

SINGAPORE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION LAUNCH NEGOTIATIONS ON A DIGITAL TRADE AGREEMENT

Singapore and the European Union (EU) have launched negotiations on a bilateral digital trade agreement.

2 This was announced via a videoconference today between Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong and the Executive Vice President of the European Commission for An Economy that Works for People and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis (**Annex A**). Singapore and the EU have also issued a joint statement on the launch of the digital trade agreement, which is appended at **Annex B**.

3 Singapore and EU share longstanding and strong economic relations underpinned by the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (EUSFTA). The EU-Singapore digital trade agreement will further expand bilateral trade cooperation in the digital domain, through legally binding rules and provisions to provide certainty for end-to-end trade, facilitate trusted data flows, and promote a connected and secure digital environment.

4 Minister Gan said, “Singapore and the EU are like-minded and digitally progressive partners who share a strong commitment to upholding open and rules-based trade, and business-friendly environments. The digital trade agreement will strengthen our economic and investment ties by enabling new opportunities in the digital realm for our businesses and people. It will also build on the EU-Singapore Digital Partnership and Digital Trade Principles signed earlier this year, expanding both parties’ efforts to advance digital connectivity and shape global digital trade rules. Singapore looks forward to working with the EU to expeditiously conclude negotiations on the digital trade agreement, and bring our economic and digital partnership to new heights.”

Annex A: Photo

Annex B: Joint Statement by Singapore and the European Union on the launch of negotiations on the EU-Singapore digital trade agreement

**MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
SINGAPORE**

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Caption: Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong and the European Commission Executive Vice President for An Economy that Works for People and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis announced the launch of negotiations on the EU-Singapore digital trade agreement.

Joint Statement by Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong and Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis on the launch of negotiations on an EU-Singapore digital trade agreement

Today marks the launch of negotiations between the EU and Singapore on a digital trade agreement that will provide legal certainty for end-to-end digital trade and enhance protection for our people and companies in digital transactions. These negotiations reflect the strategic importance of digital trade and the pivotal role of the Southeast Asian region.

The EU and Singapore share longstanding and robust economic relations underpinned by the 2019 EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement. With these negotiations, we aim to bring this partnership into the digital domain. It demonstrates our commitment to being at the forefront of new digital developments, while upholding open digital economies that are competitive, transparent, fair, and free of unjustified barriers to international trade.

Building on the cooperation and convergence in the EU-Singapore Digital Partnership and Digital Trade Principles that were agreed upon at the start of this year, we intend to negotiate an ambitious and modern digital trade agreement that contributes to our societies' digital transformation, enables our companies and people to keep pace with the fast-evolving nature of the digital economy, and deepens and complements our existing preferential trade framework.

We consider digital trade an essential part of the digital and green transitions of our societies. International cooperation on the digital economy is important for supporting job creation, empowering companies – especially micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises – to access new opportunities, responding to online consumer needs, and fostering innovation.

Our digital trade rules should build consumer trust, ensure predictability and legal certainty for businesses, and remove and prevent the emergence of unjustified barriers to digital trade, while ensuring that we can continue to develop and implement the policies required to address new challenges posed by the digital economy.

As digitally progressive and like-minded trading partners, the EU and Singapore can play a leading role in setting high-standard digital trade rules between our regions, and raising the ambition of global digital standards.

The EU and Singapore have tasked our negotiating teams to follow up swiftly on the first negotiation round. We look forward to working together to proceed expeditiously in the negotiations.