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EUROPEAN UNION
Delegation of the European Commission to Vietnam

“EU Through the Eyes of Asia” Volume II New Cases, New Findings

Speech by Willy Vandenberghe, Delegation of European Union to Vietnam

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- Ladies and Gentlemen,
- I warmly welcome all of you today to the public lecture and book launch of “How the EU is perceived in Asia – Volume II - New cases, new findings”.
- I would like to sincerely congratulate the project members and everyone involved in this project that devoted their time and efforts into producing such a fine collaborative piece.
- The publication of this volume II is a continuation and expansion of volume I, which already provided data on the perceptions of the EU in 6 research sites (China, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand). In this second volume, findings of the first publication are updated and fresh findings on the perception of the EU in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam are added.
- This publication is very timely, few days after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which will pave the way for better coherence in and visibility of the EU's external action, through the nomination of a High Representative for External Relations and the forthcoming establishment of the European External Action Service.
- As you all know, the European Union perceives Asia as a true partner, since both of us believe in effective multilateralism, mutual respect, and the promoting of diversity through cultural and educational exchange. We therefore have much to share and learn from each other from a political, economic, social, developmental and cultural point of view.
- In this second volume, we notice that EU-Asia relations have been broadened, deepened and intensified through wide-ranging dialogues on global issues and challenges such as climate change, sustainable development, security

and stability, governance and human rights, as well as the prevention of, and response to natural and human disasters.

- I agree that the overriding low visibility of the EU may be largely due to the sophisticated and complex strategic partnerships between EU and Asia. While visibility for politics and economic looks suitable – though still with room for improvement – our relationship with Asia needs to be better articulated and highlighted for development aid and global issues such as environmental protection and climate change. More importantly, all the mutual interactions between the two regions could be more attractive when they are also embedded in a broader, global, strategic context.
- This very much coincides with the objective and scope of the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreements that are currently negotiated between the EU and several Asian countries including Vietnam and that will offer a suitable strategic framework for further broadening our relationship.
- It is true that Europe is an important export market for much of Asia, but it is also correct to say that EU, through the European Commission and its 27 Member States, is an important source of development and humanitarian assistance for the less developed nations in Asia. This new book rightly points to the need for better visibility of this important engagement.
- Furthermore, I would like to reiterate the sheer variety of what Europe has to offer in cultural terms, and to its potential for promoting understanding and collaboration between the peoples of Asia and Europe through cultural, intellectual and people-to-people exchanges.
- In addition to the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreements between Europe and several countries in South East Asia which are expected to be signed next year, the year 2010 year will provide valuable opportunities for EU and Asia to work together, to produce concrete outcomes, to enhance their partnership, and finally increase visibility. Full advantage should be taken from Hanoi's Millennium celebrations, from the 8th ASEM Summit in Brussels in October 2010 and from a series of important summit meetings of ASEAN that Vietnam will host in its capacity of ASEAN chair.
- The mutually strong and dynamic partnership between our two regions continues to prosper each year, but we should not become complacent but on the contrary be aware of the challenges ahead. This book constitutes a valuable contribution thereto. I hope that the launch of this book, with its new findings, will regenerate people's awareness of our long-standing relationship but also of the need to invest and find create solutions to the problems identified. This outstanding book, of which I want, again, to warmly thank and congratulate the authors, should encourage everyone to become involved in nurturing our genuine friendship well into the future.
- Thank you.