

# IN DIPLOMACY

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SINGAPORE

**52ND CHRISTMAS**  
PRESENTATION BY CATHEDRAL CHOIR  
BLEND MUSIC, DIPLOMACY,  
AND TRADITION

**PRESIDENT**  
**THARMAN SHANMUGARATNAM'S**  
STATE VISIT TO MEXICO

**MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE**  
12TH LEADERS' RETREAT

**SINGAPORE AND CHINA**  
21ST JCBC IN CHONGQING



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

# A Year Concluded, Partnerships Strengthened



**A**s we present the final issue of IN Diplomacy for 2025, we extend our warmest wishes to our readers, partners, and the global diplomatic community for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. December offers a natural pause – a moment to reflect not only on the year gone by, but on the enduring relationships and shared responsibilities that continue to shape international engagement.

This year-end edition is led by our cover story, “52nd Christmas Presentation by Cathedral Choir Blends Music, Diplomacy, and Tradition,” a testament to how cultural expression continues to serve as a powerful diplomatic bridge in Singapore. The annual Christmas presentation, steeped in heritage and harmony, brought together members of the diplomatic corps, faith leaders, and the wider community – reminding us that diplomacy is not only conducted through policy and protocol, but also through shared traditions, music, and moments of collective celebration.

Beyond the cover, this issue captures Singapore’s diplomacy at a defining juncture – one marked by depth of partnership, principled cooperation, and an unwavering commitment to dialogue. From President Tharman Shanmugaratnam’s State Visit to Mexico, which advanced collaboration in environmental sustainability and international development, to the 12th Malaysia–Singapore Leaders’ Retreat, where trust, friendship, and strategic clarity guided discussions, the months closing 2025 reaffirmed diplomacy as both relationship-driven and future-oriented.

Our coverage also highlights the momentum of major bilateral frameworks. The 21st Joint Council for Bilateral Cooperation with China in Chongqing marked a milestone year in Singapore–China relations, delivering tangible outcomes across green finance, digital connectivity, trade, and people-to-people exchanges. These engagements underscore how structured cooperation continues to provide stability and opportunity amid global uncertainty.

A special moment in this issue is the launch of the India–Singapore @60 Coffee Table Book by Sun Media, commemorating six decades of diplomatic relations through stories of people, institutions, and shared progress. At a time when diplomacy is often measured by agreements and outcomes, this publication serves as a reminder that enduring partnerships are sustained by human connection, cultural exchange, and collective memory.

Beyond state visits and high-level meetings, this edition reflects the broader tapestry of diplomacy in Singapore – from national day commemorations and farewell receptions within the diplomatic corps, to cultural showcases, cyber policy dialogue, and community-focused initiatives led by foreign missions. Together, these moments illustrate diplomacy not as isolated events, but as a continuous, living process rooted in trust, respect, and engagement.

As 2025 comes to a close, IN Diplomacy remains committed to documenting this evolving global conversation with balance, clarity, and purpose. We thank our readers and contributors for their continued trust throughout the year, and we look ahead to 2026 with optimism – confident that dialogue, cooperation, and shared values will remain central to the international order.

Happy reading, and season’s greetings.

– Nomita Dhar, Editor-in-Chief, IN Diplomacy

# 52nd Christmas Presentation by Cathedral Choir Blends Music, Diplomacy, and Tradition

The Cathedral Choir of the Risen Christ marked its 52nd Christmas Presentation in Singapore with multilingual music, diplomatic participation, and a renewed message of peace.



52nd Christmas Presentation by Singapore Cathedral Choir of the Risen Christ

Singapore The Cathedral Choir of the Risen Christ held its 52nd Annual Christmas Presentation at the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd in Singapore, drawing diplomats, dignitaries, clergy, and parishioners for an evening of sacred reflection and festive celebration. The event was graced by Ms Indranee Rajah, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Finance and National Development, who attended as Guest of Honour. The programme began with solemn liturgical pieces depicting the Nativity narrative, before expanding into an extensive repertoire of carols performed in more than 30 languages, including Latin, French, Tamil, and Mandarin. This multilingual approach underscored Singapore's cultural diversity while emphasising the universal spirit of the Christmas season.

