

# EABC ACTIVITY REPORT 2024



## European Association for Business and Commerce (the European Chamber of Commerce Thailand)

The Activity Report 2024 aims to give a fair, balanced and accurate sample of relevant EABC activity. EABC's core business is Advocacy. Advocacy involves developing recommendations (positions), aiming to build consensus in the foreign business community, supporting bilateral European chambers; dialogue with government agencies backed up by written submissions and participation in conferences, seminars, workshops, trade fairs in Thailand and regionally. The overall objective is about enhancing the volume and quality of trade between Thailand and Europe, and Investment. EABC's Advocacy Development Group and Working Group Chairs have been a catalyst for the advancement of effective advocacy.



The EABC Activity Report 2024 is in three parts:

1. General Advocacy Dialogue and Events
2. Working Group by subject matter
3. EABC Affairs

### General Advocacy Dialogues and Events

- EU Delegation
- EU-ASEAN Business Council
- EBO Thailand
- Department of Business Development
- BOI
- OECD
- OCS
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### Working Group by subject matter (selected events only)

- Automotive
- Cross Sectoral Issues (CSI)
- Digital Economy/ICT
- Energy
- Food, Agriculture and Beverages
- Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals
- Insurance
- Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)
- Tourism
- Transport And Logistics

### EABC Affairs

- Annual General Meeting & Joint Networking Event 2024
- EABC Joint European Networking event
- Phuket Networking
- EABC Breakfast Talk: Economic Recovery, Strategic Insights, and Investment Opportunities for European Businesses.
- EABC Luncheon Seminar: "Progress and Prospects in the EU-Thailand FTA Negotiations"
- FTA Survey Report

## GENERAL ADVOCACY DIALOGUES, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS



Meeting with OECD on 16 January 2024



On 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024, EABC representatives led by Mr. Bob Fox, Board Member and a Chair of Digital Economy/ICT Working Group, Mr. Anthony Høglund, Board Member and a Chair of Tourism Working Group, Mr. Matthew Grose, a Chair of Insurance Working Group and Dr. Charanya Nopnukulvisud, Operations Director had a meeting with the OECD on the corporate governance of state-owned enterprises at EABC office. The meeting was a part of OECD final policy mission in Bangkok, which is part of Phase II of the OECD-Thailand Country Programme.



On 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024, Mr. Bob Fox, Board Member and Chair of the Digital Economy/ICT Working Group, along with Dr. Charanya Nopnukulvisud Operations Director, participated in The 3rd Annual Sustainability Week Asia at The Athenee Hotel. The event, taking place from March 11th to 13th in Bangkok, gathers 4,000 sustainability leaders to address pressing issues such as climate change, social justice, and sustainable financing.



On 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024, representatives from EABC attended the "NET ZERO, WITH INTEGRITY" seminar organized by the Thai-Finnish Chamber of Commerce and JFCCCT at the Pacific City Club. EABC was a Supporter. The event was held in collaboration with the Finnish Embassy in Thailand, featured a keynote address by Mr. Ville Tavio, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, who highlighted Finland's climate journey and commitment to net zero goals, emphasizing international collaboration and opportunities in Southeast Asia.

The seminar underscored the imperative of integrity in the journey to a Net Zero state, emphasizing the importance of consistency in measurement and reporting to combat greenwashing practices and help companies in their decarbonisation journeys, and to promote confidence in Thailand as a green investment destination.

Mr. Bob Fox, EABC Board Director and Chair of the Digital Economy/ICT Working Group (and Head of JFCCCT's Climate Group), curated and moderated the event (with some questions via Pigeonhole), providing an overview of the concept of Net Zero with Integrity and its bases.

The seminar also featured insights from four other distinguished speakers:

- Mr. Thachatat Kuvarakul from The Creagy, who discussed Thailand's engagement on climate and the journey to Net Zero, including the Climate Change draft law.
- Dr. Wanwipa Siriwatwechakul from Vectors Capital, who shared insights on climate-focused investments.
- Mr. Petri Paukkunen from Valmet Co, who explored strategies for building a sustainable future through real and effective CO2 emissions reduction.
- Mr Natthaphong, Tantichattanon from KPMG, who discussed measurement, accounting and standards towards building investor confidence.

The event provided a cogent message about the need for integrity in the journey to Net Zero (which all speakers agreed was possible, with focus and intelligent effort), of achieving consensus on standards for measurement and reporting.



