



**For Immediate Release:**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan Reiterates Importance of Singapore-EU Partnership Amidst An Increasingly Fragmented and Volatile World at EuroCham's Annual General Meeting**

*EuroCham Singapore's AGM brings together public and private sector leaders to drive practical outcomes for EU-Singapore business cooperation.*

**Singapore, 29 April 2026:** The European Chamber of Commerce (EuroCham) Singapore held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) today, welcoming Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs, as Guest of Honour.

The AGM, held at Amara Hotel, brought together representatives from EuroCham's Board of Governors, senior government officials, diplomatic stakeholders, and members. Including, H.E. Artis Bertulis, Ambassador of the European Union to Singapore. The AGM also marked the lead-up to EuroCham's 25th anniversary in 2026, reflecting its role as the voice of European business in Singapore and its contribution to strengthening EU-Singapore business partnerships.

Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs in Singapore, delivered an address and engaged in a fireside discussion with EuroCham President, Jens Rübber, where they discussed global geopolitical and economic tensions, their impact on Singapore, and the evolving role of EU-Singapore partnerships, resilience, and future opportunities for businesses. The conversation comes at a significant moment, as both sides look ahead to 2027, marking 60 years of ASEAN and the 50th anniversary of EU-ASEAN Dialogue Relations.

Following his attendance at the 25th ASEAN-European Union Ministerial Meeting in Brunei Darussalam from 27 to 28 April 2026, Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vivian Balakrishnan, spoke about the growing need and opportunity for deeper collaboration between the EU and Southeast Asia.

In his address ahead of the fireside chat, Dr Balakrishnan said, *"The key point for the principle of consensus and deliberations is when you're dealing with such diversity, getting everyone on board is critical, otherwise, you can make grand announcements - but you can't make it stick."*

He also emphasised, *"What I would like is to accelerate EU-ASEAN free trade agreements"*.

Speaking about alignment between the EU and Southeast Asia, the Minister said, *"We all still believe in the rule of law, that alignment creates quite a natural partnership, because the rest of the world is being disrupted, globalisation is under pressure, free trade is being dismantled, it calls for even more doubling down on this collective approach between the EU and Southeast Asia"*.

Adding to this, EuroCham President Jens Rübbert encouraged more communications in Europe around the value of globalisation and free trade, stating, *“at the end of the day, there’s no alternative”*.

In his welcome address at the AGM, H.E. Artis Bertulis, Ambassador of the European Union to Singapore, spoke about the strength of the EU–Singapore partnership, adding *“Above all, this cooperation is creating jobs, driving innovation, and generating wealth on both sides. Our partnership extends far beyond trade. In the digital realm, the EU–Singapore Digital Partnership provides a platform to ensure that future technologies benefit our societies and support our shared prosperity. On the green transition, Singapore’s Green Plan 2030 and the EU’s Green Deal offer complementary visions for a more sustainable future. We are already collaborating on decarbonisation. Renewable energy and sustainable aviation fuels are areas where European and Singaporean companies can lead the world together.”*

He continued, *“The EU and Singapore have navigated an increasingly uncertain economic environment, one we did not choose, but one we must confront. The rules-based international order has come under severe strain. Wars, energy shortages, and the weaponisation of trade have tested our resilience. But in these trials, we have seen the strength of our partnership.”*

Marking 25 years as the voice of European Business in Singapore and business partnership between EU-Singapore, EuroCham Singapore also unveiled its evolved brand identity and a new website at the AGM, signalling its next phase of growth.

President Jens Rübbert said the changes reflect *“both who we are today and where we are heading.”*

He added that the Chamber will continue to deepen its focus on thought leadership, meaningful industry dialogue, and stronger public-private engagement by prioritising areas critical to its members, stating, *“Our role (EuroCham Singapore) has never been more relevant. We have seen strong engagement across our Committees, deeper collaboration with government agencies, and a growing demand for meaningful, outcome-driven discussions... our collective efforts are contributing to conversations that matter, not just for Europe, but for the broader ASEAN region.”*

**ENDS**

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### **About H.E. Artis Bertulis, Ambassador of the European Union to Singapore:**

Ambassador of the European Union (EU) Delegation to Singapore Artis Bertulis assumed office on 1st September 2025. Ambassador Bertulis is a career diplomat, who has held several key postings including as:

- EU Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau (2022-August 2025),
- Ambassador of Latvia to India (2018–2022), with accreditation to Sri Lanka,
- Ambassador of Latvia to Italy (2013–2018), with accreditation to Albania, Malta, and San Marino, and as Permanent Representative to the FAO,
- Ambassador of Latvia to Portugal (2007–2011), with accreditation as Ambassador to Brazil (2008–2011),
- Ambassador of Latvia to Sweden (2001–2005).

From 2011 to 2013, he served as Director General for EU Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, working closely with the Prime Minister on Latvia's successful adoption of the Euro. He served as Foreign Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister of Latvia in 1994 and continued as Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs until 1998. He was appointed Head of the State Protocol twice, from 1998 to 2001 and again from 2005 to 2007. Ambassador Bertulis began his diplomatic career in 1991 as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the newly independent Latvian Parliament. In 1992, he served as a research assistant at the North Atlantic Assembly in Brussels, and the following year joined the Latvian Foreign Service. He has a Master's degree in Physics. He completed postgraduate studies in international affairs at the University of Latvia and the Royal College of Defence Studies in London. Ambassador Bertulis is fluent in English, Italian, Swedish, Portuguese and Russian, and has a working knowledge of French.

### **About Mr Jens Rübberdt, President of EuroCham Singapore:**

Mr Jens Rübberdt is the President of the European Chamber of Commerce, Singapore and the Managing Director & Regional Head for Asia Pacific at Landesbank Baden-Württemberg (LBBW).

Jens has been a senior banker for 33 years and has 20 years of experience in the Asian financial market. Currently, he is the Managing Director & Regional Head for Asia/Pacific of LBBW, one of Germany's largest banks. Previously, Jens was with Deutsche Bank for 27 years in several senior positions across various regions including Germany, Turkey, Hong Kong, Singapore, China and Vietnam.

He has also held positions as Vice Chairman of EuroCham China (2011 – 2014), Chairman of GBA Vietnam, (2015 – 2017), Chairman of EuroCham Vietnam (2017), and President of the Singaporean German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (2020 – 2023). Jens is the current Chairman of the EU ASEAN Business Council. He holds a degree in business administration and was awarded Germany's Federal Order of Merit in 2021.

### **About European Chamber of Commerce, Singapore (EuroCham Singapore):**

Celebrating 25 years of being the voice of European Business in Singapore, EuroCham Singapore is an independent non-profit organisation governed by members, representing the common interest of the European business community in promoting bilateral trade, services, and investments between Europe and Singapore and the region. EuroCham Singapore represents the voice of the European business community in Singapore. We provide our members with a forum for advocacy, networking, and information sharing within the European and Singaporean business communities and governmental circles. Visit EuroCham Singapore at <https://eurocham.org.sg/>