



EUROCHAM'S ADVOCACY WORK IN FAVOR OF THE EUSFTA

Progress and achievements

BENEFITS OF THE EUSFTA

The EUSFTA is an ambitious one. Unlike traditional FTAs, this 'new generation' FTA includes a chapter on encouraging sustainable, 'green' growth and development of both economies.

Under the EUSFTA both sides:

- have offered each other much better commitments on services and government procurement
- have agreed on an advanced regulatory framework for many services sectors
- will foster and protect foreign direct investment
- will remove many technical barriers to trade, such as duplicative testing requirements for motor vehicles, electronics or certain green technologies
- remove nearly all customs duties and get rid of overlapping bureaucracy
- will facilitate meat exports based on modern audits of national systems
- have agreed on a high level of protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights as well as, based on a register of geographical indications (GI), a higher level of GI protection
- have also made a special effort to use the EUSFTA as a means to stimulate green growth in Europe and Singapore

EUROCHAM'S ADVOCACY WORK ON THE EUSFTA

Closed Door Meeting with European Members of Parliament (MEPs) in Singapore (31 January 2018).

EuroCham organised a closed door meeting for its members with MEPs Bernd Lange, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade and David Martin, European Parliament rapporteur on the EU Free Trade Agreement with Singapore on 31st of January 2018 during their visit to Singapore. The agenda of the meeting was focusing on the labour aspects of the FTA, such as i) immigration restrictions, ii) labour conditions of foreign and domestic workers, iii) and issues faced by the industry and last but not least iv) adhesion to international convention including ILO.

EuroCham's breakfast dialogue with 16 European MEPs in Singapore (14 February 2018)

16 Members of the European Parliament from the Friends of Singapore group in the European Parliament were on a working visit to Singapore at the invitation of the Singapore Government. During their visit EuroCham, in collaboration with NTUC, hosted this breakfast event on 14th of February 2018 with the MEPs, alongside EuroCham corporate members. This engagement benefited the mutual knowledge sharing on the future role of HR in Singapore and the region and in particular how the EU-Singapore FTA, once applied, would benefit European businesses and create job opportunities for both our citizens.

Mission to Brussels (23-25 April 2018)

Serving the interests on the business community in Singapore, EuroCham was able to receive feedback from the ground regarding the FTAs. Several multinational corporations (MNCs) gave feedback that they were keen to see the EUSFTA ratified soon, give the manifold benefits that European businesses can take advantage of here in Singapore to grow and develop their business.

Thus, EuroCham, represented by Vice President Mr Francois Guibert and Executive Director Ms Nele Cornelis met with key personnel from various divisions within the European Commission and Parliament in Brussels and diplomats of the Singapore Embassy to the EU. The aim of this mission was to represent the voice of the

European Companies in Singapore for a swift action in the ratification process for the agreement to be implemented by both parties.

The mission also aimed to generate awareness of the importance of the EUSFTA for both Europe and Singapore but also for ASEAN. Trade is an important determinant for achieving economic growth. At a time of weak economic growth and rigorous fiscal consolidation, the EU needs to actively tap into external sources of growth. It is rational that the quest for external demand growth focuses on those global economies with the highest growth potential. The markets in Southeast Asia play a prominent role in that respect.

Joint Statement Letter (2 July 2018)

The mission proved successful as talks about the EUSFTA were revived. This saw the agreement move towards the European Council for the voting phase. The voting phase decides the fate and progress of the EUSFTA. As such, to avoid further delays in the ratification process, EuroCham gathered the support of the European National Business Groups (NBSGs) in Singapore via a Joint Statement Letter to rally the European Council to make swift and decisive action in support of the EUSFTA. The Joint Statement Letter reiterated the economic and political benefits that could be derived and included a section on the geographic importance of the agreement. The letter was also endorsed by Amfori, an association of European and international commerce that promotes the values of free and sustainable trade.

In-Camera & INTA Meetings in Brussels, Belgium (10-11 July 2018)

Between 10th and 11th July 2018, EuroCham represented by Ms Nele Cornelis was also involved in the meetings on the EUSFTA that took place at the European Parliament (EP) in Brussels.

The first meeting on 10th July 2018 was with the EP's Committee on International Trade (INTA) on the EUSFTA. The session included an analysis made by the EU Parliament on the trade agreement and also a presentation by the Directorate-General for External Policies to MEPs on the potential impact of the EUSFTA for the whole economy. During the Q&A session, two comments were repeatedly emphasized by the MEPs:

- 1/ The process of the EUSFTA ratification has taken long time and the EU is thankful that Singapore has been patient and constructive in the discussions towards this 'New generation Free Trade Agreement'
- 2/ Concerns and questions were raised on why the 3 conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) convention are not signed by Singapore.

The second meeting on 11th July 2018 was an in-camera meeting where Ms Nele Cornelis, representing EuroCham, had the opportunity to exchange views with the MEPs on the economic aspects of the FTA, and employers' perspective with the Parliament's monitoring group for Singapore. Her presentation featured facts on Singapore and ASEAN combined with anecdotal testimonials of the European companies in Singapore, multinational corporations and Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) on how they could benefit from the FTA.

In the debate afterwards no new alarming elements were raised and the questions were rather targeted at the economic provisions of the FTA. The MEPs very much appreciated the concrete examples and testimonials that were presented by Ms Cornelis. A copy of EuroCham's presentation was disseminated amongst the attendees.

