



## PRESS RELEASE

### 8<sup>TH</sup> ASIA-EUROPE CLASSROOM NETWORK CONFERENCE

26-30 October 2009  
Hotel Comwell, Sønderborg, Denmark

Press Release No. 091020\_PR0912  
20 October 2009

## Secondary teachers take action on Climate Change at Asia-Europe Meet in Denmark

***Over 80 educators from Asia and Europe will gather in Sønderborg, Denmark to exchange views on how to mobilise their respective school communities to act towards reversing the impact of climate change.***

Organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the **8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET) Conference** will bring together secondary and high school teachers from Asia and Europe to promote collaborative learning and cross-cultural exchanges through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This year's Conference, *"The Impact of Climate Change and Sustainable Development Within the School Community in Asia and Europe"*, aims at enabling teachers in Asia and Europe to strengthen environmental awareness and practices in their own school community.

HRH Princess Marie Agathe Odile, Countess of Monpezat, will officiate the opening of the Conference on 27 October 2009 together with ASEF Executive Director Ambassador Dominique Girard. Other Danish dignitaries attending the Conference include Ms Bodil Ullerup, Secretary General of the Danish National Commission of UNESCO; Mr Jan Prokopek Jensen, Mayor of the Sønderborg Municipality; and Mr Jørn Lehmann, Vice Mayor of the Sønderborg Municipality.

A highlight of the Conference will be the awarding of the **Asia-Europe Classroom (AEC) Award**, an annual prize which recognises outstanding online collaborative learning schemes conceptualised by secondary school teachers from Asia and Europe. From the short list of six finalists, three winners will be awarded a cash grant of EUR 2,000 each. This sum is to be used for further developing the winning project or conceptualising a new one. The winners will be announced in a press conference.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Classroom Network Conference is organised by ASEF, in collaboration with the Sønderborg Municipality, and with support from the Danish Ministry of Education, Hørup Centralskole, Nyborg Friskole and Herfølge Skole. More information about the AEC-NET Conference can be found at <http://aec.asef.net>

#### Press Event:

**Press Conference: Announcement of AEC Award Winners**

Date: 27 October 2009 (Tuesday) | Time: 6:00 PM

Venue: Hesteskoen, Hotel Comwell  
Rosengade 2, 6400 Sønderborg, Denmark

**Members of the media are invited to the above event.  
To confirm your attendance, please contact:**

**Ms SOH Lai Yee**

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## About the organiser:



The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** advances mutual understanding and collaboration between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges. These exchanges include conferences, lecture tours, workshops, seminars and the common use of web-based platforms. The major achievement of ASEF is the establishment of permanent bi-regional networks focussed on areas and issues that help to strengthen Asia-Europe relations.

Established in February 1997 by the partners of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), ASEF reports to a board of governors representing the ASEM partners. ASEF is the only physical institution of the ASEM process. Since 1997, the Foundation has initiated projects engaging 14,000 individuals from Asia and Europe. ASEF works in partnership with other public institutions and civil society actors to ensure its work is broad-based and balanced among the partner countries. [www.asef.org](http://www.asef.org)



The Municipality of Sønderborg is among the largest municipalities in Denmark, with a population of around 77,000 people. Sønderborg has the longest coastline in Denmark, making it an ideal place for maritime activities. The largest part of the community lies on the island of Als, which is connected to Jutland by two bridges. Culture is one of Sønderborg's strongpoints, history, music and sports being some of its key areas. One of the country's most famous battles, the Battle of Dybbøl has been fought here, and is worth re-experiencing at the Sønderborg Castle, or in and around the historic centre of Dybbøl.

Sønderborg also boasts of world-class educational institutions, which gives priority to the teaching of Science, perhaps accounting for Sønderborg having the largest concentration of engineers in Denmark. The municipality is ambitious on several subjects. Environmental responsibility is high on the Municipality's agenda, as Sønderborg aims to become Europe's first CO2-neutral community in 2029. The Municipality also seeks to become Denmark's best place for children to grow up and go to school, and to become the European capital of Culture by 2017. [www.sonderborg.dk](http://www.sonderborg.dk)

### With the support of:



ASEF's contribution is with the financial support of the European Commission.

