



# Celebrating Human Rights Day with the Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights

**On the occasion of Human Rights Day, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) is proud to reflect on the outcomes of the 16<sup>th</sup> Informal ASEM<sup>1</sup> Seminar on Human Rights: Persons with Disabilities and Human Rights.**

## Press Release

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### More Information

<http://bit.ly/HRights2016>



"Nothing about us without us", this message highlighting the importance of including persons with disabilities in the discussions about human rights was shared by Mr Yannis YALLOUROS, Vice-President of the European Disability Forum, at the 16<sup>th</sup> Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights, the largest multi-sector gathering on human rights between Asia and Europe. "We have very common voices and souls in fighting and advocating for our right to participate in all aspects of society on an equal basis with others", he added, underlining the common desire of all participants to build more equitable and inclusive societies in Asia and Europe.

"Persons with disabilities are not only an important part of human civilization, but also a main force for human development"<sup>2</sup>, stated China's Vice Foreign Minister Mr LI Baodong at the opening ceremony, chaired by the Asia-Europe Foundation's Executive Director, Ambassador Karsten WARNECKE. Hosted by the People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the China Disabled People's Federation and China University of Political Science and Law, the event took place on 8-10 November 2016 in Beijing, China, and was attended by more than 120 participants.

The Seminar examined how the rights of persons with disabilities can be strengthened at regional and national levels by bringing together senior government officials, human rights ambassadors, academics as well as disability experts and advocates from Asia and Europe. The discussions were articulated around 4 working groups addressing *participation in political and cultural life; social and economic inclusion; legal status, justice and remedy; national implementation and international cooperation*. Professor Gerard QUINN, Director of the Centre for Disability Law and Policy of NUI Galway and one of the main rapporteurs of the Seminar, welcomed the very unique platform of exchange between actors of the two regions provided by the Seminar: "There is a richness of experience on both sides that needs to be captured and shared. We will return home better informed but also with better questions".

The key messages from the Seminar are available on the [ASEF website](#). The Seminar's report will be available soon.

### About the Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights

The Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights series is organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland. The initiative promotes mutual understanding and cooperation between Asia and Europe in the area of political dialogue, particularly on human rights issues. ASEF has been the secretariat for the Seminar Series since 2000. Participation in the Seminar is by invitation only.

<sup>1</sup> The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is an intergovernmental forum for dialogue and cooperation established in 1996 to deepen relations between Asia and Europe, which addresses political, economic and socio-cultural issues of common concern. ASEM brings together 53 Partners (21 Asian and 30 European countries, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the European Union). [www.aseminfoboard.org](http://www.aseminfoboard.org)

<sup>2</sup> This quote has been sourced from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Vice Foreign Minister Li Baodong Attends Opening Ceremony of the 16<sup>th</sup> Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights and Delivers a Speech", 8 November 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjbxw/t1414286.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/t1414286.shtml)

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## About the Organisers

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The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, education, governance, sustainable development, public health and economy. ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). Together with about 750 partner organisations ASEF has run more than 700 projects, mainly conferences, seminars and workshops. Over 20,000 Asians and Europeans have actively participated in its activities and it has reached much wider audiences through its networks, web-portals, publications, exhibitions and lectures.

For more information, please visit [www.ASEF.org](http://www.ASEF.org)

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The **Raoul Wallenberg Institute** of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law is an independent academic institution dedicated to the promotion of human rights through research, training and education. Established in 1984 at the Faculty of Law at Lund University, Sweden, the institute is currently involved in organising in Lund two Masters Programs and an interdisciplinary human rights programme at the undergraduate level. Host of one of the largest human rights libraries in the Nordic countries and engaged in various research and publication activities, the Raoul Wallenberg Institute provides researchers and students with a conducive study environment. The Institute maintains extensive relationships with academic human rights institutions worldwide.

For more information, please visit [www.rwi.lu.se](http://www.rwi.lu.se)

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The **French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development**, as a founding member of ASEM, is pleased to have supported the ASEM human rights dialogue since its inception in 1997.

For more information, please visit [www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/)

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The **Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs** is the prime agency of the Philippine government responsible for the pursuit of the State's foreign policy. It is also responsible for the coordination and execution of the foreign policies of the country and the conduct of its foreign relations.

For more information, please visit [www.dfa.gov.ph](http://www.dfa.gov.ph)

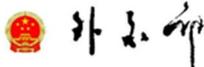
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The **Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland (FDFA)** forms and coordinates Swiss foreign policy on behalf of the Federal Council, pursues foreign policy objectives, safeguards the interests of Switzerland and promotes Swiss values.

For more information, please visit [www.eda.admin.ch](http://www.eda.admin.ch)

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This event was hosted in partnership with the People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the China Disabled People's Federation, and China University of Political Science and Law.



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