

Singapore Highlights



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EU-South East Asia relations to be deepened

A conference on "Europe in Asia: the Outlook for ASEAN-EU Relations" was organised by the ASEAN Brussels Committee and Forum Europe from 27-28 June 2001.

The objective of the Conference was to bring together distinguished government leaders, business people and academia to brainstorm on how ASEAN and the EU could further strengthen their relations. In total, 168 other delegates from over 20 countries attended the Conference. Keynote speakers included the EU Commissioner for Trade, Mr Pascal Lamy, and the Singapore Minister for Trade & Industry, BG George Yeo.

"Asia has become one of our largest partners, and is destined to become an even more important partner in future years" said EU Commissioner Lamy at his opening address at the conference.

"The remarkable speed with which South East Asia recovered from the first shock of the financial crisis is a testimony to the resilience of South East Asian markets – and indeed South East Asians themselves", continued Mr Lamy.

The conference was chaired by Singapore's Minister for Trade and Industry, BG George Yeo,

who was optimistic about the South East Asian's prospects for long-term economic prosperity, despite the recent crisis that hit the region.

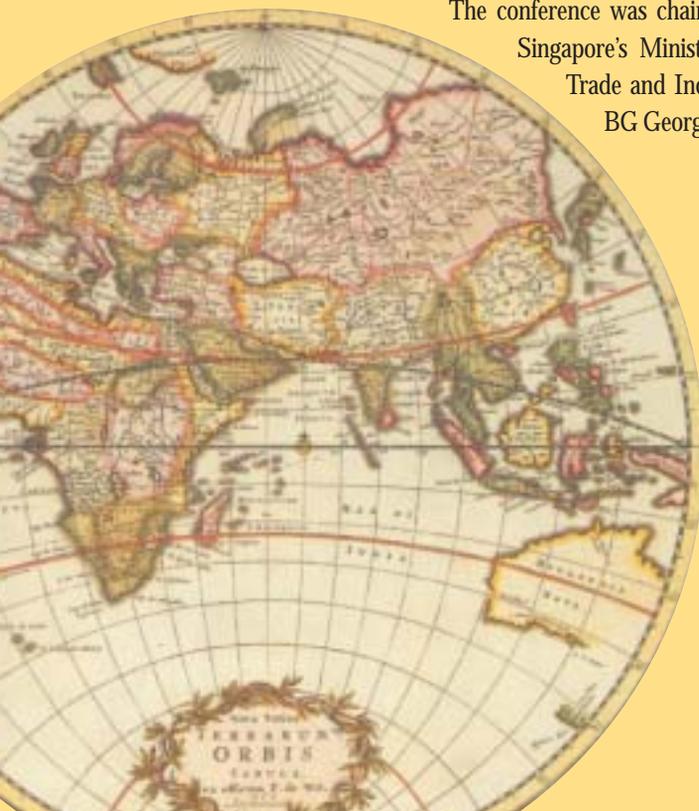
"With a market of 500 million people, ASEAN will become more important to Europe", says BG Yeo, "...in twenty-thirty years' time East Asia's economy may equal that of the US and the EU combined."

BG Yeo also believes that the ASEAN Free Trade Area offers a good alternative to China, which is ASEAN's largest regional competitor for manufacturing.

Most speakers at the conference echoed the need for further deepening of the relations between both regions. The Philippine Ambassador to the UK, Mr Cesar Bautista, captured it all by stating that Europe "is an underrated key partner of ASEAN".

An important step for further cooperation was also taken on 18 and 19 September at the EC-ASEAN Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting held in Brussels. JCC members reaffirmed the importance of EC-ASEAN relations and cooperation.

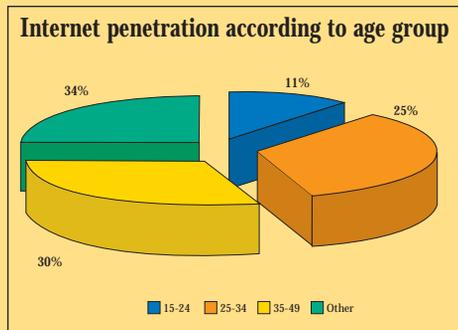
They also reiterated the importance of the dialogue on economic integration and globalisation, as well as the enhancement of mutual understanding and awareness in all sectors of society.



