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Thursday June 23, 2011

Union wants to collaborate with varsity and hold green ICT seminar in Penang

THE European Union (EU) looks forward to working closely with Penang on the green agenda, said its delegation to Malaysia head Vincent Picket.

Picket said the delegation aimed to partner with Penang on a 'business-to-business' platform to further green initiatives.

"We're looking at organising a seminar on green ICT (information and communications technology).

"ICT is a big sector for this state. So, focusing on this sector and looking at how we can green this sector is one way (to forge this partnership)," he said.

"We also have a large research and development programme which prioritises energy efficiency and renewable energy and we hope to see a collaboration on this with Universiti Sains Malaysia," he said at the Town Hall on Tuesday after the opening of the first EU-Penang Day.



Partnership plan: Picket giving his address at the opening of EU-Penang Day at the Town Hall, Penang

Picket was among six EU ambassadors who came for the one-day event which was aimed at forging closer ties with Penang.

He said it was the first time the delegation had organise an outreach programme of this kind outside the Klang Valley.

He earlier led ambassadors Andrea Wicke (Austria), Marc Mullie (Belgium), Svend Weaver (Denmark), Paul Bekkers (the Netherlands) and Petru Petra (Romania) along with several EU honorary consuls for a breakfast with Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and state officials.

Lim, who also spoke at the opening ceremony, said the EU was Malaysia's third largest export market, with exports there totalling RM68.7bil last year, almost 10% of the RM693bil in total exports.

He said the biggest export market was North Asia (RM223bil) followed by the Asean region (RM163bil).

He added that the state government and the EU delegation to Malaysia aimed to make the EU-Penang Day an annual affair.

During the day, Piket and the other ambassadors gave briefings on the history and workings of the EU and conducted a trade and investment gathering with the EU-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry and investPenang.

There was also a friendly EU vs Penang futsal match at the Esplanade.

Piket at a later press conference revealed that the bilateral trade in goods between Malaysia and EU reached its highest ever with more than RM140bil last year.

The amount, he said, showed a significant increase in comparison to the previous year of 2009 which was RM108bil.

He said: "The trade involved was mainly on the natural resources and the electrical and electronic products. The natural resources were palm oil, timber and rubber."

When asked on the projection for this year, Piket said: "We won't do that, but I have no reason to think that we won't be doing well."