

Dear Ms **SIM** Ann,
Minister of State, Ministry of
Education and Ministry of
Communications and Information

Dear Mr Sam **TAN** Chin Siong,
Minister of State, Prime Minister's
Office and Ministry of Culture,
Community and Youth

Dear Ms Ellen **LEE** Geck Hoon,
Member of the Parliament for
Sembawang Group Representation
Constituency

Dear Mr Edwin **TONG** Chun Fai,
Member of the Parliament for
Moulmein-Kallang Group
Representation Constituency

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Leif Lëtzebuerger Matbirger,

Dear friends,

First of all, of course, let me thank all of you for joining us here tonight, on the occasion of the traditional celebration of the Luxembourg National Day. I hope that you will enjoy your evening with us.

A year has gone by, since I last stood here, and while looking back at all that has happened during these twelve months, I can tell you that it has been an interesting and oftentimes very dense year for both our countries.

I believe that, during that time, both have learned a lot from each other, and about each other, both our

representatives have had many fruitful exchanges and they have identified new fields of overlapping interests and a lot of potential for future co-operation.

To sum up, the last twelve months have been marked by what I would call “changes in continuity”, be it in Luxembourg or in the relations between Luxembourg and Singapore.

On the 20th of October last year, there have been, as you certainly know, elections in Luxembourg, early elections, which is, in itself, an exceptional phenomenon in my country.

Moreover, these elections have seen a new Government emerge, a coalition of three parties, led by a new Prime Minister – clearly an element of change and innovation.

On the other side, on continuity, as far as the relations with Singapore are concerned, it came as no surprise that, just as did the Ministers of the previous Government, the members of the new Government keep up with the tradition of regular exchanges with their Singaporean counterparts.

This takes me to the second highlight of the past twelve months and, considering the fact that it has been a first since 1996, certainly the most important event on my list.

I am speaking, of course, of the visit of the Prime Minister of Singapore, H.E. Mr Lee Hsien Loong, to Luxembourg last 26th of March, less than eighteen months after Prime Minister Juncker's visit to Singapore in November 2012.

Prime Minister Lee's visit allowed the new Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Mr Xavier Bettel, to confirm not only the constancy of Luxembourg's commitment to both our countries bilateral relations and to demonstrate the strength of our friendship, but also to propose to intensify those relations and to build up a closer collaboration in new sectors.

An early example for such an effort to develop relations in new areas can be seen in the recent mission organized by the Business Federation Luxembourg (FEDIL), during the week of May 19th, in order to learn more about and from Singapore's Information and Communication Technologies Sector. The Embassy had the opportunity to join the delegation on that occasion and I can

assure you that these few days were well invested.

This recent mission adds up to a few more traditional activities, like the seminar organized in Singapore on December 4th by the Association of the Luxembourg Fund Industry (ALFI), or the upcoming mission organized by Luxembourg for Finance (LFF), Luxembourg's Agency for the promotion of its financial sector. The delegation will be led by the new Minister of Finance, Mr Pierre Gramegna, and during his presence here in Singapore, the Embassy will seek for the Minister to meet with representatives of Singaporean investment funds, banks, both Singaporean and Luxembourg based, the Monetary Authorities of Singapore, the Minister of Finance, as well as various members of the

Singaporean business and finance community.

I could not complete my list without at least mentioning the signature, in Washington, in the margins of the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, on the 9th of October, of a new and modernized agreement between Singapore and Luxembourg on the avoidance of double taxation, and the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between Singapore and the European Union. I am convinced that all these agreements will facilitate future joint business endeavors.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

As I have pointed out, the past year has been intense and I could certainly go on with my list for a longer part of the evening.

But I would not like to be too long and I still have a few important messages to deliver, illustrating once more what I called in the beginning “*changes in continuity*”.

As all of you know, during the past five years, Peter Sung has been Luxembourg’s Honorary Consul in Singapore. (*Ambassador invites Mr. Sung to the stage.*) Together with his team, Peter, tirelessly and on a voluntary basis, contributed with elegance and devotion to the numerous Luxembourg events and visits which happened to take place during those five years. He was “our man, and face, in Singapore”.

Peter's mandate has come to an end three months ago and he has chosen not to seek its renewal. As it is customary for honorary functions, Peter received a simple thank-you letter from our Minister of Foreign Affairs and was granted "honorable resignation of his functions" by our Head of State, the Grand Duke, whose birthday we are celebrating today.

Peter, on my behalf and on behalf of all of us, please accept this small present as a souvenir from Luxembourg and a modest sign of our deepest recognition for your exemplary engagement. Thank you very very much! *(May I ask for a well deserved applause.)*

Peter himself contributed greatly in order to ensure that the change in the position of Luxembourg's Honorary

Consul happened without disruption and in total continuity, by not only making us a proposal for his succession but by also associating his successor very closely to his activities during the last months of his tenure.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

I have now the pleasure and the privilege to formally introduce to you the new Honorary Consul of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in Singapore, Ms Michelle Liem. (*Ambassador invites Ms Liem to the stage.*)

Dear Michelle, on behalf of our Head of State, I have the honor to officially hand you over the Royal Decree appointing you as our new Honorary Consul as well as your Letters of Commission, signed and sealed by HRH Grand Duke Henri.

Needless to add that I know that you will accomplish your mandate with equal grace and commitment as your predecessor. We, my colleagues and staff at the Embassy and myself, we already had the opportunity to appreciate the excellence and the proficiency of your deeds by observing your numerous actions and initiatives with regards to the ICT mission, our National Day Event and Minister Gramegna's upcoming visit. But we are also convinced that you will be a competent and charming interlocutor for all the Luxembourg citizens residing or interested in Singapore. Thus we are very grateful to you for having accepted to be our "new face" in Singapore.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

I would not like to end my speech without including in my thanks Mr. Patrick Seil, our Advisor for Foreign Trade, as well as the sponsors which are all mentioned on the invitation, for their contribution to the success of this night's event. Thank you very much.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

May I now invite you to listen to the national anthem of Singapore, before joining me in a toast to the good health and the long life of His Excellency President Tony Tan (Keng Yam).

To the President.