



EMBASSY OF MALAYSIA HELSINKI NEWSLETTER
Inaugural Issue of the Quarterly Newsletter
(July-September 2015)

Greetings from the Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki!

Autumn has arrived in Finland and we are gearing up to the last quarter of the year. As part of our efforts to increase the visibility of Malaysia in Finland and further engage with our stakeholders, the Embassy is initiating quarterly newsletters aimed at sharing news information about our activities with cooperation partners, the Malaysian community and Friends of Malaysia in Finland as well as other Malaysian Embassies globally.

The Newsletters will include updates on Embassy activities, upcoming events as well as overviews on current affairs in Finland, Estonia and Latvia. To provide you an insight into the Embassy's work, the newsletter will also feature introductions to our local staff.

The Embassy has further developed its social media presence and more frequent updates on our activities can be followed on our [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) accounts. Please see the links found at the bottom of this newsletter and do connect with us online!

We look forward to future cooperation in promoting fruitful relations between Malaysia and Finland. 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

1. Quaterly events and visits review

The Third quarter, July-September 2015, included a variety of events and activities ranging from cultural cooperation, community events as well as business promotion and delegation visits to Finland.

The month of July included the second half of Ramadan, followed by the Eid-al-Fitr celebrations. For the Muslim members of the Embassy staff this meant fasting for nearly 22 hours since the summer months in Finland, due to its northern location, include white nights with almost around the clock daylight.

Cultural cooperation

The **15th World Gymnaestrada 2015** was held in Helsinki 12-18 and we were proud to have a Malaysian delegation from Sabah participating in the international gymnasts event for the first time. We also had members of the Royal Family of Pahang attending the **Annual Meeting of the Olave Baden Power society** in Tampere on 5-9 August.



Visit by the Sabah Gymnaestrada team at the Embassy in July



Arrival of the members of the Royal Family of Pahang to Finland

Community engagement

The Embassy hosted a **Majlis Bersama Rakyat Malaysia** – event on 1 August 2015, aimed at forging closer relations between the Embassy and Malaysians living in Helsinki.

August also included the commemoration on the **48th ASEAN Day**, hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Helsinki this year as the current chair country of the ASEAN Helsinki Committee. The celebrations consisted of the ASEAN Flag Raising Day Ceremony on 12 August and the ASEAN Family Day on 30 August at the Chancery of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Helsinki. The ASEAN Helsinki Committee (AHC) consists of Ambassadors of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam (ASEAN Embassies residing in Helsinki).

The status of bilateral relations between Finland and Malaysia was discussed at traditional **Ambassadorial Luncheon** hosted by the Finland-Malaysia Association on 14 August 2015 at Ravintola Perho. Speeches were given by H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia and H.E. Mr Matti Pullinen Ambassador of Finland to Malaysia on current situations in both countries.



Majlis Bersama Rakyat Malaysia at the Ambassador's Residence in August 2015



ASEAN Helsinki Committee Ambassadors at the ASEAN Flag Raising Ceremony

Business promotion, palm oil seminar and education visit

InvestPerak visited Finland in September to meet with local companies. The state of Perak, in the north of Peninsular Malaysia, is focusing on developing knowledge-based and high-technology industries and is interested in attracting Finnish companies.

On 10 September the Embassy organized a seminar in Helsinki together with **the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB)** discussing the current trends in the world market for palm oil in terms of opportunities and challenges. The seminar was a success with lively discussion and participation by ASEAN Ambassadors, the Ambassador of India, Finnwatch, and Unilever representatives, among others. The main speaker of the event was Dr. Kalanithi Nesaretnam, who is based in the MPOB office in Brussels, Belgium.

We also had the **Negeri Sembilan State Education Department** visiting Finland in September to learn about the Finnish education system, teacher training in Finland and the school learning environment. Education is one of the key areas of cooperation between Finland and Malaysia with potential for valuable exchanges in information and experiences.



Visit by the Negeri Sembilan State Education Department



MPOB seminar discussing the current trends in the world market for palm oil

POLITICAL COOPERATION

In her role as the Chair of the **Asian Ambassadors Group**, H.E. Dato Blance Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia hosted a luncheon at the Malaysian restaurant Borneo in Lauttasaari, Helsinki on 14 September 2015 with Mr Kimmo Lahdevirta, Director General for the Americas and Asia as the Guest of Honour.

