

Holger Standertskjöld

Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Singapore

Speech by Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Singapore Holger Standertskjöld

*Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort*

**Press Launch of Encore! The European Season in Singapore
Singapore, 07 May 2010**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Friends from the Media,

Welcome to this morning's press briefing. I am delighted to be introducing you to the third season of Encore! in Singapore.

Encore! is a project about bringing Europe and the EU closer to Singapore. We hope to be able to showcase Europe through the myriad of cultural events lined up for you. This year's programme is exciting and full of colour, even our new logo reflects that colour and vibrant energy of the festival!

I believe we have line up of 36 events this season. These events include theatre performances, film festivals, Operas in the Park and many more... And may I also announce to you that this year is Chopin year. With the Polish Embassy, we will be having a series of concerts and performance on Chopin throughout the year.

However, Encore! is more than about these performances and events. It is about building a deep and meaningful relationship between Singapore and Europe. Already, ties are closer with the Singapore and the EU Free Trade Agreement currently being negotiated. For this we had Trade Commissioner, Karel De Gucht coming down personally to start these talks. We also have 4,000 European companies based in Singapore. These are affirmations of the close commercial ties we have with Singapore. But it is indeed more meaningful when interactions between EU and Singapore are extended beyond the areas of trade and commerce and into areas such as culture and entertainment too.

The EU has always been a supporter of the cultural programmes that promote efforts to emphasise the common cultural heritage of Europe and its Member States. And I am indeed pleased that Encore! is moving into its third year. It is my wish to see it grow from strength to strength –to reflect the close EU-Singapore relationship.

I am looking forward to Encore!'s year ahead and I hope you will do so too.