A central feature of the evening was the "Tree of Peace" ceremony, during which ambassadors and high commissioners placed ornaments bearing the flags of their respective countries. The gesture served as

a symbolic expression of unity, international friendship, and goodwill. In attendance were numerous members of the diplomatic corps, alongside Archbishop Marek Zalewski,



H.E. Allaster Cox  
Australian High Commissioner  
to Singapore



H.E. Luciano Mazza de Andrade  
Ambassador of Brazil  
to Singapore



H.E. Dr Shilpak Ambule  
High Commissioner of India  
to Singapore



H.E. Dr. Anjani K. Sinha  
U.S. Ambassador to Singapore



H.E. Kateryna Zelenko  
Ambassador of Ukraine to Singapore

Apostolic Nuncio to Singapore, and Sir Peter Low, founder-director of the choir. Their presence highlighted the presentation's dual significance as both a spiritual observance and a diplomatic gathering. The performance brought together 72 choristers supported by musicians and volunteers. The choir delivered a selection of classical works—including Handel's Hallelujah Chorus—and traditional favourites such as Adeste Fideles. The evening concluded with a collective rendition of Silent Night, sung by both choir and audience, offering a poignant moment of reflection and unity.

Founded in 1970, the Cathedral Choir of the Risen Christ has become one of Singapore's longest-standing cultural and liturgical traditions. Its annual Christmas presentation continues to strengthen ties across communities and nations through music, faith, and cross-cultural appreciation.

# Singapore Deepened Bilateral Cooperation with Mexico Through New Agreements

Singapore and Mexico signed two MOUs to enhance collaboration in environmental sustainability and international development.



*Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam signed new agreements with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo*

Singapore reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening ties with Mexico during President Tharman Shanmugaratnam's State Visit to the National Palace in Mexico City on 1 December 2025. President Tharman was received by Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo, where both leaders witnessed the signing of two key Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).

The first MOU, signed on behalf of Singapore by Minister of State for Trade and Industry Alvin Tan Sheng Hui, formalised cooperation with Mexico on coral reef restoration. The agreement established a framework for scientific and technical collaboration, aligning bilateral environmental priorities and supporting efforts to enhance marine resilience. It also reflected Singapore's continued commitment to environmental stewardship and the conservation of vital ecosystems.

A second MOU on International Cooperation for Development was signed by Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Minister of State for Higher Education, David Neo Chin Wee. The agreement, concluded with Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, created a platform for both countries to jointly promote development programmes for third countries. It strengthened Singapore's role in South-South cooperation and expanded opportunities for knowledge sharing and capacity building.



*Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo witnessed the signing of new bilateral agreements*

The State Visit underscored the growing partnership between Singapore and Mexico, particularly in areas of sustainability, global development, and policy collaboration. The newly signed MOUs provided a stronger legal and institutional foundation for future cooperation and affirmed Singapore's commitment to working closely with international partners to address shared challenges.

# Malaysia and Singapore Deepen Strategic Cooperation During 12th Leaders' Retreat in Singapore

Prime Ministers Anwar Ibrahim and Lawrence Wong reaffirmed their close personal friendship and strengthened bilateral collaboration across connectivity, economic growth, security, and regional leadership.



*Malaysia Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim (left) with Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong (right)*

Malaysia's Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim, arrived in Singapore to a warm reception from his counterpart and long-time friend, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong. The visit began with a luncheon and a cordial four-eye meeting that reflected not only the personal bond between the two leaders but also the deep-rooted ties between Malaysia and Singapore. PM Anwar expressed his appreciation for the gracious hospitality extended by PM Wong and the Singapore Government, noting that it symbolised the enduring friendship shared by both nations.