From 3-4<sup>th</sup> April 2024, Dr. Charanya Nopnukulvised, Operations Director, represented EBO Thailand at the EBO Sustainability Summit 2024 held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

This summit organized by EuroCham Cambodia with support from GIZ FABRIC. convened representatives from European Chambers of Commerce across 10 Asian nations, along with members of the Responsible Business Hub global network and distinguished trade and sustainability experts. The event provided a dynamic platform for the exchange of knowledge, best practices and future action plans to promote sustainability.



On 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024, we were pleased to attend Europe Day's celebration, organized by the Delegation of the European Union to Thailand. In presence of H.E. Mr David Daly, Ambassador of the European Union to Thailand, this moment was a unique opportunity to celebrate the European values as well as the friendship between EU and Thailand.



On 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024, EABC attended a briefing on Thailand’s Foreign Business Act provided by the Department of Business Development, Ministry of Commerce. The Department updated its proposed revisions to the Foreign Business Act. About ten business activities which had been proposed previously but not removed, are currently under revision to become exempt from the requirement for foreign business approval.

At the briefing, it was announced that in July this year, the Department will launch the e-Foreign Business Service, which will digitalise foreign business registration, with the aim of improving ease of doing business.



On 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024, EABC Development Director Khun Omar Ben Abderahmen, had a fruitful meeting with Ms. Nuntanart Krisanachinda, Director of BOI Paris’ office, with her team, at the Royal Thai Embassy.

This meeting was the opportunity to discuss the business opportunities between Thailand and the European Union, especially France. As EABC key mission is to promote Thailand as an attractive partner for European foreign investment and trade, we are happy to work very closely with different institutions and organisations in Thailand and Europe, so as to foster opportunities for European and Thai businesses.



From 3<sup>rd</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024, Omar Ben Abderahmen represented EABC Thailand for the Annual Meeting of the European Business Organization worldwide network in Brussels.

On top of networking with several colleagues from other European business organizations in the world, especially in ASEAN countries, this week is the opportunity to meet important public stakeholders, such as members of cabinets of European Commissioners and representatives of European administrations.

All these meetings have highlighted the importance of comprehensive Free Trade Agreements to boost both economies. Omar has particularly pointed out the fact that these agreements should benefit to all the economic actors, including the SMEs.



On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024, EABC representatives, including President Mrs. Paranee Adulyapichet, Vice President and Chair of Digital Economy/ICT Mr. Bob Fox, Board Member Mr. Jerome Kelly, and Operations Director Dr. Charanya Nopnukulvised, attended the TEBA Cocktail Reception at U Sathorn Bangkok.

The event featured keynote speeches and valuable insights from distinguished guests, including Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport, H.E. Mr. Suriya Juangroongruangkit, Secretary General of the Thailand Board of Investment (BOI), Mr. Narit Therdsteeerasukdi, and EU Ambassador, H.E. Mr. David Daly. TEBA’s existing Future Mobility white paper was a feature.



On 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024, EABC representatives attended BOI-Foreign Chambers of Commerce in Thailand Consultative Meeting at Queen Sirikit National Convention Center. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Narit Therdsteeerasukdi, Secretary General of the BOI, and Mrs. Vibeke Lyssand Leirvag, Chairwoman of JFCCT. Mr Bob Fox guided the meeting through topics raised by the foreign business community.

This meeting provided a valuable opportunity to discuss issues affecting Thailand’s business environment, particularly service liberalization, work permits, visas, and LTR, including recent BOI measures.





On 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024, EABC organized a Corporate GPT Training at EABC Office. We organized with our member System in Motion, this 3-hour course allowed some of our members to improve their skills engaging with generative AI tools.

On-site exercises combined to theoretical understanding are a unique way to produce results at higher quality and efficiency. Through this kind of activities, EABC -The European Chamber of Commerce Thailand is pleased to be concretely useful to its members.



On 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024, EABC was pleased to have been invited to the Farewell Ceremony of Mr. Petros Sourmelis, Head of the Economic and Trade Section, Delegation of the European Union to Thailand.

The event, hosted by EU Ambassador H.E. Mr. David Daly and his spouse at the EU Ambassador's residence, was a touching moment of both sadness and celebration. We bid farewell to a valued colleague and wished him every success in his future endeavors.