Pascal Lamy, Merritt and George Yeo at the Europe in Asia conference

SINGAPORE'S NET PENETRATION NO. 1

Singapore is well ahead of China, Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan in terms of Internet penetration, says the latest report by NetValue, a global Internet measurement company.



Nearly half of all Singapore's homes are connected to the Net. At 40 per cent, Taiwan has the next highest penetration. In the four surveyed countries, men are the most active surfers. In Singapore, 44 per cent of women use Internet, compared to 41 per cent in China and 43 per cent in Taiwan.

Over a third of users are aged 15-24, the 25-34 age group follows with 30 per cent, and the 35-49 year olds 25 per cent. The most popular websites among Singapore's Net users are Yahoo!, MSN and the local AsiaOne.



EC TO SET UP A SINGAPORE OFFICE

According to a proposal dated 7 July 2001, the European Commission (EC) has stated it will open an EC Delegation in Singapore, reflecting the growing bilateral relations between the two sides.

6 offices would be set up in Asia, with the ones in Singapore and Malaysia being full fledged EC delegation offices. The Singapore EC office is scheduled to open in 2002.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY DUTIES

Eight hundred Singapore Armed Forces personnel have been involved over the past ten years in 12 United Nations peacekeeping missions. Currently the SAF participates in three such missions: at the Iraq-Kuwait border, in East Timor, and Ethiopia and Eritrea. "Singapore takes its international security responsibilities

seriously, as they are an important part of its overall defence policy," added Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Tony Tan at the end of his speech, highlighting Singapore's efforts to strengthen interaction with regional armed forces during the defence budget debate in the Parliament.

ART SINGAPORE 2001

The Singapore Art Galleries Association (AGA) launched the premier contemporary Asian art fair "ARTSingapore 2001" which took place from 29 September to 3 October at the Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre. This event, coincided with Christie's and Sotheby's early October auctions, as well as "For Art's Sake" the 2001 arts season supported by the STB.

Mr Chua Soo Bin, Director of the Fair and President of AGA, said that the aim of ARTSingapore was to position Singapore as the focal point for galleries from the region to exhibit and trade, and to strengthen Singapore's reputation as a leading centre for Asian art. One of the focal points was an exhibit by the renowned artist Mr Tang Da Wu.

THE ART SCENE IN SINGAPORE

40 art groups from twenty countries performed 32 productions during this year's Singapore Arts Festival. The audience responded enthusiastically as eight of the 32 productions were sold out.

Examples of the variety of selected productions shown during the festival are: the highly creative piece "UROBOS: Project Time", a collaboration between Argentinean, Australian, Austrian and

Singaporean artists, examined the significance of time through different pieces of music. A play on the life of a Chinese political hero from the Warring States period, "Shang Yang", was staged by the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre from China. "The Rite of Spring" by the all-female Japanese dance company H. Art Chaos, added vibrancy to the festival with their stunning aerial displays.



For more information please see : www.nac.gov.sg/main_events_html/main_events_artsfest_festival.html

DOING BUSINESS IN SINGAPORE

E2open's regional HQ

E2open, a consortium of the world's leading electronics companies, has opened its regional headquarters in Singapore.

E2open is founded by companies such as IBM, Lucent, Nortel, Seagate, Solectron, Acer, LG, Matsushita, Hitachi and Toshiba and aims to create a collaborative network to manage product lifecycles within the global electronic industry.



Photonics: business of the future

Singapore has attracted investors such as US-based Zolo Technologies, which set up a manufacturing plant for multiplexers, and Nippon Sheet Glass, a world leader in micro lenses.



View of optical cables

During the first half of this year, more than a dozen photonics companies have set up new operations in Singapore. At the Fourth Optics/Photonics Forum in July, Mr Ko Kheng Hwa, Managing Director of the Economic Development Board (EDB), explained that Singapore starts to bear the fruits of its promotion of investment in this growing sector.

Dutch University's move to Singapore

The Technische Universiteit Eindhoven (TU/e) is the 7th world-class university to invest in Singapore.



TU/e will work with the National University of Singapore (NUS) to set up the \$28 million Design Technology Institute (DTI). The institute, to be housed at the NUS Faculty of Engineering, will offer a new Master of Technological Design (MTD) programme focusing on rapid product development, mechatronics and embedded systems.

