

**Welcoming Remarks by  
H.E. Ambassador Aminah Tun Haji A. Karim  
Acting Director General of IDFR**

**Lecture on  
“Strengthening Diplomatic Ties between the European Union and  
Malaysia in the Face of the Eurozone Crisis”**

**by  
H.E. Jacques Santer  
former President of European Commission**

**Treaty Room, IDFR, Kuala Lumpur  
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H.E. Jacques Santer,  
former President of the European Commission,

Mr Jan Senkyr

Their Excellencies Ambassadors of EU Countries,

Dato'–Dato',

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning and Salam 1 Malaysia.

On behalf of IDFR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, I would like to welcome all of you to today's lecture. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to welcome H.E. Jacques Santer to the Institute and to have him address and share his thoughts on such an important topic. His vast knowledge and expertise on all matters related to the EU is well known. We are also grateful to Mr. Jan Senkyr and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung for choosing to partner with us and holding the lecture here.

2. Over the past few years, the global economy has been grappling with the financial crisis that swept both the US and Europe. Major manufacturing and trading nations like Malaysia have been seized with developments in the Eurozone countries and how to safeguard themselves from the after effects of the crisis and particularly to avoid falling into a similar situation. Needless to say, Malaysia is relieved to see that the crisis has begun to wane and countries in the Eurozone have started to recover.

3. I must add that in spite of this and other factors such as the general weakening of the global economy, the turmoil in the Middle East and even the slowing of China's economy, Malaysia has been fortunate indeed to have emerged relatively unscathed and even managed to grow at a respectable 5.1% in 2011. This can in part be attributed to our strong economic fundamentals, trade, investment and economic policies. Ongoing efforts to strengthen the economy such as the various initiatives under the Economic Transformation Programme have ensured continuing interest and belief on the future economic direction and prospects of the country.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. Malaysia has a long-standing relationship with the European Union and this could be traced back to the formation of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, the precursor of the 28-member European Union today. May I take this opportunity to congratulate Croatia on its EU accession on 1<sup>st</sup> July this year. Undoubtedly, Malaysia enjoys excellent bilateral relations not only with individual EU member states but also with the EU as an institution. The establishment of the European Commission office in Malaysia in 2003 further enhanced and solidified cooperation in all aspects including political and economic dialogue.

5. Presently, Malaysia-EU relations are largely dominated by trade and investment. Malaysia is currently the EU's second most important trading partner in ASEAN. Beyond this, some EU countries such as Germany, France, the UK and the Netherlands of course have deeper and more substantive bilateral relations with Malaysia in areas such as

education, defence, science and technology. From my view, the prospects for collaboration remain enormous as both sides leverage on niche areas such as transfer of technology, the environment and the energy sector to name a few.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

6. I am certain all of us present have many questions that linger in our minds. I imagine these would include the following... – is the recovery sustainable? have the Greeks resolved their sovereign debt problems? will Malaysian exports regain its market share? And many more. Like me, I am certain you too look forward to the answers in the address by H.E. Jacques Santer.

7. Before I end, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr Jan Senkyr for agreeing to moderate the session this morning. My deepest thanks also to H.E. Jacques Santer for the upcoming lecture and for his readiness to engage with us to share his knowledge and perspectives. May we all have an informative, stimulating and fruitful discourse. Last but not least, I thank you all for your attendance and participation in the event this morning.

Thank you.