We extend heartfelt thanks for the collaboration and support extended to EABC in the past. We are committed to strengthening Thai-European business relations and look forward to continuing our work with the successor and other colleagues.



On 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024, EABC attended the TCCT Competition Policy Symposium "Looking at the Past and Challenging the Future," hosted by the Trade Competition Commission (TCCT) in collaboration with the International Trade Centre (ITC) under the ARISE Plus Thailand Project at the Renaissance Ratchaprasong Hotel in Bangkok.

In the morning session, representatives from the organizers delivered their remarks. Mr. Yanyong Puangraj, Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister, emphasized Thailand's focus on establishing clear, fair competition regulations and driving independent mechanisms to enable Thai entrepreneurs to compete globally. H.E. Mr. David Daly, Ambassador of the European Union to Thailand, highlighted that adaptive competition policy is essential for the modern economic landscape and that competition drives European businesses to achieve high efficiency. H.E. Dr. Angela Macdonald PSM, Ambassador of Australia, shared insights from the Australian experience of competition policy and collaboration to support competition policy and law reform in Thailand.

In the afternoon, the session covered various topics, including optimal competition policy, economic development, and perspectives from different nations.



On 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024, EABC participated in Delegation of the European Union to Thailand's meeting with the EU Economic and Commercial Counsellors to present the survey report titled "Expectations and Challenges of an EU-Thailand Free Trade Agreement (FTA): Perspectives from European Business in Thailand." The report provides insights into the expectations of European businesses in Thailand regarding the potential FTA. In the meeting, EABC shared the anticipated high-level changes and key topics that the FTA should emphasize.



On 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024, EABC was happy to support its member Tractus to host the “Site Selection Seminar: Finding the Right Manufacturing Location” at Oriental Residence Bangkok.

The event provided valuable guidance on navigating the complexities of choosing the optimal location for manufacturing operations, considering economic, logistical, and strategic factors.



On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024, EABC met with Mr. Tongthong Chandransu, Advisor to the Prime Minister and Chairperson of the Regulatory Reform Committee for Ease of Doing Business at OPDC, which is termed the ‘third generation’ of reform efforts. The meeting focused on updates from the Regulatory Reform Committee on amendments to immigration and labor laws, international trade concerning the MICE industry, and the promotion of clean energy use in business operations.

The participants also discussed draft laws, including the Draft Clean Air Bill and the Draft Alcoholic Beverage Control Bill. EABC reaffirmed its commitment to supporting OPDC in conducting regulatory reforms to improve ease of doing business in the country.



On 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024, EABC representative, Ms. Khemika Ratanakul, attended the 104th Anniversary Celebration of the Ministry of Commerce. This event marked a significant milestone for the Ministry, showcasing its commitment to leveraging soft power to drive growth, accelerate economic recovery, and strengthen Thailand's global trade presence.



On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024, We were delighted to welcome Dr. Frank Feulner, Ms. Puspa Verena, and Ms. Annisa Rasydihartanti from the EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package Higher Education Programme (SCOPE-HE) to our office. Later engagements in October and November about SCOPE-HE advanced these discussions.

Our discussion centered on the importance of aligning vocational education and training programs with labor market needs. SCOPE-HE aims to bridge the skills gap by fostering stronger connections between educational institutions and the private sector, particularly in the sectors of green transition and digitalization.



On 29<sup>th</sup> August 2024, EABC attended the Asia EV Tech Thailand Summit 2024, themed “Plugging into the future with EV mobility.”

The Summit was joined by senior-level executives from car producers, government officials, EV battery producers, and EV technology partners from around the world. It reflected the latest trends, innovations, technologies, and solutions in EV investment, EV design, car engineering, EV technology, battery innovation, charging stations, and readiness for EV transition.



On 19-20<sup>th</sup> September 2024, EABC representatives, led by Ms. Paranee Adulyapichet, EABC President, and Dr. Charanya Nopnukulvised, attended the OCS International Symposium 2024 at the Mandarin Oriental.

This event, themed “Competitive Thailand, Growing Sustainably Together”, delved into the past and present of Thailand's regulatory management regime. It highlighted the essential role that a well-crafted regulatory framework plays in fostering sustainable growth. This is especially crucial in an era of rapid technological advancements and significant global economic and social transformations.



