

**Malaysian Ambassador Wants To Take Malaysian-German Relations To Next Level**  
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BERLIN, March 23 (Bernama) -- Even though bilateral Malaysian-German relations are good and without any major contentious or thorny issue weighing on it, Malaysia's ambassador to Germany would like to take the relationship to the "next level".

"Nothing is lacking at the moment. Indeed, relations are good between the two countries. The point is not to get complacent with the current status quo but to take relations to the next level," said the ambassador, Datuk Ibrahim Abdullah, in an interview with Bernama at the Malaysian embassy here.

"While we are working on building up a solid relationship with our German friends, the private sector in Malaysia can help by doing more in terms of research and development which is undertaken, mainly, by the government.

'The private sector's involvement in this area will open up new avenues of cooperation for Malaysia's private sector, and forge closer ties with their foreign counterparts, including in Germany where there is great interest in Asia, including the Asean region," he said.

Ibrahim recalled the recent visit to Germany of the Malaysian Minister of Science, Technology and Environment Datuk Seri Maximus Ongkili, though he was here in his capacity as chairman of the parliamentary committee on electoral reforms in order to study the German system.

Ibrahim sees good potential in developing relations in the human context - by augmenting and intensifying not only economic and business ties but also in the fields of culture, science and education.

"There are presently about 700 Malaysian students in Germany. I expect the number of Malaysian students coming here for higher studies to rise in the future," he said.

On the other hand, he added, there was also an increasing number of German students wanting to do internships in Malaysia.

Ibrahim said the dynamic economic growth recorded by a number of Asian countries has made the German industry and also, somewhat belatedly, German politicians realise the importance of having young students brought here for education.

"The rationale is that these German-educated students, when they return to their countries of origin, tend to act as "goodwill ambassadors" of Germany after being vaccinated with what is euphemistically referred to as the "German serum".

"They invariably tend to support forging closer ties, be it between the industries of the two countries, people-to-people, or if they attain some political leadership, promote political ties with German counterparts," he added.

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