

**For immediate reporting**

## **SINGAPORE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION SIGN DIGITAL PARTNERSHIP**

1. Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations S Iswaran and European Commissioner for Internal Market Thierry Breton signed the EU-Singapore Digital Partnership (EUSDP) today. The signing follows Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's announcement of the substantial conclusion of negotiations in December 2022, on the sidelines of the EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit.
2. The EUSDP is an overarching framework for all areas of bilateral digital cooperation between the EU and Singapore. These include core issues in the cross-border digital economy such as digital trade facilitation, trusted data flows, electronic payments, and standards and conformance; as well as new and emerging areas such as Artificial Intelligence, digital identities, and 5G/6G. The EUSDP will also support and enable broader participation in the digital economy through cooperation on digital upskilling for workers, and the digital transformation of businesses as well as public services.
3. As a first deliverable of the EUSDP, Minister Iswaran signed the EU-Singapore Digital Trade Principles with Executive Vice-President for an Economy that Works for the People and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis. The Digital Trade Principles is the first step towards a legally binding digital trade agreement between the EU and Singapore that facilitates cross-border data flows, enables cost savings through the use of electronic trade documentation and authentication, and ensures that consumers enjoy greater online consumer protection when purchasing goods and services online.
4. Following the signing of the EUSDP, Minister Iswaran and Commissioner Breton co-chaired the inaugural EUSDP Digital Partnership Council. During the meeting, Minister Iswaran and Commissioner Breton welcomed the signing of the Digital Trade Principles. They also agreed to swiftly commence cooperation in the exchanges of best practices and/or developing projects in: AI governance and standards, digital identities, facilitating cross border digital transactions, supporting SMEs' digital transformation, and digital skills. Minister Iswaran and Commissioner Breton also looked forward to projects between Singapore and the EU, including the EU Member States, in partnership with the private sector.
5. Minister Iswaran said, "The EU-Singapore Digital Partnership strengthens connectivity and interoperability between the digital markets of the EU and Singapore. It will enable our people and businesses to transact digitally more seamlessly and at lower costs. As a first deliverable, we launched a set of Digital Trade Principles which mark the first step towards a bilateral digital

trade agreement that provides legal certainty for cross-border digital trade. I look forward to working with the EU to bring our economic and digital partnership to greater heights.”

6. Singapore and the EU share a strong economic relationship, underpinned by the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (EUSFTA) which entered into force in November 2019. The EU is Singapore’s fourth largest goods trade partner globally. In 2021, bilateral trade in goods came to S\$102 billion, representing 8.8% of Singapore’s total goods trade. The EU is also Singapore’s second largest services trade partner globally, with bilateral trade in services exceeding S\$67 billion. Investment relations are strong, with the EU being Singapore’s second largest foreign investor and largest overseas investment destination.

**Annex A: Photos of the signing**

**Annex B: Factsheet on the EUSDP**

**Annex C: Infographic on the EUSDP**

**Annex D: Quotes from Companies**

**Jointly issued by the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Communications and Information, and Infocomm Media Development Authority**

**1 February 2023**

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**Annex A**

**Photos of the signing**



**Caption:** Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations S Iswaran and European Commissioner for Internal Market Thierry Breton sign the EU-Singapore Digital Partnership.



**Caption:** Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations S Iswaran and Executive Vice-President for an Economy that Works for the People and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis sign the EU-Singapore Digital Trade Principles.

## **Annex B**

### **Factsheet on the European Union-Singapore Digital Partnership (EUSDP)**

The EUSDP is an overarching framework for all areas of digital cooperation between Singapore and the EU. These include core issues in the cross-border digital economy such as digital trade facilitation, trusted data flows, electronic payments, and standards and conformance; as well as new and emerging areas such as Artificial Intelligence, digital identities, and 5G/6G. The EUSDP will also support and enable broader participation in the digital economy through cooperation on digital upskilling for workers, and the digital transformation of businesses as well as public services. Collaborations on different issues will be advanced through various modalities, including Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), technical workshops, and legally binding commitments.