On 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024, EABC had the honor of hosting H.E. Sujiro Seam, Ambassador of the European Union to ASEAN, and Mr. Antoine Ripoll, Minister-Counsellor for parliamentary affairs at the European External Action Service (EEAS) Delegation to ASEAN.

During the visit, H.E. Sujiro Seam provided an overview of the EU's bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on the ongoing EU-Thailand FTA negotiations and how they compare to other regional agreements. Mr. Antoine Ripoll highlighted the role the European Parliament can play in bringing the FTA to fruition.

EABC took this opportunity to share the perspectives of European businesses operating in Thailand on the FTA negotiations.







On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024, EABC's President, Mrs. Paranee Adulyapichet, spoke at the roundtable titled "Stepping into a New Era of Thai-EU Relations: What Will Thailand Gain under the PCA?" organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mrs. Paranee emphasized that the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) would help identify gaps for European businesses interested in investing in Thailand, and provide technical support to bridge those gaps. She also highlighted research and development, along with capacity building, as key benefits that both Thai and European businesses stand to gain from the Agreement.

The roundtable, an initiative by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aimed to bring together stakeholders from various sectors—government, business, academia, and media—to share their expectations for the Agreement.

Joining Mrs. Paranee on the panel were representatives from the Department of European Affairs, the Department of Trade Negotiations, the Federation of Thai Industries, the Centre for European Studies (CES) of Chulalongkorn University, and the Department of Climate Change and Environment.



From 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024, EABC President, Mrs. Paranee Adulyapichet, attended the Green Economy Forum & Exhibition (GEFE) 2024, organized by EuroCham Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City. This event brings together key stakeholders from businesses, government, and non-governmental organizations from Europe and Vietnam to engage in important discussions and advocate for sustainable practices, policies, and initiatives.

Over three days, GEFE 2024 features conferences, exhibitions, and high-level B2B and B2G dialogue sessions. The event serves as a platform to strengthen cooperation between the European and Vietnamese business communities, promoting a sustainable green economy in Vietnam through expertise sharing and technology transfer.

Mrs. Paranee also participated in the ASEAN EuroCham Panel Discussion on the topic, "What for ASEAN in the EU Green Deal: A Challenge or a Chance?" Joining her on the panel were H.E. Sujiro Seam, Ambassador of the European Union to ASEAN, along with representatives from EuroCham across ASEAN, including Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, and the Philippines.



On 28-29 October 2024, EABC representatives, led by Mr. Bob Fox, EABC Vice President and Chair of the Digital Economy/ICT Working Group, and Dr. Charanya Nopnukulvised, Operations Director attended the Closing the Gap Workshop 2024: Identifying Key Issues and Gaps of Employability in the Agri-food Sector in ASEAN at Four Points by Sheraton Ploenchit, Bangkok.

This regional workshop is organised by the EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package - Higher Education Programme (SCOPE-HE) in collaboration with the Office of the Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) Ministry of Education (MoE) Thailand, and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (SEAMEO VOCTECH).

The workshop addressed vital gaps in the agri-food sector, such as policy continuity, stakeholder engagement, investment in agricultural education, and digital skill integration. Key recommendations included:

- **Government:** Establish policies for sustained manpower in agri-food, encourage stakeholder partnerships, modernize agricultural education, and integrate digital skills.
- **Private Sector:** Support soft skills for TVET graduates, incentivize investment in education, and enhance industry cooperation.
- **Institutions:** Increase investment and data availability, promote tech use in education.
- **International Organizations:** Advocate for green TVET and partnerships.



On 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024, EABC representatives, led by Mrs. Paranee Adulyapichet, Mr. Bob Fox, Mr. Matthew Grose, and Dr. Charanya Nopnukulvised, attended a special networking reception hosted by H.E. Mrs. Anna Hammargren, the Ambassador of Sweden, at her residence.

The reception followed the event Supporting Working Parents with Paid Parental Leave: Status, Sharing Experiences, and Next Steps, co-hosted by the Swedish Embassy in Thailand and the UN Global Compact Network Thailand. H.E. Mrs. Anna Hammargren welcomed key speakers from the launch event and selected invitees from both the public and private sectors to discuss this vital initiative.

This gathering provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen networks and engage with organizations dedicated to advancing parental leave policies in Thailand. We look forward to supporting further initiatives that positively impact working parents and foster greater inclusivity in the workplace.



