

Press release

## **Conference on the Thai-Channel on 11 September 2017**

The EABC is the European Chamber of Commerce in Thailand. The unified voice of all European Companies and Chambers in Thailand.

However, the Thai laws do not allow us to call ourselves the Chamber of Commerce because the European Union is not a nation.

We are working very closely with the Thai government, supported by the delegation of the European Union and the bilateral Chambers, with our 11 advocacy groups. Our Rail & Road Infrastructure group, where I serve as a chairman, deals with transport infrastructure, including waterways.

We are firmly convinced that the expansion of the infrastructure in general is very important for the future growth of the Thai export industry. We strive to bring European know-how to Thailand.

This also seems very important to us, as we have great concerns. Some projects, particularly in the railway sector, run the risk of ending in an economic fiasco due to the lack of consideration of the costs of operation and maintenance.

This is different with the Thai channel, as we can see at many other places in the world. All similar construction projects in other countries are extremely successful in the long term.

As the canal offers tremendous advantages for freight traffic between Eastern Asia, Japan and China, and the West, India and Europe, we are sure that international shipping is willing to pay appropriate charges.

Therefore, we can only recommend the Thai government to issue a current feasibility study as soon as possible.

It must be remembered that the channel will not only offer international transport advantages, but also create a lot of jobs in the south of Thailand, both in the construction of the canal as well as in operation.

We are also sure that the construction of the canal will bring a lot of new industrial investments in the region.

The channel will also mean a relief for the Malacca road. This shipping route is already overloaded and will certainly not be able to absorb the future growth of shipping traffic without huge problems.

Of course, the Thai channel is mainly concerned with transit cargo traffic, but also the most important ports in Thailand, ie Laem Chabang and Bangkok, would be reachable quicker and more cost-effective, too.


The port of Dawei, which will play a very important role in the Thai trade in the future, will certainly benefit greatly, as it will be much better reachable from the East. Without the canal only goods from the West will land there.

For feeding the south and also our southern neighbors, a deep-sea port connected with the canal would certainly offer a huge development potential.

In summary, we believe the Thai-Channel project shall have a high priority for the government, even if or because the implementation will take a long period of time.

Therefore, we would like to thank the organizers of the Thai Channel Conference on 11 September for their initiative and we are looking forward to supporting the project.

Bangkok, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017



(Georg M. Wolff)

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