A reception was hosted on the occasion of the **58th National Day of Malaysia** for the diplomatic community and official cooperation partners in Finland on 18 September 2015. The National Day of Malaysia commemorates the independence of the Federation of Malaya from British colonial rule in 1957, and is celebrated on 31 August each year.



58th National Day of Malaysia reception



Asian Ambassadors Group luncheon at the Malaysian restaurant Borneo in Lauttasaari

2. Bilateral Trade

The promotion of bilateral relations between Finland and Malaysia focuses primarily on trade and business relations, educational exchanges as well as tourism.

We have been pleased to observe Finnish companies looking at Malaysia as a viable location and as a regional hub in Southeast Asia.

Finnish manufacturer of welding equipment, **Kemppi** has sent its CEO, Mr. Anssi Rantasalo to Kuala Lumpur in support of growing the company's operations in the region.

Finnish tracking device manufacturing company, **Tramigo** announced in August it is launching a Global Manufacturing and Logisticd Hub in Penang, Malaysia, in a joint-venture with its local partner EG Industries.

Finland's presence in Malaysia will be further strengthened with the contribution of Finnish elevator company **Kone**, due to supply elevators to the upcoming Sky Park development in Cyberjaya.

We are also happy that Finland is boosting its promotion activities in Malaysia with the appointment of the new **Finpro Regional Director** Mr. Juha Miikkulainen, based at the Finnish Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, who started in his position in September.

In Finland in turn, we welcome the recent establishment of the **Malaysian Business Council** (MBC), headed by Ms. Anita Navaratnam, aimed at promoting business relations between the two countries. In the future we hope to further enhance cooperation with the MBC as well as the Finland-Malaysia Association in the engagement of bilateral affairs in Finland.

3. Finland current affairs

The latest Finnish Government was appointed on 29 May and is led by the Centre party leader Prime Minister Juha Sipila. The government consists of a coalition of the three largest parties according to the April election results: the Centre Party (Keskusta), the Finns Party (Perrussuomalaiset) and the National Coalition Party (Kokoomus).

The Finnish Government has recently announced its budget and plans for the term. The government has been faced with difficult decisions in the current economic climate, on one hand coming up with measures to reduce the amount of public debt while at the same time aiming to promote growth.

In the foreign policy domain, topical Finnish concerns include the EU refugee quota negotiations, Russians relations and the Ukrainian crisis, the Greek bailout negotiations, and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations, among others.

From the Malaysian perspective, we were pleased to see Finland's priorities with regard to Malaysia defined in Finland's Action Plan for Southeast Asia earlier in the year. We hope the defining of the action plan will provide fruitful ground for fostering our relations further. Areas of interest from the Malaysian perspective in Finland include further promotion of business and trade relations, educational exchanges and people-to-people cooperation, information sharing and exchanges in ICT and clean technologies.

4. Estonian overview

Bilateral relations between Estonia and Malaysia have gradually developed since the formal accreditation of the Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki to Estonia in June 2011. Estonian Minister for Economic Affairs and Communications Juhan Parts visited Kuala Lumpur in February 2012 and opened the first honorary consulate in the country.

Since 21 December, 2011, Estonia is represented in Malaysia by Honorary Consul (Colonel) Dato' Harbans Singh. Appointing a Malaysian honorary Consul in Estonia has also been considered.

On 2 July, 2013, the Ambassador of Estonia to Malaysia Abdreas Unga represented his credentials to King Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah. The Estonian Ambassador resides in Tallinn. Ambassador Blance Olbery was accredited to Estonia in March 2014.

A new Estonian Foreign Minister Ms. Marina Kaljurand was appointed in July. Ms. Kaljurand is a career diplomat.

The Estonian government has increased its efforts to boost exports and investment with the development of a Global Estonia network.

Estonia is a forerunner in the ICT industry with a highly developed e-governance and electronic services. From 1 December 2014, Estonia became the first country in the world to start a supranational e-residency scheme, offering foreigners e-residency in Estonia. This is an area of interest from the Malaysian perspective to learn from.