During their private discussions, the two leaders engaged in highly positive exchanges on several outstanding bilateral matters. These included issues relating to airspace management, water

supply, and the coordination of maritime boundaries—areas that remain central to maintaining stability and mutual trust

between the neighbouring countries. Both sides reiterated their commitment to resolving these matters constructively for long-term benefit.

Later in the afternoon, PM Anwar and PM Wong led their respective delegations in an in-depth bilateral meeting. The discussions were productive and resulted in several shared understandings aimed at expanding cooperation across sectors such as economic development, connectivity, and security. The strong relationship between Malaysia and Singapore, as close neighbours and founding members of ASEAN, was further reinforced through these engagements.

PM Anwar also highlighted the encouraging achievement of RM17.97 billion in business investments recorded under the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) since the signing of the MoU last year. At the joint press conference, he stressed that



*A high-level government meeting between officials from Malaysia and Singapore during the Malaysia-Singapore 12th Leaders' Retreat*



*Exchange of documents during the 12th Malaysia-Singapore Annual Leaders' Retreat in Singapore*



*Malaysia Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim (left) and Singapore Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan (right)*

such accomplishments were made possible through the trust, mutual respect, and longstanding friendship between both countries. The leaders witnessed the exchange of several MoUs covering health cooperation, tackling drug distribution, and an additional agreement on the Johor Bahru-Singapore Rapid Transit System (RTS Link). Singapore additionally announced plans to open new consulates in Kota Kinabalu and Kuching, which are expected to enhance local economic, tourism, and renewable energy opportunities.



*A press conference following the 12th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat*

The working visit was particularly meaningful as it coincided with the 60th anniversary of Malaysia-Singapore diplomatic relations. As host of the 12th Leaders' Retreat, PM Wong also organised a special tea reception for the Malaysian delegation. During the joint media address, PM Anwar was touched by PM Wong's heartfelt expression of gratitude for their personal friendship and the trust shared between their governments. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to charting a strategic direction that would ensure continued stability and shared prosperity for their nations.

PM Anwar concluded by thanking PM Wong and the Singapore Government for their continuous support of Malaysia, especially as the country assumes the ASEAN Chairmanship in 2025. The visit not only strengthened bilateral cooperation but also reinforced the importance of friendship, trust, and collaboration in shaping the future of both Malaysia and Singapore.

# Sun Media Launches India–Singapore @60 Coffee Table Book Celebrating Six Decades of Bilateral Ties

Excellency Dr Shilpak Ambule, High Commissioner of India to Singapore, and Mr Lennon Tan, President of the Singapore Manufacturing Federation, to commemorate 60 years of bilateral relations.



*Representatives of embassies and high commissions joined H.E. Dr Shilpak Ambule, Mr Lennon Tan, and Ms Nomita Dhar at the launch*

The India–Singapore @60 Coffee Table Book was officially launched on Wednesday, 17 December 2025, at the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF). The launch was jointly officiated by H.E. Dr Shilpak Ambule, High Commissioner of India, and Mr Lennon Tan, President of Singapore Manufacturing Federation, and attended by the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Mr Agustín García-López Loaeza, embassy representatives, business leaders, and delegates from the featured companies and institutions.

The programme featured welcome and keynote remarks by Ms Nomita Dhar, Editor-in-Chief of Sun Media, H.E. Dr Ambule, and Mr Tan, highlighting six decades of India–Singapore relations, people-to-people ties, and collaboration across diplomacy, business, education, and culture. Video presentations showcased the partnership and the making of the coffee table book. Published by Sun Media Pte Ltd, the India–Singapore @60 Coffee Table Book marked six decades of diplomatic relations, shared history, and the evolving partnership between India and Singapore. The publication celebrated past

achievements and ongoing collaboration between India and Singapore. Featuring stories on diplomacy, innovation, art, civic life, and community, it highlighted the individuals and institutions that have strengthened bilateral ties, emphasizing that people and their stories are at the heart of lasting partnerships.

