



### In this issue

- Thailand-EU FTA Negotiations
- IPR update: Thailand is granted the first-ever South East Asian Geographical Indications Product
- EABC continue its efforts on providing policy recommendation to the Thai authorities.
- Highlights from EABC social networking and business functions

# THAILAND-EU FTA NEGOTIATION

## THE EABC STRENGTHENS EUROPEAN BUSINESS POSITION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION ON FTA NEGOTIATIONS



As the EABC has been actively pushing for, major progress which positively paved the way for a prompt start of the FTA negotiations between Thailand and the European Union have been made.

Starting with a public hearing organized by the Department of Trade Negotiations on 23 January 2013. The event was aimed to provide an opportunity for the European business community to directly learn of update on TH-EU FTA and also to provide comments/ support to the official commencement of the negotiations. Then a week later, Thai Parliament by a vote of 347 to 21, with 59 abstentions, already approved a framework for the TH-EU FTA negotiations in accordance with Section 190 of Thai Constitution.

Along with some of our Working Group members, the EABC took part reiterating our support for prompt commencement of the FTA negotiations. We had also re-submitted our comments to the DTN, emphasizing that the negotiations should lead to three key achievements namely:

1. The reduction, leading to an elimination, of tariffs and non-tariff barriers which have been impeding trade between Thailand and the EU to the most comprehensive extent possible.
2. Meaningful and comprehensive liberalization of services and investment to the economic development benefits of the countries.
3. Strengthening of the IPR protection to enhance

the development of IPR with the aim to support research & development activities, promote innovation and creativity, paving the way for a balanced and sustainable technology transfer.

In the verbal statement in the public hearing, the EABC also highlighted the key role of the EU in terms of trade and investment with Thailand to the mutual benefits. Additionally, clarification was made – within the time limit - on certain misunderstandings and misled comments made by other participating stakeholders. These were in relation to three main issues i.e. the difference/ misunderstanding between patent extension vs patent term restoration; border measures to combat imported counterfeits; and the fiction about imported alcoholic beverages of about 1.5% of the total domestic consumption mistreated as the main cause for the problem of rising consumption of alcoholic beverages in Thailand.

The EABC will continue to work more closely with all its Working Groups, the EU Delegation and relevant stakeholders, to gather inputs and make recommendations as the negotiations progress.

## UPDATE ON IPR

### EU GRANTED THE FIRST-EVER SOUTH EAST ASIAN GI PRODUCT TO THAILAND: THAI “KHAO HOM MALI THUNG KULA RONG-HAI”



On 12 February 2013, European Commission has officially granted the protection of the “Thai Khao Hom Mali Thung Kula Rong-Hai” as a registered European Union’s Protected Geographical Indication or PGI. Set for better protection within 27 European Union Member States, this is the first-ever South East Asian PGI being recognised and the second by the European Union. The implementing regulation was announced in the Official Journal of the European Union. The full article can be read at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:041:SOM:EN:HTML> .

Looking at this success, Thailand’s application for GI protection on Khao Hom Mali Thung Kula Rong-Hai has been a long attempt

of the Thai Department of Intellectual Property (DIP) to enhance its national product for better visibility in international market, since its application to the EU in 2008.

The protection of Thai Khao Hom Mali will only impact the increase of the exportation and consumption of Thai rice. The end-benefactors to this news are Thai people and economy. The farmers and producers of Khao Hom Mali Thung Kula Rong-Hai from five provinces in the North-Eastern Part of Thailand that are Roi-Et, Mahasarakam, Surin, Sisaket and Yasothon will greatly benefit from this expanded protection.

This will strengthen the economic ties between Thailand and Europe even further.



Examples of already existing Asian GIs include Binh Thuan Dragon Fruit and Phu Quoc Fish Sauce from Viet Nam, and Longjing Tea from China. Many Asian countries have agricultural and food products which could benefit from GI protection and promotion, for example Darjeeling Tea from India or Bali Coffee from Indonesia.



# HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE



**When: 7 January 2013**

**Where: Social Security Office**

The EABC delegation led by Dr Thavirap Tantiwongse, Chair of the EABC Working Group on Healthcare and Pharmaceutical, paid a courtesy visit to the Secretary General of the Social Security Office, Mr Jirasak Sukhontachat.

The objective was to share experiences towards the improvement of Thailand's social security and healthcare scheme.

The meeting commenced by a short introduction of the EABC followed by a short presentation to share information on the EU public private partnership

in the provision of effective and efficient healthcare to the workforce.

Learning from experiences of various countries, engagement of the private sector in the health insurance could help improving Thailand's social security and healthcare scheme.



**When: 16 January 2013**

**Where: Department of Intellectual Property, Ministry of Commerce**

The Department of Intellectual Property has

hosted the consultation between Thai law enforcement agencies and EU industry representatives on the improvement of protection and enforcement of intellectual property

rights. The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders on the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in Thailand.

# SOCIAL NETWORKINGS



***EABC and DanCHAM  
Networking  
Date: 17 January 2013  
Venue: Admiral's Pub and  
Restaurant***

## BUSINESS UPDATES

### ***Financial Action Task Force (FATF) upgraded Thailand from its “dark grey” to “grey”***

The Anti-Money Laundering Office (Amlo) recently announced that the global intergovernmental Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has agreed to upgrade Thailand from its “dark grey” to “grey” list following the passage of two bills to amend the Anti-Money Laundering Act and the Anti-Terrorism Act. That means Thailand is still considered a risk, but is making active progress to address FATF concerns.

The decision came after Bangkok presented evidence to prove it was attempting to fight money laundering. Key to that

evidence was the recent implementation of two bills on money laundering and financial support for terrorism. However, the process of upgrading Thailand from the list will not be completed until FATF experts have certified the amended laws are being fully enforced.

This announcement is coincide with EABC Policy Recommendation presented in the 2012 Position Paper. The improvement in Thailand’s position will strengthen foreign investor confidence and the country’s reputation.



Read the full article at: FATF Upgrade Thailand’s Status (<http://www.fatf-gafi.org/topics/high-riskandnon-cooperativejurisdictions/documents/improvingglobalamlcftcomplianceon-goingprocess-22february2013.html#thailand>)

# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



## The European Pavilion in the Worldwide Symposium on Geographical Indications

Date: 27-28 March 2013

Venue: Centara Grand Hotel (Floor 23, World Ballroom) at Central World Bangkok

*Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn will grace the opening ceremony of the symposium on 27 March 2013 at 09.00 hrs.*

The International Symposium on Geographical Indications (GI) is organized every two years by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in cooperation with an interested Member State. It brings together international experts, representing academia, member states' administrations, GI producers and non-governmental organizations.

The 2013 edition of the Worldwide Symposium on Geographical Indications is organized jointly by the World Intellectual Property Organization and the Department of Intellectual Property (DIP) of Thailand. Full programme of the symposium can be downloaded at [http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/2013/wipo\\_geo\\_bkk\\_13/program.html](http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/2013/wipo_geo_bkk_13/program.html)

The European ASEAN Business Centre (EABC) as a European Union's window to Thailand, will hold a European Pavillion at the event; providing valued propositions and promoting business opportunities and networking opportunities to European GI producers or companies. This is a fantastic and prestige opportunity for companies of GI producers from European Member state countries to exhibit European-based GI products in the world leading symposium on GI.

### ***BENEFITS: Free-of-Charge***

- 1) Standard Booth Exhibition at the EU Pavilion in the International Symposium on Geographical Indications at Centara Grand at CentralWorld on 27-28 March<sup>1</sup>
- 2) Sale opportunity at Gourmet Market, Paragon Shopping Complex on 29-31 March<sup>2</sup>

Additional cost for extra booth decoration, freight forwarder, custom tariff will be borne by the exhibitors. Our designated freight forwarder will assist the exhibitors on documentation and provide information on the tariff rate as well as other relevant information.

<sup>1</sup>The standard booth size 9 m<sup>2</sup> will be equipped standard decoration and equipment.

<sup>2</sup>Only applicable for products authorized by FDA/responsible authorities. Gourmet Market will deduct 25%