

Concept Paper

Background

[ASEF University \(AU\)](#) is a 2-week programme that aims to promote cross-cultural exchanges among youth from [ASEM](#)¹ countries. AU offers opportunities for up to 46 promising undergraduate and graduate students, as well as young professionals, to explore current issues in various fields through presentations, workshops, field visits, and other highly interactive activities. AU is organised annually at locations alternating between Asia and Europe. The most recent editions took place in Penang, Malaysia (2011), and Lodz, Poland (2010), with the themes "[Cultural Heritage: Challenges and Opportunities](#)"², and "[Public Health and Vulnerable Groups: Access To Quality Health Care](#)"³ respectively.

As part of ASEF's work on international voluntary service⁴, this year's edition of ASEF University will integrate an international volunteering awareness campaign. This addition to the academic programme is a first in the history of AU.

Relevance

At the [3rd ASEM Environment Ministers' Meeting](#)⁵, ministers underlined "the need for a strengthened dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe on environmental issues including climate change and sustainable energy, and their relevance for other issues such as sustainable consumption and production". The importance of the connection between consumption and environment is also reflected in [Green Economy](#), one of the themes at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development⁶. Green Economy "rests on a balanced consideration of social, economic and environmental goals and objectives in both public and private decision-making".

Emphasising the need to foster awareness on the connection between consumption patterns and the sustainability of the environment, the 18th ASEF University (AU18) will focus on *Sustainable Consumption* and contribute to the overall work of ASEF on environment. The results will be shared with the [Asia-Europe Environment Forum \(ENV Forum\)](#) Steering Committee and alumni and could serve as inputs for future activities.

In cooperation with the [University of Tartu](#) and the [Estonian School Student Councils' Union](#), ASEF will organise AU18 in [Tartu](#), located in the southern part of Estonia. Being the initiator of "[Let's Do It: World Clean Up](#)"⁷ Estonia is one of the leading countries to promote sustainable and responsible lifestyle. With its unique location and untouched nature, Estonia is an appropriate venue for AU18.

Objectives

Themed "*Conscious Consumers for Environmental Sustainability*", AU18 will combine academic/theoretical input with practical learning through formal education (FE) and non-formal education (NFE) approaches with the aim of raising awareness about sustainable consumption among the youth.

¹ ASEM now brings together 46 member states (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam) plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat.

² Co-organised with the University Sains Malaysia (USM) and in coordination with the Centre for Policy Research and International Studies (CenPRIS), AU17 took place from 20 June to 1 July 2011.

³ Co-organised with the Medical University of Lodz, AU16 took place from 29 June to 10 July 2010.

⁴ More information can be found on the project page of the [Asia-Europe Cooperation in Voluntary Service \(VolunAET\)](#).

⁵ The 3rd ASEM Environment Ministers' Meeting took place on 24 to 26 April 2007 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

⁶ Rio+20 will take place from 20-22 June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

⁷ The "Let's do it!" movement was first conceived in Estonia in year 2008, including more than 50,000 volunteers that cleaned up 10,000 tons of waste. In 2012, the campaign aims to include 70 countries.

The main objectives of the programme are:

- To deepen understanding of concepts, challenges and cooperation related to sustainable consumption in the ASEM context;
- To inspire young people to look beyond the scope of their own (non-) formal education background and become acquainted with a larger view illustrated by cases from various ASEM countries;
- To encourage dialogue between the participants and the youth from the local communities on the connection between consumption and the environment;
- To enhance the debating skills and critical thinking of the participants through discussions and intellectual challenges;
- To establish linkages and a sustainable network ([ASEF University Alumni Network](#)) among top university students and young professionals from ASEM countries, who have the potential to become the next leaders.

Curriculum

The first half of AU18 will have 1 week of presentations and interactive workshops by experts on sustainable consumption. This will be followed by 1 week of international volunteering awareness campaign, which will reach the young people in Estonian communities. The programme is generally outlined as below:

Academic Presentations and Interactive Workshops

- Introduction on Behavioural Economics;
- Sustainable Consumption and Production in the ASEM context;
- The Strength of Consumers' Campaigns on Sustainable Consumption;
- The Impact of Social Media Campaigns on Consumption Behaviour;
- The Contribution of Non-formal Education and International Voluntary Service to Sustainable Consumption;
- The Participation of Youth in Sustainable Consumption Awareness Campaigns;
- Estonian Initiatives on Sustainable Consumption.

International Volunteering Awareness Campaign

- Social Mapping: compiling information on (non)-sustainable consumption behaviour in Estonia. The outcomes of this exercise will be the basis for the awareness campaign;
- Environmental Action with Estonian Youth;
- Awareness Campaign Day: using creative ways to promote sustainable consumption to Estonian youth;
- Open Day Event: sharing the results of the Sustainable Consumption Awareness Campaign with interested parties, such as (but not limited to) non-governmental organisation, youth organisations, ministry representatives and media.

Methodology

AU18 will integrate theoretical learning and hands-on experience through panel discussions, lectures, workshops and a volunteering awareness campaign. It will also provide a venue for intercultural learning through interaction with local youth.

Through active involvement in the implementation of the awareness campaign, the participants will interact with Estonian youth. Several creative methods will be used to conduct the sustainable consumption campaign, such as developing posters and creating arts and handicrafts through recycling and reusing (e.g. kites).

Prior to the programme in Tartu, participants will interact with each other through ASEF's virtual forum to gain knowledge and share ideas on sustainable consumption towards preparing for the awareness campaign.

Participants' Profile

AU18 will gather up to 46 participants that are:

- A citizen of any [ASEM](#) country between 18 and 30 years old;
- A student, a young professional or a young educator;
- Proficient in the English language (written and verbal);
- Studying or working in the fields of Economics, (Social) Marketing, Environment, Arts or Psychology/Behavioural Studies;
- Committed to participate during the project as well as during the online preparation and follow-up;
- Preferred: an active member of a non-governmental and/or international voluntary service organisation that organises environmental awareness activities.

Outputs

The following outputs are envisaged for AU18:

- Creative output, such as (but not limited to) posters and kites, from the participants;
- (E-)publication compiling presentations, speeches, working groups and creative output of the awareness campaign;
- A film to showcase the Sustainable Consumption Awareness Campaign;
- Open Day Event.

Information on the Partner Organisations



The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Through ASEF, civil society concerns are included as a vital component of deliberations of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). ASEF was established in February 1997 by the participating governments of ASEM and has since implemented over 500 projects, engaging over 17,000 direct participants as well as reaching out to a much wider audience in Asia and Europe. (www.asef.org)



The University of Tartu (UT) was founded in 1632, intended to pursue research and advance learning in a wide variety of disciplines. Research at UT focuses on subjects as diverse as medicine and philosophy, genetics and computer science. UT preserves the culture of the Estonian people and spearheads the country's reputation in research and provision of higher education. UT stresses the importance of international co-operation and partnerships with reputable research universities all over the world. (www.ut.ee)



The Estonian School Student Councils' Union (ESCU) is a student representative organisation and the largest youth organisation in Estonia. ESCU unites students' councils from almost 200 schools and the opinion of 100,000 students across Estonia. ESCU is also active at the international level as member of the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU). (<http://opilasliit.ee/about-escu.htm>)

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