The India–Singapore @60 Coffee Table Book featured contributions and insights from a wide range of organisations, including the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

(RSIS), Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), Enterprise Singapore, Invest India, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI), Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Global Indian International School (GIIS), Indian Heritage Centre, Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA), Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Temasek, PSA International, Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society (SIFAS), Radio Masti, SCC Cricket Academy, as well as cultural and community figures including Soundara Nayaki, Shabbir Hassanbhai, Chitra Shankar, and K. V. Rao.

The publication was supported by key advertisers, including SingHealth, State Bank of India (SBI), NPS International School, S P Jain School of Global Management, and Australian International School, reflecting strong institutional backing from sectors spanning healthcare, finance, and education. The launch of the India–Singapore @60 Coffee Table Book celebrated six decades of strong bilateral relations, bringing together diplomats, institutions, businesses, and community leaders, and serving as a lasting tribute to the people, partnerships, and stories that shape the India–Singapore relationship.



*Guests of the India–Singapore @60 Coffee Table Book Launch*

# Singapore and China Cooperation at 21st JCBC in Chongqing

Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong co-chaired high-level meetings with China, marking key milestones in bilateral ties and advancing cooperation across multiple sectors.



21st Joint Council for Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC) meeting between China and Singapore held in Chongqing, China

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong co-chaired the 21st Joint Council for Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC) and related Joint Steering Council (JSC) meetings with Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang in Chongqing, China, on 15 December 2025. The meetings took place in conjunction with the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Singapore and China.

Prior to the meetings, DPM Gan and Vice Premier Ding held a bilateral discussion, during which both sides reaffirmed the strong and mutually beneficial state of Singapore–China relations. They committed to deepening cooperation to address geopolitical uncertainties and rapid technological changes, while strengthening trade links, economic connectivity, and people-to-people exchanges. DPM Gan also reiterated Singapore's consistent adherence to its "One China" policy.

The JCBC reviewed progress across a broad range of cooperation areas, including trade, sustainability, digital and green economies, food security, finance, science and innovation, education, public health, and cultural exchanges. A total of 27 memoranda of understanding and agreements were announced, covering initiatives such as green finance, digital connectivity, customs cooperation, financial market integration, renewable energy, and

youth and sports cooperation. Both sides also agreed to enhance collaboration in emerging areas to deliver high-quality outcomes that would benefit both countries and the wider region.

The meetings also marked significant milestones for flagship projects, including the China–Singapore (Chongqing) Demonstration Initiative on Strategic Connectivity (CC1), which celebrated its 10th anniversary. Leaders welcomed new deliverables outlining the CCI's next phase, reinforcing its role as a strategic trade corridor linking Western China to Southeast Asia and beyond. Progress was similarly noted for the Suzhou Industrial Park and the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City, with continued emphasis on green development, innovation, and people-to-people ties.

The successful conclusion of the 21st JCBC and related JSC meetings underscored Singapore and China's shared commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation, enhancing regional connectivity, and contributing to sustainable and inclusive growth across Asia.

# National Day

## Singapore Reaffirmed Strong Ties at Thailand's National Day Reception

A representative of the Singapore Government attended Thailand's National Day Reception on the evening of 3 December 2025, marking a key moment in the 60th anniversary of Singapore-Thailand diplomatic relations. The event celebrated the longstanding partnership between both countries and their commitment to advancing cooperation in emerging and strategic areas.

During the reception, Singapore underscored the depth of its political and economic ties with Thailand, which have been strengthened through close people-to-people links built over decades. The relationship has grown beyond traditional sectors to include sustainability, food security, and digital economy collaboration.

The Singapore representative highlighted recent milestones achieved in 2025. In August, both countries signed an Implementation Agreement on Carbon Credits Collaboration – Singapore's first such agreement with an ASEAN Member State – to promote green investments and support national climate targets. In November, Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul's introductory visit to Singapore saw the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation on Rice Trade, contributing to regional food security.