On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024, EABC's Board visited the Department of European Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss economic relations between Thailand and the EU. The Ministry's participants were led by Mrs. Krongkanit Rakcharoen, Director-General of the Department, along with Ms. Somrudee Poopornanake and Ms. Marinee Suwanmoli, both Deputy Directors-General.

The two sides shared key areas of focus and discussed the EU-Thailand economic relationship, particularly the ongoing EU-Thailand FTA negotiations, the EU-Thailand Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), Thailand's accession to the OECD, and visa policies. EABC also took this opportunity to present the business perspective on EU regulations, namely, the EUDR, CBAM, and CSDDD.

On 11-12 November, Mr. Bob Fox participated in **the ASEAN Policy Forum on Higher Education**, organized under the EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package – Higher Education Programme (**SCOPE-HE**) in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Mr. Bob Fox presented about AI in higher education, with research into AI Governance, Platforms in use, Best practices and Policies for AI in education, and major issues. The approach aimed to show that assuming digital divide issues can be overcome, the take up of AI can be advanced by no cost access to various AI platforms where generative AI tools can be put to good use. The presentation emphasised the importance of AI Governance: (i) human in charge, (ii) ethical / trustworthy use, (iii) do no harm, (iv) respect IPRs. The presentation was shared with the SCOPE-HE community.



On 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024, Mr. Jan Eriksson, Vice President, Mr. Bob Fox , Vice President and Chairmain of Digital Economy/ICT and Dr. Charanya Nopnukulvised, Operations Director had attended “Pioneer the Possible Thailand 2024” hosted by the Embassy of Sweden and Business Sweden at Samyan Mitrtown Hall.

The event underscored Sweden and Thailand’s joint commitment to sustainability through innovation and collaboration. The discussions on pioneering technologies and integrative approaches driving the energy transition were highly informative and reinforced the vital importance of cross-border cooperation in advancing a sustainable future.

## EABC WORKING GROUPS

### Automotive



On 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024, EABC and the Thai-European Business Association (TEBA) held a joint meeting at the EABC office. During the meeting, both organisations discussed strategies to strengthen and unify the voice of European businesses in Thailand. They also explored potential areas and activities for future collaboration.

### Cross Sectoral Issues (CSI)



On 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024, EABC's CSI Working Group held a hybrid-format meeting at KPMG. The primary focus of the meeting was the drafting of the CSI Chapter for the EABC Position Paper. Key topics discussed included the Climate Change Draft Law, the tax regime, foreign investment, and services liberalization.

## DIGITAL ECONOMY/ICT



On 20 August 2024, EABC participated in the BOI–Digital Economy/ICT Group meeting focused on software development and the on-boarding of foreign professionals. The workshop was hosted at Seven Peaks Software and was co-chaired by Mr. Bob Fox, Vice President and Chair of the Digital Economy/ICT Working Group, and Ms. Kantarot Laopradith Director of the Expatriate Services Division, BOI.

A follow-up discussion was held on 18 October regarding BOI’s VC matching scheme, and again in November, addressing the bachelor’s degree requirement for digital projects in some situations.



On 26 August 2024, at the regional seminar on Digital Platforms, Mr. Bob Fox spoke on the role of self-regulation in platform governance.





On 29 August 2024, Mr. Bob Fox, Vice President and Chair of the Digital Economy/ICT Working Group, spoke on the topic of supporting the upgrade and uptake of digital skills at Thailand Digital Employer 2024 aimed at empowering the Thai workforce through digital transformation.



On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024, EABC representatives Mr. Bob Fox, Vice President and Chair of the Digital Economy/ICT Working Group, and Dr. Charanya Nopnukulvised, Operations Director, participated in the seminar on "ESG Practices for SMEs: Strategies for Thriving in the Global Green Market" at Amari Bangkok.

Organized by OSMEP, The Asia Foundation, JFCCT SME Committee and supported by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the event covered how Thai SMEs need to be part of Sustainable Development policies and actions ("No Net Zero without SMEs") integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices into businesses for success in the global green market and considered the pathway to standards in measurement and reporting.

Mr. Bob Fox as Head of Climate Group of JFCCT and Chair Digital Economy/ICT spoke about Governance, its evolution and what it means in the ESG context, then proposed practical steps SMEs can take to integrate sustainability into their businesses and the tools needed for measurement and reporting. SMEs are the life-blood of the economy, and effective governance is key to navigating the Net Zero pathway, with integrity.



