



4TH CONNECTING CIVIL SOCIETIES OF ASIA AND EUROPE CONFERENCE
Changing Challenges, New Ideas
An official side-event of the ASEM8 Summit
1-3 October 2010, Brussels

Press Release No 101004_PR1022
4 October 2010

Civil society conference concludes with eight points of action for ASEM8

The 4th Connecting Civil Societies of Asia and Europe Conference, an official side-event of ASEM8, concluded on 3 October 2010 with eight points of action for ASEM on how to enhance Asia-Europe relations. The recommendations have been channelled to the Leaders attending the 8th Asia-Europe Meeting.

The eight points cover key concerns shared by the more than 150 conference participants from the academia, think tanks, NGOs, journalists, artists, youth organisations, business people and other civil society organisations.

They are the outcome of eight thematic workshops which took place during the three day conference and dealt with the topics of regional integration; the costs of higher education; the development of life-long learning opportunities; the inclusion of art in urban planning; the role of youth in promoting public health; community building and post-conflict reconciliation; the right to information and exchange of resources across ASEM countries; and the question of how Asia and Europe should address current challenges towards better global governance.

The civil society representatives welcomed the continuing political dialogue between ASEM leaders at the highest level. They also called for greater civil society engagement and partnership at all levels and initiatives of the ASEM process.

The key recommendations put forth by the participants included the need for Asia and Europe to increase their knowledge about each other and their inter-regional relations. Furthermore, higher Education and Research co-operation should be a top priority of ASEM and more resources should be mobilised to ensure the continuity, quality, diversity, equity and access. The participants also urged the ASEM leaders to identify a common regional vision. This vision has to be founded on common goals, affirmed by historical recognition, and supported by trans-regional and multi-stakeholder cooperation. Please refer to the full text of the report "Eight points for ASEM8" (Annex A).

In his closing remarks, Ambassador Dominique Girard, Executive Director of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), emphasised the significance of the conference.

“We have brought everyone here to ensure that the political momentum of ASEM is transmitted to the ground, where the people are,” he said, adding, “our discussions are legitimising the ASEM process by echoing its core principles and priorities, giving evidence of the real work at the grassroots level and more importantly, following up on them.”

The conference was organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in co-operation with the Europe-Asia Policy Forum, including the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS), the Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA), the European Policy Centre (EPC), with the support of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Belgium, the European Commission and the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The conference took place from 1-3 October 2010 in Brussels, as an official side-event of the 8th Asia-Europe Meeting Summit (ASEM8).

For more details on the 4th Connecting Civil Societies Conference, please visit:

http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com_project&task=view&id=630

Media contact:

Ms Kristine Lucero | Public Affairs Department, Asia-Europe Foundation

Mobile +65 97717536 | Email: kristine.lucero@asef.org

About the Organisers:

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 1997 by the participating governments of ASEM. ASEF has since implemented over 450 projects, engaging over 15,000 direct participants and reaching out to a much wider audience in Asia and Europe. ASEM now brings together 43 member states, the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. www.asef.org

Europe-Asia Policy Forum (EUforAsia)

The Europe-Asia Policy Forum (EUforAsia) has been set up with the support of the European Commission to improve Europe's understanding of Asia and to provide a growing rapport between the two regions. It is based on an extensive academic network of institutes, universities and think tanks in both Europe and Asia. The EUforAsia Policy Forum aims to strengthen knowledge and understanding of EU-Asia relations and contribute to EU policy formulation towards Asia. The EUforAsia is managed by a consortium of four partner organisations, each with vast experience in the field of Asian Studies and Europe-Asia relations. These partners include the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the European Policy Centre (EPC), the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and the Singapore Institute of International Affairs. www.euforasia.eu

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About the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) now brings together 43 member states (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, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam) plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. Australia, New Zealand and Russia will be formally admitted into ASEM during the 8th ASEM Summit in Brussels on 4-5 October 2010. www.aseminfoboard.org