizeable [Chinese investment in a biofuel factory in Kemi](#).

The Finnish government is also keen on promoting entrepreneurship to support growth from innovation and start-ups. The city of Helsinki is building its profile as a start-up hub by building premises and opportunities for entrepreneurs. [Helsinki city councillors](#)

[recently approved](#) the setting up what is expected to become the largest incubator for startup companies in the Nordics, the Startup Maria hub.

#### **4. Estonian overview**

The Malaysian Embassy Helsinki is accredited to Estonia. A step towards the development of trade relations between Malaysia and Estonia was taken on 19 January 2016 with a networking dinner in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, between Malaysian organisations covering Estonia and relevant Estonian government, trade and investment bodies.

The organisations represented included from the Malaysian side: the Embassy of Malaysia, Helsinki; MIDA Munich office; MATRADE Warsaw office; and from the Estonian side: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication; Enterprise Estonia; Estonia Investment Agency; Estonian Service Industry Association; and Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



The Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) assists companies interested in investing in Malaysia, facilitates the implementation of their projects, and provides information on investment opportunities and government policies. More information: [MIDA](#).

Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) is the national trade promotion agency of Malaysia. MATRADE is involved in promoting Malaysian exports in foreign markets and assists foreign companies to source for suppliers of Malaysian products and services. More information: [MATRADE](#).

#### **5. Latvian overview**

The Malaysian Embassy was pleased to attend a briefing on 16 February 2016 organised by the Latvian Embassy in Helsinki on the new Latvian Government under the leadership of PM Mr. Maris Kucinskis. It was an excellent opportunity to gain a better insight into the current situation of the new government as well as the Latvian policy priorities, it being one of our accredited countries.

The Latvian Parliament (Saeima) confirmed the government of Prime Minister Maris

Kucinskis (Greens/Farmers) on Thursday 12 February 2016. The government is made up of the previous three coalition parties – the Union of Greens and Farmers, Unity, and National Alliance (All For Latvia-For Fatherland And Freedom/LNNK). (Source: [Baltic News Network](#))

## **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 Laimes Jali, Accounting Assistant. Laimes has been with the Embassy since May 2011. Besides accounts matters, Laimes' scope of duties includes cooking for Embassy events under the Perwakilan association, particularly Malaysian Kuih Muih - desserts, which are her specialty.



Laimes comes from Sabah, located in the north of Malaysian Borneo. Her background in accounting is from working as an Accounting Admin Assistant in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah for nearly 7 years before moving to Helsinki in October 2002 with her Finnish husband. Prior to joining the Embassy Laimes studied Finnish as well as graduating as a beautician at a beauty care training unit in Helsinki. The course was all in Finnish, which enabled her to fully learn the language.

Please feel free to be in touch with Laimes in matters related to the Embassy's accounts.

Contact details:

Ms. Laimes Jali

e-mail: [account@malaysianembassy.fi](mailto:account@malaysianembassy.fi)

tel: 010 320 2037

## **7. Malaysian professionals in Finland**

We are beginning a new feature series introducing Malaysian professionals in Finland. The first article is with Edmund Liew, 29-year-old Malaysian, who recently won the award for Finland's best young sommelier. Edmund is the Head Sommelier at the [Sinne](#) restaurant in Helsinki, ranked among the Top 40 Best Restaurants in the White Guide Nordic 2016.

Edmund Liew, a wine professional living in Helsinki, is realising his dream of traveling the world and learning about new cultures through gastronomy, food and wine, thanks to his profession.



Edmund has lived in Finland since November 2014, after being invited by his Finnish colleague Lauri Vainio from Singapore to work at the second outlet of restaurant Sinne in Helsinki. The two of them had gotten to know each other in Singapore working together at an Italian celebrity chef restaurant, Osteria & Pizzeria Mozza, in Marina Bay Sands. Edmund has been with Sinne since its opening and as the Head Sommelier he is responsible for the restaurant's beverage programme. The restaurant imports its wines directly from the producers, mainly in Europe, as well as sourcing from a few local quality suppliers. Edmund's prior career in the restaurant and wine industry ranges from celebrity fine dining to bistro

style restaurants. In addition he has honed his professional competence and won awards in a host of sommelier competitions.

Edmund Liew originally comes from the town of Kajang, in the eastern part of Selangor, Malaysia. Inspired by his love of travel, he chose studies in the hospitality and tourism industry. He completed a bachelor's degree at Taylor's University in Subang Jaya, Malaysia and Université de Toulouse Le Mirail, France. Edmund's young sommelier career spans roughly a decade to date. His interest in wine was initially sparked when working as a busboy in the early stages of his career at a French fine dining restaurant in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur, where he became intrigued over the lavish pricing of wines. He went on to write his bachelor's thesis on wine and began to develop his sommelier skills, among others, working at a wine bar in Kuala Lumpur, completing the level four Diploma proficiency course by the Wine and Spirit Education Trust (WSET), and subsequently being granted the status of Certified Sommelier by the Court of Master Sommelier (CMS). After studies and training, Edmund's award-winning sommelier career began to bloom in 2009 with his first significant victories in national and later international competitions, leading up to winning both Malaysia's Best Sommelier and South East Asian Best Sommelier competitions in 2012.