On 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024, EABC attended the “Thailand’s Path to OECD Membership” conference, organised by Center of Excellence for Public Policy and Good Governance which is located at Thammasat Law School. The conference, held at Kempinski Siam, served as a platform for in-depth discussions on the issues and challenges for Thailand’s accession to OECD, focusing on three key themes, one being Policies & Regulatory Frameworks.

The panel for this theme included Bob Fox, as Chair Digital Economy/ICT group and Head of Climate Group of JFCCT, who is also an EABC Vice President and Chair of the Digital Economy/ICT Working Group. He covered topics on policy coherence; fast track regulatory reform (where substantial resources, committed personnel, and political buy-in are essential) and anti corruption. Exploration of the importance of Rule of Law showed the real role of laws in service of the economy and society, and citizens, residents and investors.



On 29 November 2024, EABC participated in the regional webinar titled "AI in Education: A Regional Webinar for Thailand and Singapore Business and Education Communities." This event, hosted virtually via Zoom, was devised as a collaborative effort between the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in Thailand (JFCCT) Digital Economy/ICT Committee and the Sasin School of Management.

The event brought together leading experts and professionals to explore the transformative role of artificial intelligence in shaping the future of education. Moderated by Bob Fox, Vice President of the EABC, Chairman of the Digital Economy/ICT Committee, and Head of the Climate Group at JFCCT, the panel discussion was enriched by an engaging keynote address from Dr. Atip Asvanund. The distinguished panel of speakers included Professor Mimi Zou, Associate Professor Dr. Atiwong Suchato, Dr. Pinnaree Tea-Makorn, Dr. Hugh O'Connell, and Mr. Koo Sengmeng.

The discussion emphasizes the growing influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on education, highlighting its potential as a powerful tool for personalized learning. It stresses how AI can help equip students with the skills needed for a technology-driven future, while also underscoring the importance of educating them about the ethical implications and responsibilities associated with AI.

## ENERGY

### Energy Working Group Meeting



On 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024, EABC organized an Energy Working Group meeting, with the main agenda being the election of the Working Group Chair. Khun Marty Sinthavanarong from GULF was elected by the members as the new Chair of the Working Group. Following the election, members discussed strategies and issues within the energy industry that they aim to advocate for.

EABC extends its congratulations to Khun Marty on this new role and looks forward to the Working Group's advocacy efforts under his leadership.

## FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND BEVERAGES



On 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024, we attended Thailand Balanced Alcohol Policy Roundtable 2024, co-convened by EABC, The Better news and Thai Alcohol Beverage Business Association (TABBA). The Roundtable provided a platform for discussion on the control of alcoholic beverages. Its aim was to explore solutions to make alcohol policies suitable for the present-day context.

This will lay a solid foundation for sustainable and balanced growth in society, good health and economic development, especially in the tourism sector.



On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024, EABC, partnered with Oxford Economics, organised the Economic Contribution of International Wine and Spirits in Thailand Forum at Anantara Siam Bangkok.

Ms. Khemika Ratanakul, Chairperson of EABC's Food, Agriculture, and Beverages Working Group, enriched the panel discussion on the Contribution of International Wine and Spirits to the Thailand Tourism and Hospitality Sector as one of the esteemed panellists.

The discussion emphasised the necessity for balanced policies within the tourism and hospitality sectors, fostering collaborative dialogues among government bodies, private enterprises and civil societies. At EABC -The European Chamber of Commerce Thailand, we are committed to bolstering the beverages sector and fostering sustainable growth and shaping a vibrant future for Thailand's wine and spirits industry.



On 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024, the EABC Food, Agriculture, and Beverages Working Group met with Ms. Chotima Iemsawasdikul, Director General of the Department of Trade Negotiations.

Our discussion covered key topics such as the progress on the EU-Thailand FTA, market access for the food, beverage, and agriculture industry, illicit trade, and price caps. We also addressed the progress of regulatory guillotines and initiatives to promote ease of doing business and the advancement of food, beverage, and agricultural products.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Ms. Chotima Iemsawasdikul and her team for their continued support. We look forward to deepening our collaboration.