5. Latvian overview

The Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki has monitored Latvia since 2010. Ambassador Blance Olbery was accredited to Latvia in April 2014.

Mr Idris Jusoh Minister for Education of Malaysia attended the 5th ASEM Education Minister's Meeting (ASEMME5) during Latvia's EU Presidency on 27-28 April 2015 in Riga, Latvia.

On 14 September, the Ambassador of Latvia, Peteris Vaivars, presented his credentials to the King of Malaysia, his Majesty Almu'tasimu Billahi Muhibbuddin Tunku Alhaj Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah Ibni Almarhum Sultan Badlishah, the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia XIV. Peteris Vaivars is the first Latvian Ambassador to Malaysia and resides in Riga. He is Deputy State Secretary and Administrative Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia accredited to Latvia attended the annual Heads of Mission trip to Latvia on 24-25 September. This year's regional visit was to Daugavpils and areas near the Latvian-Belarusian border. The trip included a visit to Latvia's largest regional university and its campus as well as meetings with companies from Daugavpils and the surrounding area. The event was organised by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr Andrejs Pildegovičs to promote cooperation in the field of tourism, education, business and culture.

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.

In this first issue we will begin with the introduction of Ms. Satu Spratley, Senior Communications Officer. Satu has been with the Embassy since 2009 and is currently responsible for communications related matters. She is tasked with keeping the Malaysian Embassy's diplomats informed with developments in Finland from the local perspective, as well as most recently developing the Embassy's external communications and visibility in Finland.



Satu has a background in international relations. She completed her university degrees in the United Kingdom, at King's College London and the University of Sussex. Prior to joining the Embassy Satu worked at the Finnish Foreign Ministry's political department.

Working at the Embassy has provided Satu with an insight into the world of diplomacy in practice. The Embassy has introduced her to Malaysian culture and the Southeast Asian region on the whole, as well as giving her the unique opportunity of looking at Finland from an outsider's perspective, with Malaysian interests in mind. In Malaysia, Satu admires the community spirit and friendliness, the jovial people, and their passion and pride towards good food. She has visited Kuala Lumpur once and plans to visit the Borneo in the not too distant future.

Please feel free to be in touch with Satu in matters related to the Embassy's external communications, visibility and local stakeholder contacts.

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7. Upcoming events

This section provides an overview of some of our activities and events in the final quarter of 2015. Save the date for our upcoming events.

Visit by the Chief Secretary to Finland

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Malaysia, Tan Sri Dr. Ali Hamsa is visiting Finland for the 34th Meeting of Senior Officials from Centres of Government at the end of October 2015.

Seminar on doing business in Malaysia

The Embassy of Malaysia will organize a seminar in Helsinki on 28 October with current information on how to do business in Malaysia. The speakers include representatives from MIDA Stockholm, MATRADE Rotterdam and Finnpartnership.

For more information on the seminar, please contact Ms. Jerlene Lee Wallenius, consular@malaysianembassy.fi.

Christmas party

Save the date for the traditional Embassy Little Christmas party (pikkujoulut) for the Malaysian community and Friends of Malaysia, due to be organized on 12 December 2015. Invitations are to be sent later this autumn.

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8. People-to-people diplomacy

At the people-to-people level of inter-cultural exchanges during the quarter of review, on 23 July H.U. Dato' Blanche Olbery had the pleasure of experiencing a Malaysian-Finnish summer wedding and the opportunity to meet with relatives from both sides of the family, including Malaysian families who had come all the way to Finland for the wedding, some of them for the first time.

The month of September has also seen many friends of Ambassador Blance Olbery visiting the Embassy, getting to know Finland, Porvoo and Tallin, contributing to the exchanges of awareness between the two countries.

At the friendly diplomacy level, in September Ambassador Olbery enjoyed attending for the second time the now traditional annual mushroom picking event for diplomats organized by the Polish Ambassador, an opportunity to get acquainted with the autumnal Finnish tradition and learning about the different mushrooms that grow in the Finnish forests.

This concludes the inaugural issue of our newsletter. The next issue will appear in January 2016.

Until then, we would like to wish you a successful end of the year!

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