



European Union
Delegation to Singapore

EUROPE DAY 2026

Speech by the EU Ambassador to Singapore Artis Bērtulis

Singapore, 6th May

Your Excellency, Minister Jeffrey Siow, Acting Minister for Transport and Senior Minister of State for Finance

Deputy Speaker Christopher de Souza and Ms Nadia Ahmad Samdin,

Fellow Ambassadors, Team Europe Ambassadors, Distinguished Guests, Dear Friends,

Welcome to Europe Day - a celebration not only of Europe's journey but of the deep and vibrant friendship that binds the European Union to Singapore and to the wider ASEAN region and celebrates the depth and dynamism of the EU-Singapore relationship.

For my wife, Esmeralda, and I, this is our first Europe Day in Singapore, and it is a true privilege to share it with all of you.

Seventy-six years ago, on 9th of May, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman proposed a vision that would change the course of history of Europe.

Emerging from the shadows of war, he imagined a Europe where former adversaries could build a future founded on cooperation, democracy, and the rule of law.

That vision - once a daring dream - became the European Union we know today: a union of nations, yes, but more importantly, a union of values.

Yet as we gather here tonight, we do so at a time when those values are being tested.

Around the world, the principles of international law, multilateralism, and mutual respect are under pressure. We face global crisis – from the war in the Middle East to Russia's brutal aggression against Ukraine.

Over the past twelve months, the EU and Singapore have navigated an increasingly uncertain economic environment - one we did not choose, but one we must confront.

Conflicts rage, trust erodes, and the rulebook that has long governed relations between nations sometimes feels - it has been thrown out of the window.

In such a world, we face a choice: to stand by as these foundations weaken or to stand together in their defence.

The European Union has chosen to act—not alone, but alongside partners who share our commitment to stability, openness, and justice.

And in that endeavour, few partners are as vital, or as aligned with our vision, as Singapore and the nations of ASEAN with whom we have built a relationship defined by ambition and action.



Singapore, in many ways, is a natural partner for Europe. Like the EU, this nation has built its success on the belief that diversity is a strength, that rules create predictability, and that prosperity is best shared.

Our economic ties tell this story clearly. Each year, we exchange some 200 billion Sing-dollars in goods and services, making the EU one of Singapore's largest trading partners and a leading source - and destination - of investment.

Our relationship extends far beyond trade. It is a partnership of purpose—one that thrives in the digital realm, where our newly implemented Digital Trade Agreement sets regional and global standards for cross-border data flows.

We are united in the fight against cyber threats and disinformation, where we stand together to protect the integrity of our democracies; and in the urgent battle against climate change, where our shared ambition is turning vision into action and we do not just adapt to change; together we shape it.

This year, as Singapore prepares to assume the chairmanship of ASEAN, and as we approach the 50th anniversary of the EU-ASEAN Dialogue Partnership, our cooperation takes on even greater significance.

The EU is proud to be ASEAN's third-largest trading partner and a key investor in the region's future. Together, we are advancing security through collaboration on counterterrorism, maritime safety, and cyber resilience, while also supporting sustainable connectivity projects that will bind our regions closer than ever.

The ASEAN Power Grid, for instance, holds immense promise for a cleaner, more interconnected energy future, and the EU stands ready to contribute.

Meanwhile, the provisional application of the ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement is already delivering tangible benefits, making travel and trade easier for our people and our businesses.

Yet for all we have achieved, the greatest potential of our partnership still lies ahead.

The challenges of our time—geopolitical tensions, economic fragmentation, and the climate crisis—demand that we deepen our cooperation, not retreat from it. The EU and Singapore must continue to lead by example, showing the world that openness and multilateralism are not relics of the past but the cornerstones of a stable and prosperous future.

So, what does that future look like? It begins with strengthening our economic ties, ensuring that trade remains a force for good—creating jobs, fostering innovation, and lifting standards across our regions.

The EU's market of 450 million citizens offers stability and opportunity, and we invite Singapore's businesses to be part of this journey, benefiting from the predictability and fairness that the rule of law provides.

Our cooperation extends to accelerating the green transition, where the EU's Green Deal and Singapore's Green Plan 2030 can drive mutual progress in sustainable finance, renewable energy, and circular economies.

Most importantly, our future depends on people. That is why I encourage Singapore's students, researchers, and entrepreneurs to look to Europe—not just as a destination for travel, though our diverse landscapes and cultures await you, but as a place to study, innovate, and grow.

Our universities and research institutions are among the best in the world, and with initiatives like the Singapore-Horizon Europe Complementary Fund, announced last December by Chairman, Excellency Heng Swee Keat, (who is tonight here with us), we are creating new opportunities for collaboration that will shape the world of tomorrow.

Dear friends,

On a personal note, my time in Singapore so far has been nothing short of inspiring. From climbing Bukit Timah to walking the lush trails of Rail Corridor; or exploring the vibrant energy of your neighbourhoods, this is a nation that embraces both tradition and progress with equal enthusiasm.

But what has impressed me most is the people—their pragmatism, their warmth, and their unwavering belief in a future built on cooperation.

It is this very spirit—this blend of pragmatism, openness, and forward-thinking ambition—that makes Singapore such a natural and trusted partner for Europe.

And it is why I am so confident in what we can achieve together.

To the colleagues across Singapore’s ministries, agencies, and civil society: thank you for your partnership. Your dedication makes our work not just possible, but consequential.



To my fellow EU ambassadors and their teams - now representing 20 EU Member States here in Singapore - your collaboration embodies the strength of Team Europe.

And to all my fellow EU citizens here tonight—thank you for being part of this celebration! You carry our Union’s values with you, and your presence makes this Europe Day even more meaningful.

To the wider diplomatic community, thank you for your friendship and support.

A special thank you to the German European School Singapore - GESS - for their wonderful partnership and for tonight’s beautiful rendition of our anthems. Your talent and enthusiasm truly bring this celebration to life.

And to our sponsors - Airbus, BNP Paribas, EuroCham Singapore, and all those who have contributed so generously - your belief in the value of our partnership makes evenings like this possible.

Thank you to our in-kind sponsors: Backshop Asia and BeerCellar Asia; Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma; Sedno; Ecolah; Agora Products; Copenhagen Distillery, and BlueWhale.

Finally, to my extraordinary team at the EU Delegation: you are the heart of our mission here.

Your hard work, creativity, and commitment bring Europe closer to Singapore every day. Tonight, I am grateful to each one of you; and I'd like to extend a special thanks to the Coordination Team for their tireless efforts. Thank you, Olivier, Deepika, Jean-Pierre, and Maria!

Minister Jeffrey Siow, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

As we now listen to the National Anthem of the Republic of Singapore, performed so beautifully by the students at the German European School, let us reflect on the values that unite us: a belief in peace, in progress, and in the power of partnership.

Following the anthem, I propose a toast to His Excellency, President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, and to the people of Singapore

Thank you for being here tonight. Happy Europe Day!