The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** is organising the **8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET) Conference**, which will be held in Sønderborg, Denmark on 26 - 30 October 2009. With the theme *"The Impact of Climate Change and Sustainable Development Within the School Community in Asia and Europe,"* the Conference specifically aims to raise the environmental awareness of teachers in Asia and Europe, thus enabling them to initiate concrete action for protecting the environment in their own school community. The 8<sup>th</sup> AEC-NET Conference is organised by ASEF in collaboration with the Sønderborg Municipality, and with support from the Danish Ministry of Education, Hørup Centralskole, Nyborg Friskole and Herfølge Skole. Please refer to **Annex A** for the full details of the Conference programme.



The 8<sup>th</sup> AEC-NET Conference falls under the greater framework of the **Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET)** programme.

### ABOUT AEC-NET

Launched in December 1998, the **Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET)** is the Asia-Europe Foundation's (ASEF) flagship programme which aims to foster collaborations among secondary and high school teachers and students in Asia and Europe. It was formerly called the Asia-Europe Classroom (AEC), which was conceived at a brainstorming session attended by secondary and high school teachers and educators from Asia and Europe held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in May 1998.

The original challenge was to harness the potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in connecting secondary and high schools of Asia and Europe and construct the framework for a "cyber classroom" that would promote intellectual and inter-cultural exchanges among secondary and high school teachers and students of Asia and Europe. The AEC has since evolved to encourage more active interactions between secondary and high schools in Asia and Europe.

The AEC-NET comprise a Co-ordinating Committee, which works as a provider of academic criteria in order to evaluate the different activities of the project as well as to assess and advise on the best direction, action plans and strategies for the future.

There are two principal activities held under the AEC-NET framework:

- The various **Asia-Europe Classroom (AEC) online collaborative learning projects** involving different groups of students from secondary and high schools of Asia and Europe; and
- The annual **Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET) Conference**, attended by secondary and high school teachers and educators from Asia and Europe.

### AEC PROJECTS

The AEC Projects are online collaborative projects developed by members of the Asia-Europe Classroom Network. Each project incorporates a component of intercultural exchange and learning through the use of ICT. Developed during the annual AEC-NET Conference, these projects are based on the framework that educators have worked out at these conferences. After the conference, educators then go back to their respective schools to further develop and execute their projects, with the involvement of their students, during the course of the academic year. To date, over 150 AEC Projects have been successfully implemented as a result of these collaborations.

**The six most outstanding AEC Projects are then shortlisted every year for the AEC Award**, which recognises the most innovative, effective and sustainable online projects. Please refer to **Annex B** for more information about the AEC Award and the 2009 finalists.

## **AEC-NET CONFERENCE**

The AEC-NET Conference is an annual meeting that gathers secondary and high school educators from Asia and Europe who take a keen interest in fostering collaborations among their students through innovative and interactive collaborative online learning and inter-cultural exchanges.

The Conference is usually held over a period of four days, and comprises four essential components:

- **Professional Enrichment for AEC-NET members.** Internationally-recognised experts are invited to give presentations on topics related to the conference theme.
- **Review of past AEC Projects, and presentation of new AEC Project proposals.** Participants review the results of the AEC on-line collaborative learning projects that had been developed in the preceding year, the most outstanding of which are then shortlisted to contend for the AEC Awards (please see **Annex B**). Participants are also encouraged to submit proposals for on-line collaborative learning projects that teachers and students could develop over the course of the next 12 months. These proposals are presented and further developed in different Working Groups during the conference. At the end of the working group session, each Project Group should have finalised the discussion on the project implementation plan.
- **Introduction to Host Country.** Activities including visits to places of cultural and historical significance in the host country are organised to give the participants a better understanding of the different aspects of the host country. The host country might also take the opportunity to organise activities to better acquaint the participants with its approach to secondary and high school education, which may include visits to schools or specialised training centres for teachers.
- **Networking.** Participants are given adequate opportunities to interact with one another at the social level, outside of the plenary sessions and the working groups. This is to engender camaraderie among participants, thereby fostering the creation of networks that could form the foundations of future and further contacts and collaborations.

