

Marc Ungeheuer

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

**Remarks by Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the
European Union to Singapore Marc Ungeheuer**

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

Europe Day Reception, the Fullerton Hotel
Singapore, 09 May 2011

Your Excellency (Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry
and Ministry of Manpower) Mr LEE Yi Shyan,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the annual Europe Day celebrations. This year marks the 61st Anniversary of Europe Day – the day when the Schuman Declaration was made and Europe embarked on a course of integration on an unprecedented scale. Only five years after the end of World War two the Schuman Declaration represented the first steps that were taken towards the creation of what we now know as the European Union.

I am joined on stage this evening by my fellow EU Ambassadors and consuls, which is a true representation of the project of European integration and a testament to what has been achieved in the past 61 years. I am pleased that such a large family of colleagues from the 27 Member States of the European Union are represented here in Singapore.

My colleagues and I, standing before you here this evening, also represent the diverse nature of the European Union. Diversity is a term that one hears much about here in Singapore, whether it is the diversity of Singapore or the diversity of regional organisations such as ASEAN. We are no strangers to diversity in the European Union - perhaps the most diverse countries were, at the time, the founding members of the European Union who, having just emerged from the ravages of War, saw the necessity to

establish a set of fundamental values to be respected by all. It is these values that we seek to maintain that have helped us build a Union that is strong in Europe and strong in the world. This strength undoubtedly comes from the commitment of our Member States to working together to upholding these fundamental values.

To put the EU's strength in context, the EU is an important global actor economically and politically. We are the largest economy and account for a third of world trade and GDP. We are the largest contributor of development aid in the world (over 60%). We remain committed to the fight against Climate Change and believe there needs to be a continued global effort to tackle this global challenge. The EU also continues to contribute to peacekeeping missions around the world.

Our reputation also goes beyond our economic and political achievements. The diversity of Europe's cultural heritage is well known and appreciated worldwide. We have some fine examples of European culture for you later on this evening which I hope you will enjoy. In addition, the 21st European Union Film Festival in Singapore began last night along with the European Season in Singapore, Encore!

In the EU one of our primary goals continues to be of benefit to our citizens and to unite our efforts for the greater good. A major step towards this was the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in late 2009. The Lisbon Treaty created the European External Action Service or EEAS. The EEAS acts as a single platform to project European values and interests around the world and for the first time, brings together all the tools that the EU has: diplomacy,

political engagement, development assistance, humanitarian aid, economic cooperation, and civil and military crisis management.

The European Union is strong, but it would not be as strong as it is if it were not for the good cooperation we enjoy with our key external partners. This evening provides us with an occasion to reflect on our strong relations with our host country, Singapore. As the representative of the European Union in Singapore, I am deeply appreciative of the cooperation we enjoy with our Singapore partners and I am fortunate to be able to build upon the excellent relations the EU Member States also have in Singapore.

It is our aim, at the EU Delegation in Singapore, to further improve our relations with Singapore, and the ASEAN region as a whole, by building partnerships in a way that is mutually beneficial to both parties. In this regard, I am very pleased that the ongoing EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement negotiations are progressing well and that we have also made considerable progress towards concluding an EU-Singapore Partnership and Cooperation Agreement this year.

The overall EU-Singapore relationship is healthy; EU-Singapore trade grew by an impressive 15% in 2010. The EU is Singapore's second largest trading partner and is the top destination for Singaporean exports (15.5% in 2010). The EU also continues to be a significant source of Foreign Direct Investment to Singapore. Admittedly Singapore has emerged from the global economic crisis perhaps quicker than Europe. The current challenges in the Eurozone are indeed real; however, EU has shown itself able to

take action over recent months to tackle sovereign debt issues in the eurozone and overall we believe the prospects remain good.

This strong relationship is enhanced by the active presence of the European Chamber of Commerce and the EU Centre. Led by Micheál (*me-hall*) Collins, EuroCham continues to be an important part of building on our strong economic ties to Singapore. The European Union Centre – with Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee at the helm also continues to play an important part in bringing about further understanding and knowledge of the EU in Singapore.

Finally, Europe Day is not only about speeches. It is a celebration with friends and an opportunity for you to sample the diverse cuisine and beverages of Europe which we are showcasing here this evening. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my EU Ambassador colleagues for their generous support for this evening's celebration.

On this note Your Excellency, friends, may I ask you - **after** the Singapore National anthem - to join my colleagues and I on stage in a toast to the President of the Republic of Singapore and to the strengthening of the relations between the European Union and Singapore.

<Anthem>

Toast “To the President”