New Wafer plant by international consortium

A joint venture formed by Philips Semiconductors, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) and Economic Development Board Investments (EDBI) has opened a new wafer fab plant in Singapore. The plant became operational only 15 months after construction work started. The joint venture, called Systems on Silicon Manufacturing Company (SSMC) will also have a positive effect on supporting industries. The investment has a total value of around 2 billion €. SSMC, which employs 700, will create 1,000 new jobs eventually, mostly for professionals and technicians. More than 150 engineers were trained in the Netherlands and Taiwan. The fab can produce 30,000 eight-inch wafers a month at full capacity.



First hydrogen-powered cars to be marketed from 2004

Daimler-Chrysler's NECAR has a fuel cell system based on the Mercedes-Benz A Class. Daimler-Chrysler decided to test its environmentally friendly fuel cell cars in Singapore. Singapore is one of four global sites for the tests (the others being Europe, Japan and the US).



The new car is powered by a fuel cell, which generates electric power from hydrogen. Singapore will provide the necessary infrastructure for alternative fuel cell vehicles, vehicle operation and maintenance.

Italian expansion

The Italian chemicals company Chimica Organica Industriale Milanese (COIM Spa) decided to open a production facility in Singapore to produce chemicals for the shoe market. The facility will produce over 50,000 tonnes of chemicals per year and will be the COIM's first plant in the Asia-Pacific region. COIM comments that the main arguments for choosing Singapore are the availability of skilled manpower, an English-speaking workforce, the strategic location and a world-class logistics infrastructure.



LAUNCH OF POST-GENOMIC RESEARCH LABORATORIES

The Department of Biological Sciences (DBS), giving a boost to life sciences research at NUS Bioinformatics Centre, launched the Functional Genomics Laboratories recently. As the deciphering of genetic codes of over 30,000 different genes is well underway, research in the post-genomic area lies in the various fields of functional genomics, as well as proteomics, which studies the functions of yet unknown human proteins.

The \$2 million open-concept laboratories with state-of-the-art equipment for genomic research (DNA micro array and scanners, combinatorial synthesizer, automatic peptide synthesizer and mass spectrometry) represent the core facilities supporting research by life scientists such as Professor Hew Choy Leong, protein sciences specialist, one of the principal investigators at the research facility.

The Singapore Bioinformatics Learning Lab 2 (SIBILL-2), launched at the same time, supports genomics research through bioinformatics. This would be a tool for the proper identification and archival of massive data related to the biological functions of various DNA sequences and their postulated proteins.

SIBILL-2 is also internationally linked under the S* Life Sciences Informatics Alliance comprised of Stanford University (United States), the Karolinska Institute and Uppsala University (Sweden) and the University of Western Cape (South Africa).

FLANDERS AND SINGAPORE ANNOUNCE CLOSE COOPERATION

Patrick Dewael, Minister-President of Flanders, met Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong on 18 September in Singapore to discuss bilateral relations and express their mutual satisfaction with each other's investment projects in Flanders and Singapore.

Dewael and Goh Chok Tong agreed to strengthen cooperation in various fields relating to industry, technology, research and education. A "Joint Declaration on Cooperation" was adopted, which announced a number of specific initiatives, including:

- exchanges of students and scientists
- joint R&D projects

- collaboration in technology brokerage events to promote links between start-ups, venture capital firms and entrepreneurs,
- Co-investments and joint industrial projects.

Areas of cooperation will include among others: life sciences and healthcare, info-communications and electronics, infrastructure and logistics, chemicals and advanced materials, engineering and environment, venture capital and co-investment.

Bilateral visits and exchanges will be strongly encouraged to strengthen the contacts and dialogue between Flanders' and Singapore's leaders, academics, researchers and businessmen alike.

\$ 3 MILLION RECYCLING PROMOTION CAMPAIGN

SembCorp Waste Management (SWM), which operates rubbish collector Semac, is giving out free green rubbish bags to some 500,000 households, so that their unwanted plastics, glass and paper junk can be collected.

SWM is spending \$3 million on a media campaign to promote recycling, and also intends to target construction companies and industries that use plastics.

According to Semac's deputy president Ms Loh Wai Kiew, it collects 100 tonnes of recycled material a month through its Trash Bank programme, an amount it will strive to collect daily.



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