On 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024, EABC’s Food, Agriculture, and Beverages Working Group visited the EU Delegation to discuss legal developments affecting European businesses in Thailand. The EU Delegation provided updates on the outcomes of the EU-Thailand FTA negotiations and outlined potential collaborations in light of the fourth round of talks.



On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024, the EABC Food, Agriculture, and Beverages Working Group held its monthly meeting at the Diageo Moët Hennessy office. Members focused on advancing the development of the Food, Agriculture, and Beverages Chapter for the EABC Position Paper.

## HEALTHCARE AND PHARMACEUTICALS



On 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024, The EABC Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals Working Group led by Ms. Paranee Adulyapichet, EABC Vice President and Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals Working Group Chair had an in-person meeting with Mr. Rachata Ounsuk, Director of Legal Affairs Group on Civil Servants Medical Welfare Department of the Comptroller General's Department. The meeting facilitated constructive discussions on Sustainable Healthcare Financing and the Risk-Sharing Agreement.





On 29<sup>th</sup> April, Healthcare and Pharmaceutical Working Group had a meeting with Dr. Jadej Thammatacharee, Secretary General of National Health Security Office (NHSO) and his team to discuss Risk-Sharing Agreements (RSA). Our commitment to fostering knowledge exchange through international experiences underscores our mutual dedication to development. We are actively exploring opportunities to advance RSA development for the benefit of patients. Gratitude to NHSO for their support.



On 26th July 2024, EABC's Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals Working Group met with Mr. Rachata Ounsuk, Director of Legal Affairs Group on Civil Servants Medical Welfare Department of the Comptroller General's Department (CGD), Ministry of Finance.

The participants discussed the potential implementation of Managed Entry Agreements (MEA) in Thailand. The Working Group expressed its commitment to supporting the CGD by providing insights and expertise, drawing from the group's research on MEA implementations in various countries.



On 11 October 2024, EABC's Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals Working Group met with Mr. Rachata Unsuk, Director of the Medical Benefits Legal Affairs Subdivision at the Comptroller General's Department. The Working Group presented a model for an MEA governance body for Thailand, which it had developed. The discussion focused on the structure and processes of the model, emphasizing good governance and stakeholder representation.



On 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024, representatives of EABC's Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals Working Group visited HITAP to discuss the potential introduction of Risk Sharing Agreements in Thailand. During the meeting, HITAP shared its insights, recommendations, and key considerations for advocating this approach.

## INSURANCE



On 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024, representatives from the EABC Insurance Working Group, led by Mr. Matthew Grose, Chair of the EABC Insurance Working Group, had a meeting with Mr. Chuchatr Pramoolpol to extend congratulations on his recent appointment as Secretary-General of the Office of Insurance Commission (OIC) at the OIC's Office.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR)



On 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024, EABC had an opportunity to meet with Khun Kanitha Kungsawanich, Deputy Director General, along with other representatives from the International Affairs Office, Legal Affairs Office, Trademark Office, Intellectual Property Rights, Enforcement Office, Copyright Office and Patent Office.

The meeting was led by from the representatives from IPR Working Group members. Constructive discussions during the meeting allowed to cover various topics surrounding the current developments of IP in Thailand including; MOU on Online Advertising, Draft of the Patent Act,

Patent backlog, Grace period for late payment of trademark registration fees, Developments in Copyright in the context of newer digital technologies, Customs enforcement and Illicit trade.



On 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024, EABC joined the meeting of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation for the Protection of Intellectual Property on the Internet via Zoom. The event was chaired by Mr. Awoot Wongsawat, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Intellectual Property.

The MoU focuses on enhancing collaboration among government agencies, intellectual property rights holders, and internet entrepreneurs to combat the sale of products suspected of infringing intellectual property rights on various platforms. It also addresses measures aimed at addressing repeat infringements of intellectual property on internet platforms.

This MoU will benefit intellectual property rights holders and internet entrepreneurs by facilitating the fight against the sale of suspected infringing products across various platforms.



On 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024 – EABC led by Ms. Pavinee Bunyamissara, Chair of IPR Working Group, Dr. Charanya Nopnukulvised, EABC Operations Director and Ms. Saowanee Leewijitsin, our esteemed member attended the IP Fair 2024 ‘The X Power’ at Samyan Mitrtown. The opening remark was given by Mr. Vuttikrai Leewiraphan, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce.

