

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1838/03

by Roger Helmer (PPE-DE), Charles Tannock (PPE-DE), Sir Robert Atkins (PPE-DE), Giles Chichester (PPE-DE), Hartmut Nassauer (PPE-DE) and Jules Maaten (ELDR)  
to the Commission

Subject: Free Trade Agreement between Singapore and the EU

Does the Commission recognise the substantial mutual benefits that could result from an Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Singapore? Does the Commission share our concern that Singapore either has, or is negotiating, FTAs with surrounding countries including Japan, China and India, and that the EU may therefore be disadvantaged in dealing with Singapore unless we too have an FTA? Does the Commission agree that Singapore's status as a country with tiny agricultural production makes it a particularly straightforward country with which to negotiate an FTA?

We understand that tentative offers of an FTA from the EU to Singapore have been linked to rather specific conditions, for example that the FTA should apply to at least two countries from ASEAN, Singapore and at least one other. Would the Commission not agree that, given the benefits to the EU, we should seek to make the offer as easy as possible for Singapore to accept? Would the Commission agree that the wide variations in economic and political development between ASEAN countries might make the "Two Countries" criterion very difficult for Singapore to fulfil, and might prove an unnecessary and counter-productive barrier to an FTA?