

'No need to debate EU-Malaysia FTA'
Malaysiakini.com
October 28, 2010

The government will not bring the free trade agreement talks with the European Union to be discussed in Parliament.

mtuc syabas pc 091007 charles santiago Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Jacob Dungau Sagan said this in response to Klang DAP parliamentarian Charles Santiago's question on the government's preparation in commencing the Malaysia-European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (MEUFTA) talks.

Santiago (right) also asked whether the government has done cost quality analysis and consultation before going into the agreement.

The deputy minister replied that the free trade agreement is to foster bilateral relations with the EU and to ensure that the country does not lose its competitive edge.

jacob dungau sagan 101008 "Most of the countries under the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean) have established bilateral ties with the EU and if Malaysia does not commence negotiations there will be negative impact on the country," said Sagan (left).

"Before deciding to go ahead with the FTA with the EU, we had a series of roundtable discussions with various parties including ministries, the private sector and the small and medium industries," said Sagan, who is also the Beram MP.

He added that stakeholders were supportive of the idea and encouraged Malaysia to begin the agreement process which is to be held from Dec 6 to 9.

Santiago then, in a supplementary question, further pushed for an answer why the FTA consultation process cannot be debated in Parliament and demanded to know if the documents were classified under the Official Secrets Act (OSA).

'Issues linked to irregularity takings'

"These issues are linked to irregularity takings - which means if the investors in Europe find that their profit is threatened by our policies... they can drag the government to the International Court and the compensation must be paid by the government," he said.

Furthermore, it affects the sovereignty of the nation and the constitution, he argued, and demanded that for the FTA brought to the House.

However, Sagan replied that there is no necessity for it to be debated as the FTA only needs cabinet approval.

"We don't have to table our in-depth studies in Parliament because we only need the cabinet's approval unlike other countries like the US, where it has to be taken to the Congress and in Thailand they need the approval from Parliament before proceeding," he said.