Ultimately, Edmund's goal is to travel the world and he sees the sommelier profession as an enabler of his aspiration. So far he has had a chance to travel to some twenty countries. When asked to describe his profession, Edmund explains that being a

sommelier is much more than just tasting and serving wine. In addition, the job comes with a host of other responsibilities and required skills, such as salesmanship, managing beverages, the cellar and the holding costs, buying the best valued products, generating revenue, and balancing costs. An essential part of the profession is also studying beverages and keeping up with the latest trends. Edmund is proud of and very particular about his cellar at Sinne, with over 300 types of wines, which he maintains as a 'living organism' with a regularly changing wine list. He also makes sure to keep up with new trends and comes up with new ideas such as wine tasting dinners to keep clients interested.

Edmund's defining impressions of Finland are summarised by these words: cold, safe, and language barrier. Coming from the tropical Southeast Asian climate, the biggest difference is undoubtedly the weather and lack of sunlight - moving here Edmund was advised to stock up on vitamin D. The safety of Finland also made an impression on him and how law-abiding Finns were. Not speaking Finnish creates a language barrier for many newcomers in Finland. As English is widely spoken by Finns and thanks to the seniority of his position, the barrier has not been too big of an issue for Edmund but he has noted that at entry-level jobs the language barrier can be a bigger issue. From Malaysia Edmund misses most of all the food, the people (family), and the weather. Malaysian food, most likely the first thing any Malaysian will miss about their country, is very diverse and forms the heart of the culture. Fortunately Edmund had a chance to enjoy the diversity and abundance of the Malaysian delicacies during his recent visit for the Chinese New Year.

Looking at professional differences between Malaysia and Finland, Edmund enjoys the open-mindedness and seasonal trends of the Finnish restaurant culture. As an Asian, he was first intimidated about coming and 'telling Europeans what wines they should choose', and felt he had to work twice as hard to be on par with European sommeliers. However he soon noticed that, whereas in Asia there



is often a tendency of scepticism towards a sommelier's recommendations, Finns are more open-minded and willing to receive recommendations and to try new things. Another positive difference Edmund noticed is the changing seasons and the trend of celebrating seasonal or festive foods at different times of year such as mämmi (rye Easter dessert) or sima (first of May drink), different types of fish according to the

season, game delicacy of reindeer in the winter, and root vegetables in the winter or spring vegetables such as asparagus in the spring. At Sinne he likes to embrace these seasonal trends, develop them into something slightly original, and pair the wines accordingly, which he is most excited about. The seasonal variance in customer preferences that he has remarked in Finland such as wanting to enjoy rosé wine in the summer or glögi in the winter, makes his work at the same time more challenging as well as exciting. Edmund himself enjoys learning about different cultures through tasting local delicacies and getting to know the stories behind them, for example he recently sampled a classic Finnish dish Vorschmack (minced meat, anchovies or herring and onions), known as one of the favourite appetizers of the Finnish Marshall Mannerheim. This characteristic of embracing local culture and being open-minded is something Edmund has noticed to be important to getting on and making the most of living in a new country.

The young sommelier competition, which Edmund Liew won in March 2016, is organised by the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs international gastronomy association. The participants include wine industry professionals aged 21-30 working in Finland. He will next be representing Finland at the international young sommelier competition (Concours des Jeunes Sommeliers) in Vaduz, Liechtenstein in August.

## **8. Upcoming events**

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

### **ASEAN investment seminar**

The Embassy of Malaysia is planning an ASEAN business seminar together with MIDA, MATRADE and Finncham in spring 2016. For more information, please contact Ms. Jerlene Lee Wallenius, [consular@malaysianembassy.fi](mailto:consular@malaysianembassy.fi).

### **Exchange students alumni network**

The Embassy is establishing a network for former Finnish exchange students alumni to improve connections with the Embassy and information sharing for new exchange students going to Malaysia. If you would like to be included in the database, please contact Ms. Jerlene Lee Wallenius, [consular@malaysianembassy.fi](mailto:consular@malaysianembassy.fi).

### **Bloggers gathering**

In spring 2016 we are planning an informal gathering for bloggers. For more details

please contact Ms. Satu Spratley, [interpreter@malaysianembassy.fi](mailto:interpreter@malaysianembassy.fi).

\*\* \*\*

## **9. Ambassador's observations**

As part of the efforts of strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries HE Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia is also eager to support the promotion of the Finland brand to Malaysians. She has noted down the below list, which highlights ten "S"s Finland is famous for.

### **10/10 FAMOUSLY FINLAND**

1. SAUNA
2. SNOW
3. SANTA
4. SALMON
5. SCHOOL
6. SAFETY
7. SKI
8. "SLUSH"
9. SUMMER COTTAGE
10. START-UP

\*\* \*\*

This concludes Issue 2/2016 of our newsletter. The next issue will appear in August 2016.

**See you then!**

*Copyright © 2016 Embassy of Malaysia, Helsinki, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

MailChimp



Facebook



LinkedIn



Email



Our website