

**Welcome remarks at ASEF-NUS “The EU through the Eyes of Asia”  
Book Launch, Asia-Europe Foundation, 18 April 2008**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is my pleasure to join you this morning for the ASEF-NUS “The EU through the Eyes of Asia” Book Launch.

2. I would like to congratulate the European Studies in Asia (ESiA) network and the six participating prominent universities in Asia for putting together a comprehensive study on the perceptions of the European Union (EU) in the Asian region.

3. The year 2007 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> year of ASEAN-EU relations. These relations have grown and expanded to cover a wide range of areas including political and security, economic and trade, social and cultural development cooperation. ASEAN is a key partner for Europe. As a bloc, ASEAN is the EU's 5<sup>th</sup> largest overall trading partner, ahead of Japan, Norway and Turkey. EU is currently ASEAN's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest trading partner, ahead of China and Japan, and accounting for 11.7% of ASEAN trade.

4. A key pillar of Singapore's relations with Europe is economic cooperation. Singapore acts as the hub for European business in the Asia-Pacific region. The German Centre for Industry and Trade, the German Singapore Chamber of Commerce, the Singapore-British Business Council and the France-Singapore Business Council have been established to help European small and medium enterprises start-up their operations in Singapore and the region. There are more than 1,500 European companies in Singapore. Many use Singapore as regional headquarters, logistics and distribution centre for the region. Among the 10 ASEAN countries, Singapore is the largest trading partner with Europe. In 2005, the EU has overtaken the US as Singapore's largest trading partner after Malaysia and the largest source of foreign direct investment here. These figures reveal the weight of our existing economic relationship.

5. Singapore and the EU have enjoyed closed ties at many levels and across many sectors including political, cultural, education and economic sectors. On the political front, cooperation is fostered by a regular exchange of high-level visits and multilateral fora. Strong economic ties have been made possible by joint efforts and close cooperation of a network of promotion authorities, business and industry federations and delegations, covering sectors such as engineering, electronics, ICT, environment, technology, chemical, logistics transport, biomedical sciences and services. On the research and education fronts, linkages between higher education and research institutes of Singapore and those of the various EU countries as well as student/academic exchange programmes have been established.

6. Science and Technology is an essential element in the pursuit of sustainable economic and social development, as well as the basis for competitiveness. Both Singapore and the EU decision makers have already identified R&D as being at the crux of their long-term economic competitiveness. The similar objectives and comparable approaches to research have made both natural partners for research collaborations. In this regard, NUS contributes to the Singapore-EU scientific and technological cooperation through its close links with the 12 national research institutes of A\*STAR, several of which already have links with other laboratories in Europe. For instance, NUS participates in joint projects with European and Asian organizations under EU's Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development and is often a member of research consortiums comprising of overseas government-funded research organizations, top universities, research institutes of A\*STAR. In addition, reputable overseas European universities, for example, the Karolinska Institute, Eindhoven University of Technology and Oxford University have partnered with NUS to offer educational and research activities. Many of our 20 University-level research institutes/centres in various fields ranging from research on Asia, mathematical sciences, nanotechnology to marine science, and 80 faculty-based research institutes/centres engaged in research ranging from applied & policy economics to electronic commerce to tissue engineering, have forged international collaborations with government bodies, private companies, higher education institutions and other organizations.

7. In education, NUS students have a plethora of study abroad opportunities through Student Exchanges and other Overseas Educational Programmes such as field trips and study visits in universities from over 40 countries, NUS Overseas Colleges, and joint and double degree programmes with prestigious overseas universities. The Student Exchange Programme reflects NUS' commitment to global education, allowing NUS undergraduates to spend a semester or two at an overseas partner University, earning credits towards their NUS degree. Double Degree Programmes with French Grande Ecoles, Sciences Po, London School of Economics and Joint Degree Programmes with Eindhoven University of Technology, Technical University of Munich, Technical University of Denmark and Karolinska Institute are some examples of our tie-ups which allow NUS to leverage on their teaching strengths as well as provide its students with a global perspective. In addition, NUS Overseas College partnerships with the Swedish Royal Institute of Technology and the Stockholm School of Entrepreneurship have enabled budding entrepreneurs in the NUS community to learn and work in the region's thriving entrepreneurial environment. The myriad of overseas educational exposure gives students a chance to experience student life in a foreign country, pick up a new language, absorb new cultures and learn to be a global citizen.

8. NUS is pleased to support the work that goes towards fostering strong links between the three main growth areas of the world – the US, Europe and Asia – in the interest of global stability. Misconceptions of the EU based on inadequate knowledge by leaders of public opinion can lead to inappropriate policy choices. This study by the ESiA sheds light on some of the opinions and attitudes that the media, the public and the elite have towards the EU and creates an impetus amongst other European studies centres in both Asia and Europe to cooperate on further study on the issue so as to deepen the understanding between the two regions. Once again, I warmly congratulate the ASEF, the authors and editors of the book for such a successful effort.

Thank you.