



“Ancient Civilisations, New Beginnings: A dialogue of Change”

10 to 12 December 2007 | Paris, France



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From dialogue to change: Asians and Europeans meet to forestall clash of civilizations

Approximately 60 top thinkers, scholars and activists from Asia and Europe will converge in Paris from 10 – 12 December 2007 to recommend policy changes and programmes to strengthen inter-community and interfaith relations. “Ancient Civilisations, New Beginnings: A Dialogue of Change,” is an action-oriented event culminating four years of an Asia-Europe dialogue on cultures and civilisations towards a sustainable response to communal, ethnic and religious tensions.

This conference will provide an opportunity to focus on some of the most pressing areas of concern facing Asia and Europe, namely, **racism and xenophobia, the relationship between religion and the state, the role of the media in countering conflict and the relationship between the private and public sector.**

"In ancient times, cultural accommodation occurred naturally and gradually when different cultures adopted each others' valuable features. In the age of fast paced globalisation, cultural entities and civilisational groupings found themselves being thrust forward without much time and space to learn to live and appreciate each other. Dislocation, anxiety and insecurity as consequences of drastic changes take away our human tendency to converse, to exchange and to appropriate the best in our various cultures. Instead, they make us suspicious of each other, fearful of the differences and averse to anything foreign. A more peaceful world community needs to listen to, learn about and understand each other more."

- H.E. Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary General Designate, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

This dialogue seeks to contribute to relevant policy-oriented meetings between governments and civil society in Asia and Europe including the upcoming 7th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit to be held in Beijing in October next year. The Asia-Europe Foundation, mandated by the ASEM process to bridge civil society in the two regions, organises this landmark event with the World Public Forum, an international deliberative and consultative body for dialogue among civilisations. This conference is organised with the support of French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Institut de relations internationales et stratégiques (IRIS) and the Academie Diplomatique Internationale (ADI); and hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

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Journalists are invited to cover the plenary sessions of the conference

11 December 2007, 1000 – 1245

12 December 2007, 1500 – 1800

Venue :

UNESCO

Room XI

7, place de Fontenoy

75352 Paris 07 SP

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To attend, please contact:

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For more information, please see the attached concept paper and programme



The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** seeks to promote better mutual understanding and closer cooperation between the people of Asia and Europe through greater intellectual, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges. These exchanges include conferences, lecture tours, workshops, seminars and the use of web-based platforms. The major achievement of ASEF is the establishment of permanent bi-regional networks focused on areas and issues that help to strengthen Asia-Europe relations. <http://www.asef.org>

* **The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)** is an informal process of dialogue and cooperation. It brings together Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Myanmar, The Netherlands, The Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam, and the European Commission. From 2007, ASEM

includes Bulgaria, Romania, India, Pakistan, Mongolia, and ASEAN Secretariat.



The World Public Forum begins its history in 2002 when representatives of civil society from Russia, India and Greece organized the International Program "Dialogue of Civilizations". Vladimir Yakunin, Jagdish Kapur and Nicolas Papanicolaou are the founders and co-chairmen of the Forum. The forum "Dialogue of civilizations" has become a practical realisation of the UNGA resolution "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations" accepted on November 9th, 2001 at the initiative of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Khatami. The overall objective of the Forum is discussion of contemporary content of such notions as "culture," "civilization," "intercultural dialogue," role of religion and law in civilization's dialogue, scientific and technological aspects of global life threats on Earth as well as intercommunication of such burning issues of world development as traditions and innovations in build-up of civilized environment, education searching for joint development strategy, regionalization and transformation of world economics system, role of socio-cultural traditions in the Middle East countries' upgrading, etc.

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