Reflecting on the progress of bilateral relations, Singapore expressed confidence that both nations would continue strengthening cooperation and contributing to a more prosperous, resilient, and vibrant region. Singapore also conveyed warm wishes to Thailand in celebration of its National Day.



*Singapore Marked 60 Years of Diplomatic Relations at Thailand's National Day Reception*



*Thailand's National Day Reception*

# Farewell

## Diplomatic and Consular Corps in Singapore Hosts Farewell Reception for Ambassador Suryo Pratomo

The Diplomatic and Consular Corps in Singapore hosted a farewell reception in honour of H.E. Suryo Pratomo and Madam Noeri Widowati, marking the conclusion of Ambassador Pratomo's tenure in Singapore at the end of December 2025. The reception was held on Friday, 12 December 2025, at the Turquoise Room, Level 3, Sheraton Towers Singapore, and brought together members of the diplomatic community and invited guests. The event was hosted by the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador Agustín García-López Loaeza, together with Madam Katya Anaya de la Fuente. It served as an occasion to reflect on Ambassador Pratomo's contributions to diplomatic relations in Singapore and his engagement with the diplomatic and consular community during his posting.

Throughout his tenure, Ambassador Pratomo was recognised for fostering strong professional ties and warm personal relationships within the diplomatic corps. The evening reflected the sense of mutual respect and camaraderie built over the years, highlighting the collaborative spirit that characterises Singapore's diplomatic community. Ambassador Suryo Pratomo expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the farewell reception organised by the diplomatic corps in Singapore. He described the friendships formed as extraordinary and emphasised the strong bonds that had been created, noting that it was not a goodbye, but a continuation of relationships that he believed would cross paths again in the future. The farewell reception concluded on a note of warmth and reflection, underscoring the lasting connections forged during Ambassador Pratomo's service in Singapore and the enduring goodwill between him, his spouse, and the diplomatic community he leaves behind.



*A farewell reception celebrated the service of H.E. Suryo Pratomo in Singapore*



*The diplomatic community gathered to honour the conclusion of Ambassador Pratomo's tenure in Singapore*

# Events



From left to right: Brendan Dowling, David Koh, Yukio Saita, Nate Fick at Aspen Cyber Summit 2025

## Singapore Highlights Cyber Resilience Strategy at Aspen Cyber Summit 2025

Mr David Koh, Chief Executive of the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (CSA) and Singapore's Commissioner of Cybersecurity, participated in the Aspen Cyber Summit 2025 held in Washington, D.C., United States. Addressing global cybersecurity leaders, he emphasised that trust could only be built through consistent effort and meaningful engagement across the international community. The Summit gathered more than 550 senior representatives from governments, industry, and civil society. Participants discussed emerging digital threats, evolving cyber risks, and the essential role of collaboration between the public and private sectors. International engagement remained a central theme, particularly in strengthening collective responses to cross-border cyber challenges.

Mr Koh joined the panel "Strategic Frontlines: Cyber Policy in the Asia-Pacific", alongside Mr Brendan Dowling from Australia's Department of Home Affairs, Mr Saita Yukio from Japan's National Cybersecurity Office, and Mr Nate Fick, former US Ambassador-at-Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy.