The IP Fair 2024 organised annually aims to raise awareness about IP, bring IP closer to business and celebrate intellectual creations. The event consisted of an IP Seminars, exhibits, shows and even a dessert tasting experience.

We would like to thank the Department of Intellectual Property for organizing such an outstanding IP Fair 2024. We remain committed to supporting the advancement of intellectual property protection and efficiency in Thailand.



On 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2024, EABC was invited by the Department of Intellectual Property (DIP) to witness the destruction of counterfeit and pirated goods. The event was presided over by Mr. Phumtham Wechayachai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce. He reaffirmed Thailand’s commitment to upholding treaties and legal obligations to protect intellectual property rights (IPR) and to deter violations.

EABC’s IPR Working Group has been working closely with the DIP in pursuit of stronger intellectual property protection.



On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, EABC representatives attended the Opening Ceremony and Reception of the Geographical Indications (GIs) Exhibition, hosted by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) in the context of IP Key South-East Asia (IP Key SEA), at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre. EABC recognizes GIs as a key innovation that promotes local businesses and tourism in both Thailand and the EU.

## TOURISM



Regularly attended the meetings with JFCCT Tourism Committee. Major topics are MICE, sustainable tourism, and many more. Reskilling of the workforce was also major focus in the tourism and hospitality sector.

## TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

On 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024, EABC's Transport and Logistics Working Group held its meeting. The meeting focused on the new Custom Code, which is expected to become available on 2025.



## EABC AFFAIRS



On 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024, EABC held its Annual General Meeting and Joint Networking Event at Oriental Residence Bangkok.

While the AGM was the opportunity to provide an overview on EABC's activities, we were really pleased to welcome H.E. Mr David Daly, Ambassador of the European Union to Thailand, and M.L. Chayotid Kridakon, Advisor to the Prime Minister and President of Thai Trade Representative, at our Joint Networking Event.



On 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024, this event provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the strong friendship between Europe and Thailand, with the presence of the European Union Delegation to Thailand and representatives of Thai authorities.



On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024, the main room of the magnificent Governor Mansion at Blue Elephant Phuket Town was not too big to welcome all our distinguished guests present to the official launch of our Chamber in Phuket. In presence of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Phuket Town, and of many representatives of Thai, European, and international companies present in Phuket, Omar Ben Abderahmen, EABC Development Director, highlighted the importance of this event for both the local business community, that can enjoy EABC benefits and support, and our Organization, for which this event marks an important milestone.



On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024, EABC hosted an engaging Breakfast Talk on Thailand’s Economic Transformation 2024-2025, covering topic: Economic Recovery, Strategic Insights, and Investment Opportunities for European Businesses.

This event provided a valuable opportunity to engage with Dr. Arnunchanog Sakondhavat, Director of the Macroeconomic Strategy and Planning Division at the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council.



On 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024, EABC successfully hosted a highly engaging Luncheon Seminar on the “Progress and Prospects in the EU-Thailand FTA Negotiations”, alongside the fourth round of negotiations.

We were honored to welcome distinguished speakers including Ms. Renita Bhaskar, Minister Counsellor at the EU Delegation to Thailand, Mr. Christophe Kiener, EU Chief Negotiator for the European Commission, and Ms. Chotima Iemsawasdikul, Director General at the Department of Trade Negotiations, Ministry of Commerce. Together, they shared valuable insights on the ongoing FTA discussions and their future outlook. Ms. Paranee Adulyapichet, EABC President provided welcoming remarks and Mr. Bob Fox, Vice President and Chair, Digital Economy/ICT group conducted the moderated session with the two heads of the negotiating teams – Mr. Chris Keiner for the EU and Ms. Chotima Iemsawasdikul for Thailand. Participation from attending members was strong.

This event provided a unique platform for meaningful dialogue on strengthening EU-Thai trade and investment relations, underscoring the importance of continued cooperation. We are proud to support initiatives that further enhance business ties between EU and Thailand.



EABC presents the Survey report titled “Expectations and Challenges of an EU-Thailand Free Trade Agreement (FTA): Perspectives from European Business in Thailand.” This report consolidates the valuable feedback and opinions collected from stakeholders, providing insightful perspectives on the needs and expectations in the negotiation process towards an EU-Thailand FTA. To download the PDF file of EU-THAILAND Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Survey Report 2024, please [click here](#)