Under the EUSDP, the EU and Singapore have also established a Digital Partnership Council at the Minister-level to steer the EUSDP's progress and implementation, as well as identify new areas of cooperation in future. The kickoff Digital Partnership Council meeting held on 1 February 2023 welcomed the first deliverable of a set of bilateral Digital Trade Principles. Both Ministers also looked forward to collaborations on pilots and projects between Singapore and the EU, including the EU Member States, in partnership with the private sector.

#### **Highlights of cooperation areas**

##### **Digital trade**

1. Singapore and the EU have established a set of Digital Trade Principles as the first deliverable under the EUSDP. The Digital Trade Principles mark the first step towards bilateral digital trade rules between the EU and Singapore. It signals the EU and Singapore's commitment to fostering open, competitive, and fair digital markets, and enabling businesses and consumers to benefit from the cost savings and efficiency gains from digital trade between Singapore and the EU, and supports global norms in these areas. Both sides will also develop pilot projects in the digitalisation and recognition of trade administration and commercial documents, as well as e-invoicing to enable more seamless transactions and reduced cost for businesses.

Digital connectivity

2. Digital infrastructure including data centres and submarine telecommunications cables are key to facilitating cross-border connectivity between countries and across regions. Singapore and the EU will collaborate to foster an enabling environment for secure, resilient and sustainable digital infrastructure for our people and companies.

5G and beyond 5G technologies

3. To drive the development and uptake of 5G and beyond 5G technologies, Singapore and the EU will explore use cases and possible cooperation on research & development pilots.

Data flows

4. To support trusted cross-border data flows and data sharing, Singapore and the EU will work on the application of model data protection contracts and provide guidance for their use, as well as exchange information on the infrastructure and governance frameworks needed to facilitate data sharing. Both sides will also cooperate on the use of privacy enhancing technologies, including exploring industry and research collaboration.

Cybersecurity

5. To work towards the interoperability of regulatory frameworks and technical standards, Singapore and the EU will continue to strengthen cooperation and exchanges on cybersecurity certifications and standards, including exploring potential mutual recognition arrangements where appropriate.

Supply chain resilience: semiconductors

6. To strengthen our supply chain resilience, Singapore and the EU will exchange relevant information for supply chain monitoring in anticipation of disruptions. Both sides will also explore opportunities for collaboration in advanced research and cybersecurity testing for semiconductors.

### Artificial Intelligence

7. To support the deployment of AI, Singapore and the EU will encourage interoperability on AI governance, standards, and testing frameworks. Both sides will also explore cooperation on AI testbeds and research collaboration on AI.

### Online platforms

8. To promote a safer and human-centric online environment, Singapore and the EU will deepen our cooperation and information sharing in platform governance and regulation.

### Digital identities and electronic authentication

9. To enable the use of digital identities for more seamless digital transactions, Singapore and the EU will identify and implement use cases for the use of electronic signatures and digital identities, with a view to promoting compatibility and interoperability.

### Digital transformation of SMEs

10. To promote the digital transformation of our Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Singapore and the EU will cooperate on business matchmaking, as well as capability and capacity building initiatives to support SMEs in leveraging digital tools and adapting to digital trade.

### Digital education and skills

11. To ensure that our citizens and businesses can benefit from digitalisation, Singapore and the EU will explore cooperation on capability and capacity building programmes in relation to digital education and skills. Both sides will also explore the development of a cross-border tech talent network, and a mentorship network for young entrepreneurs.

### Digitalisation in the financial sector

12. To support digitalisation in the financial sector, Singapore and the EU will exchange information and share best practices on digital finance developments.

*Standards, Technical Regulations, and Conformity Assessment Procedures*

13. To encourage the adoption of internationally recognised standards relating to the digital economy, Singapore and the EU will exchange information and explore projects to enhance the understanding of standards for the digital economy. Both sides will also cooperate on promoting common standards globally, including in emerging technology areas such as the Internet of Things (IoT), AI, and digital identities.

The full text of the EUSDP is available at [this link](#).



