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No direct impact on M'sia should UK pull out of EU



Ahmad Rasidi: 'If UK remains in the EU, it will be status quo.'

LONDON: The United Kingdom's decision to remain or withdraw from the European Union (EU) will not have a direct impact on Malaysia, said Malaysian High Commissioner to the UK Datuk Ahmad Rasidi Hazizi.

He said this was because of the strong foundation built between the two countries in their bilateral relationship.

"We have built a strong foundation in our relationship with the UK and even the EU itself. People-to-people and government-to-government relationships are strong, so it won't tremendously affect us in that sense," he said.

Meanwhile, it has been reported that a referendum would be held on June 23 to decide whether Britain should exit (Brexit) or remain in the EU with the latest survey indicating Britons are evenly divided on this.

"We don't know what will happen to the world if this happens but our relation is tremendous," said Ahmad Rasidi, who explained that Malaysia is still a part of the Commonwealth and it has bilateral relations with EU countries as well.

"If it remains (in the EU), it will be status quo but we will adjust to whatever the situation is," he told the Malaysian media recently,

ahead of the working visit by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to the UK.

Meanwhile, Najib is here for the Malaysia-UK Investor Showcase, Topping Out Ceremony of Legacy 1 at Embassy Gardens, the 6th Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council meeting and launching of Khazanah Europe Investment Ltd.

Of importance, Ahmad Rasidi said was the Investor Showcase on May 16 as it involved prominent people in business, which would be a forum set to learn and exchange ideas with a view to promote a stronger Malaysia-UK partnership through business opportunities and long-term investment.

The showcase is co-hosted by UK-Asean Business Council, Malaysian High Commission in London, Malaysian Investment Development Authority and Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council, of which the latter is a non-profit organisation with the aim to facilitate increased trade and investment across the Commonwealth.

The prime minister is expecting a courtesy call from the first woman and the sixth secretary-general of the Commonwealth Patricia Scotland before the event starts,

which Ahmad Rasidi said would be a good start for further firm commitment as Malaysia was expected to host the the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2020 and assume as its chair for the 2020-2022 term.

He said the presence of the prime minister was important as the forum involved both UK and Malaysian investors with lots of opportunities to help boost investments and trade further.

He added that Malaysian investors were strong in the property sector in London, with the likes of investments by Lembaga Tabung Haji, Employees Provident Fund, Federal Land Development Authority or Felda, Sime Darby and others.

However, efforts are also being done to bring in Malaysian expertise and technologies to be involved in research and development activities here following the success of iGene Sdn Bhd, the developer of autopsy imaging software solution, in providing the technology in the UK.

Touching on the new Muslim mayor of London Sadiq Khan, Ahmad Rasidi said the High Commission would try to engage with him as early as possible. - Bernama