

# Didier Reynders deepens relations between Malaysia and Belgium



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Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Didier Reynders met with Prime Minister Sri Mohd Najib and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Hamzah Zainudin during the Belgian Economic Mission headed by HRH Princess Astrid. The Ministers discussed the bilateral relations between Belgium and Malaysia, several current issues of geopolitical interest, as well as regional integration in Southeast Asia.

The Malaysian government is closely following the international investigation into the disaster of the Malaysian Airlines plane in Ukraine in August. Didier Reynders expressed the support of Belgium for the full involvement of Malaysia in this investigation. The Minister will take the opportunity of his next trip to Kiev on 7 December to discuss the matter.

Minister Reynders also commended Malaysia on its election to the UN Security Council for the period 2015-2016. He recalled on this occasion the Belgian candidature to the UNSC for the period 2019-2020. Belgium and Malaysia share an approach to international relations based on dialogue, cooperation and effective multilateralism. At the diplomatic institute of Kuala Lumpur, Didier Reynders has given a lecture on moderation, a key concept of Malaysian foreign policy launched by the Prime Minister of Malaysia at the 65th General Assembly of the United Nations in 2010. This conference was preceded by a lunch on human rights and fundamental freedoms with representatives of Malaysian civil society.

Economically, Belgium is the 4th European investor in Malaysia and the 6th worldwide exporter to Malaysia, one of the most advanced Asian economies. Malaysia assumes the rotating chairmanship of ASEAN on 1 January 2015, with the aim to materialise a single market of over 600 million people. Didier Reynders and his Malaysian counterparts naturally emphasized the analogies with European integration.

Belgium is one of the most active European countries in Malaysia, with whom it enjoys excellent bilateral relations, both at economic and political level. It is in this atmosphere of confidence that Malaysia explained the particular importance of the palm oil market. Didier Reynders said in this connection that the approach of the Belgian consumer is to be placed in the context of European regulations on labeling. This regulation requires that all ingredients be listed, including all vegetable oils and fats. Transparent and accurate labelling, including of vegetable oils and fats, is indeed an issue affecting the rights and health of consumers everywhere and it is thus paramount that consumers are fully informed of all the contents and ingredients of their purchases.



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