



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union to
the Philippines

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THE EU AND PCCI MAKE A PUSH FOR LESS RED TAPE AND THE STREAMLINING OF IMPORT AND EXPORT PROCEDURES

A fast adoption of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the Philippines Customs Modernisation and Tariff Act could reduce trading costs by as much as 15% and help solve some of the container back-logs in the port of Manila.

For this reason, the Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry are organising a forum on "Trade Facilitation and Customs Modernisation: making better use of trade and Agreements" on 23 October at the Manila Hotel.

Senator Juan Edgardo Angara and Congressman Romero Federico Quimbo, Undersecretary Laura del Rosario of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Customs Commissioner John Philip Sevilla will discuss how the Philippines can take more advantage of its trade relationships.

EU Ambassador Guy Ledoux said "With President Aquino's visit to Europe last month, the Philippines showed an ambition to bring our commercial relationship to the next level. Our trade already increased by more than 20% this year but much more is possible. Trade facilitation is one measure which could accelerate EU-Philippines trade".

PCCI President Alfredo Yao commented that "the PCCI will issue a statement to President Aquino arguing that the adoption of the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act should be prioritised and the Bureau of Customs supported to implement measures to facilitate trade. These measures will further pave the way for the country's effective participation in negotiations of more advance trade agreements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP) and an agreement with the EU."

Trade Facilitation means simplifying and streamlining international import and export procedures and associated documentation. It is about modernising trade and customs procedures, cutting red tape, training customs officials, improving customs facilities and technology so that as to make trade easier and faster. Benefits of trade facilitation are substantial in its own right (cases show that in countries such as Costa Rica, customs clearance was reduced from 6 days to 12 minutes after implementing substantive customs reforms), and some estimate that US\$ 960 billion could be added to global GDP by implementing measures that were agreed in the WTO Ministerial in Bali last year. The EU has committed some € 400 million support to developing countries to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Ambassador Ledoux is one of the speakers together with Senator Juan Edgardo Angara and Congressman Romero Federico Quimbo, Chairperson of the Ways and Means Committee.

Other speakers include Undersecretary Laura del Rosario of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Customs Commissioner John Philip Sevilla, Mr Roberto Amores, PCCI Director-Agri and Food Security and Asa Larsson, DHL SG. They will be speaking about the emerging trends and benefits of trade facilitation and its business perspectives. The Forum will be opened by Mr Alfredo Yao, chair of PCCI.

The Forum is part of the 40th Philippine Business Conference being held from 22 to 24 October.

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