## Temasek Chairman Delivered 5th Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial Lecture in New Delhi

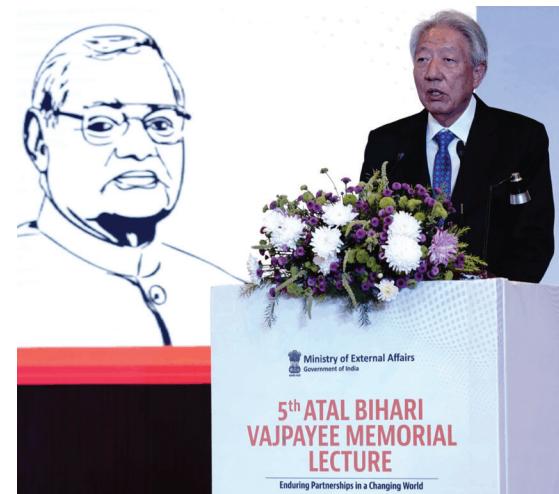
On his visit to India, Chairman of Temasek Holdings, Mr Teo Chee Hean, delivered the 5th Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial Lecture. The event brought together policymakers, academics and industry leaders to discuss geopolitical developments and the evolving regional landscape. In his remarks, Mr Teo reflected on the significant global changes underway, including shifting power dynamics, the rise of emerging economies, and the increasing complexity of international challenges. He underscored the importance of strategic autonomy for countries navigating a more fragmented world, and highlighted the value of flexible multilateralism as a practical approach to cooperation. Mr Teo also spoke on the trajectory of India-Singapore relations, expressing confidence in their continued growth. He emphasised that both countries shared a strong foundation built on economic ties, mutual trust and forward-looking collaboration. Their partnership, he noted, could serve as an anchor for regional stability, resilience and sustainable development.



Kazakh Film Days Held in Singapore to Mark Key National Anniversaries



Ambassador Askar Kuttukadam (second from left) at the Kazakh Film Days in Singapore



Temasek Holdings Chairman, Mr Teo Chee Hean, Delivered the 5th Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial Lecture in New Delhi

## Kazakh Film Days Held in Singapore to Mark Key National Milestones

Kazakh Film Days were held in Singapore from 10 to 12 December 2025 in conjunction with the Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the 35th anniversary of Kazakhstan, and the 60th anniversary of Singapore. The event was organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Singapore, with the support of the Sh. Aimanov Kazakhfilm Studio and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan. During the three-day programme, audiences in Singapore were introduced to a selection of contemporary Kazakh films, offering insights into modern Kazakh society, culture, and storytelling. The screenings formed part of Kazakhstan's cultural outreach efforts and aimed to strengthen people-to-people connections through cinema.

Through the films presented, Kazakhstan was portrayed as a confident, open, and modern nation, reflecting the values highlighted under the "Born Bold" national campaign. The showcase provided Singaporean audiences with an opportunity to better understand Kazakhstan's creative industry and cultural identity.



*India High Commission Inaugurates One Stop Centre to Support Women in Singapore*

### **Indian High Commission Inaugurates One Stop Centre to Support Indian Women in Singapore**

The High Commissioner of India inaugurated the 'One Stop Centre' (OSC) today, 15 December 2025, in Singapore. The centre is designed to provide comprehensive support to Indian women facing distress, offering legal, medical, psychological, and other essential services under one roof.

The OSC aims to empower women by creating a safe and supportive environment where they can access the necessary assistance without delay. It reflects a commitment to the welfare and protection of Indian women living in Singapore.

Through this initiative, the High Commission hopes to foster a community of care and empowerment, ensuring that women in distress can receive timely help and guidance. The centre also serves as a resource hub to promote awareness and access to support services within the Indian community in Singapore.



*The Rwanda High Commission showcased the country's tourism at the RSYC Christmas Boat Light-Up Parade.*



*South African High Commission Reflects on 2025 Achievements in Singapore*

### **South African High Commission in Singapore Reflects on a Year of Partnership and Progress in 2025**

In an increasingly fast-paced world, the importance of pausing to express gratitude is often overlooked. As the year 2025 approached its conclusion, the South African High Commission (SAHC) in Singapore took the opportunity to reflect on the collective efforts that shaped a productive and meaningful year, while encouraging moments of rest and togetherness with loved ones. The High Commission conveyed its sincere appreciation to its partners, the vibrant South African community in Singapore, and numerous institutions in both South Africa and Singapore. Their generous contributions of time, energy and resources were instrumental to the Commission's achievements throughout the year. Without such steadfast support, many of the milestones reached in 2025 would not have been possible.