

EU-ASEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL MISSION TRIP

EABC President points for PM /DPM v.-b

Monday 17 Feb 2020

Your Excellencies:

EABC acts as a European Chamber in Thailand. It is a privilege to have this audience. We would like to highlight two matters.

Firstly, Thailand-EU Free Trade Agreement

The FTA is long discussed.

Europe offers a rules-based world trading order which gives predictability and underscores the importance of the trade and investment relationship.

A meaningful FTA will bring mutual advantage. Vietnam for example will surely enjoy benefits. We very much look forward to the right circumstances so that negotiations can re-commence.

Liberalization of the Service sector will be part of such FTA supporting economic growth and Foreign Direct Investment in Thailand.

Secondly, Regulatory reforms, the so-called Guillotine project

Credit to your government for recognising the importance of reforming regulatory machinery. No amount of incentives or other very positive factors for doing business in the Kingdom can overcome some of the recognised challenges with removing unnecessary regulatory burdens.

But in the review of Licences, progress has stalled. Over 1,000 have been identified and should be ready for implementation. There seems to be some resistance, in spite of large efforts by Your Excellency's team, only a few relatively minor licences with little economic impact have been addressed. The foreign business community contributed about 100 recommendations.

If we are to have a chance of realising the Thailand 4.0 vision in our lifetimes, the pace of regulatory reform would need to be faster and deeper. We very much commend to you the value of making this project really work and offer all support for this important project to further improve Ease of Doing Business and strengthen of the Thai economy.