**Annex C**

**Infographic on the EUSDP**

## European Union-Singapore Digital Partnership (EUSDP)

2022  
**15**  
DEC

EUSDP was substantially concluded.

2023  
**1**  
FEB

EUDSP was signed.

### Key benefits to businesses and citizens:

<p><b>Digital trade</b></p> <p>Digital Trade Principles facilitate more seamless transactions for consumers and cost savings for businesses.</p>	<p><b>Digital connectivity</b></p> <p>Strengthen cross-border connectivity for businesses between countries and across regions.</p>	
<p><b>Data flows</b></p> <p>Businesses can adopt model data protection contracts to facilitate trusted cross-border data flows.</p>	<p><b>Supply chain resilience: Semiconductors:</b></p> <p>Enable seamless exchange of relevant information to monitor semiconductor supply chains and anticipate disruptions.</p>	
<p><b>Artificial Intelligence</b></p> <p>Encourage interoperability of AI governance, standards, and testing frameworks; as well as create new opportunities for AI test-beds and research collaboration.</p>	<p><b>Online platforms</b></p> <p>Deepen cooperation and information sharing in platform governance and regulation, to promote a safer and human-centric online environment.</p>	
<p><b>Digital identities and electronic authentication</b></p> <p>Enable citizens and businesses to use digital identities (i.e. electronic signatures) for seamless digital transactions.</p>	<p><b>Digital transformation of SMEs</b></p> <p>Provide more opportunities for business matchmaking, as well as support SMEs in leveraging digital tools and adapting to digital trade.</p>	
<p><b>Digital education and skills</b></p> <p>Enable citizens and businesses to level up digital education and skills through capability and capacity building programmes.</p>	<p><b>Standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures</b></p> <p>Promote common standards globally, including in emerging technology areas such as Internet of Things (IoT), AI, and digital identities.</p>	

**Annex D**

**Quotes from companies on the EUSDP**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Quote and spokesperson</b>
Technology	SGTech	<p>SGTech welcomes the signing of the EUSDP. This enhanced partnership between Singapore and the EU is timely as businesses from both sides are already in close collaboration, with a strong interest to step up cooperation, especially with the resumption of international travel.</p> <p>SGTech is confident that the EUSDP will open invaluable business opportunities for both European and Singapore companies in the digital space, and we look forward to the implementation of the agreement soon.</p> <p><b>Ms Yean Cheong, Executive Director, SGTech</b></p> <p><b>张苑青, 执行总监, 新加坡科技工商协会</b></p>
Trade Associations and Chambers	Singapore Business Federation	<p>The Singapore Business Federation welcomes the signing of the EU-Singapore Digital Partnership (EUSDP).</p> <p>The EU is an important market for Singapore companies, and we look forward to clear bilateral digital trade rules that would better facilitate the free flow of cross-border data, and enable businesses to innovate, scale, and serve customers across borders. This would benefit businesses and deepen digital trade and investment between the EU and Singapore.</p> <p>We will work closely with the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) and Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) to help more companies leverage these agreements to grow their business in the digital economy.</p> <p><b>Mr Soo Wei-Chieh, Executive Director, Global Division 3, Singapore Business Federation</b> <b>ch</b></p>

<p>Trade Associations and Chambers</p>	<p>European Chamber of Commerce (Singapore)</p>	<p>The Digital partnership is a natural next step and encore to the EUSFTA and can be a catalyst and guide for Singapore and EU to cooperate on the digital economy by co-developing standards, setting benchmarks and establishing interoperability in areas that are important for cross-border digital transactions.</p> <p>For the corporate members of EuroCham, the partnership could be an opportunity for smoother digital activities between both sides in areas such as e-payments and paperless trading and can boost online trade.</p> <p>The Digital partnership could also create opportunities for companies to meet their sustainability goals as digital technologies and data offer not only solutions to mitigate the impact of climate change, but also to monitor and adapt."</p> <p><b>Federico Donato, President, European Chamber of Commerce (Singapore)</b></p>
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