More details about the Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET) are also available on AEC-NET's official website:

<http://aec.asef.org>

For further information on the Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET), please contact:

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For members of the media interested to conduct private interviews with organisers and participants, please contact:

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The **AEC Award** seeks to encourage innovative, effective and sustainable online intercultural learning platforms by secondary and high school educators to connect students from Asia and Europe.

Each year, six short-listed finalists will compete for three AEC Awards each of a cash grant of 2,000 EUR. The cash prize can be used by the winning team to further develop the winning projects, or to initiate new ICT collaborative projects.



Short-listed projects are judged based on:

- Its effectiveness in advancing intercultural understanding among secondary and high school students
- Effective application of ICT tools in promoting intercultural learning
- Level of participation and involvement of students in developing the project
- Quality of overall presentation of the project

### JUDGES

- **Mr Jørn LEHMANN**, Vice Mayor of Sønderborg, Sønderborg Municipality
- **Amb Dominique GIRARD**, Executive Director, Asia-Europe Foundation
- **Dr Xianli ZHU**, Economist, UNEP Risoe Centre on Energy, Climate and Sustainable Development

### FINALISTS FOR 2009 AEC AWARD

AEC Projects are online collaborative projects developed by members of the Asia-Europe Classroom Network. Each project incorporates a component of intercultural exchange and learning through the use of ICT.

The following six AEC projects are the finalists of the 2009 AEC Award:

- **Backpackers' Passports**

The "Backpackers' Passports" offers a platform for students to gain better appreciation of cultural diversity through accounts and exchanges between fellow students in Asia and Europe. The project aims to develop a series of personalised and unique virtual tours by the participating students. Through research and regular online interactions, they develop a three-day backpacker's itinerary of their home country.

Project Co-ordinator:

Ms Yuen Chai Lin (Head of Department, NT Stream, Pioneer Secondary School, Singapore)

- **Local Industry and Enterprise 2008/2009**

The "Local Industry and Enterprise 2008/2009" offers a platform for each student to research and present their findings on a local industry or enterprise. A key focus is on the social and environmental impact both locally and globally. Through a process of peer sharing and reflection, students are expected to gain greater insights to businesses in both Asia and Europe. This third edition leverages from and builds on the success of the experience of the past two years.

Project Co-ordinator:

Ms Angela Rickard (Education Department, National University of Ireland, Maynooth Co. Kildare)

- **Local Traditions and Ceremonies - Weddings are Made in Heaven**

Local Traditions and Ceremonies – "Weddings are Made in Heaven" tasks Asian and European students to research and present the practices of traditional wedding ceremonies in their own culture. In any culture, a wedding ceremony is typically rich in symbolism. Students will explore similarities in cultural

practices and symbolisms between Asian and European cultures through their online interactions.

Project Co-ordinators:

Dr Zafeiroula Kagkalidou (School Adviser, Directorate of Secondary Education, Greece)

Mrs Aggeliki Arvanta (Teacher, 5<sup>th</sup> Gymasio Serron, Greece)

Mr Michalis Feidakis (Information Society Executive, Hellenic Ministry of Education & Religious Affairs, Greece)

- **Mastering Media – Fact or Fiction? The Truth Behind Reality TV**

This project tasks participating students to give an account of their reactions to reality shows in Asia and Europe. Through a comparative study of global TV formats, students can better comprehend the power of the mass media and the entertainment industry. They are then tasked to examine the rationale for participation in reality shows as a reflection of universal behavioural patterns in contemporary society. The project focuses on the dynamics between (media) production, participants and the audience in modern media environment, as well as concepts of morality, scandal or hype.

Project Co-ordinators:

Ms Maija Ojutkangas (Teacher, Messukylä Upper Secondary School, Finland)

Ms Jonina Altschuler (Teacher, Messukylä Upper Secondary School, Finland)

- **TraditionalGames@VirtualHomestay**

"TraditionalGames@VirtualHomestay" is a project where participating students are required to develop more in-depth understanding of the games as well as facilitate learning by their partners through video demonstration of the game. All student participants are tasked to analyse the similarities and differences of the traditional games. Lastly, students will explore their creativity by conceptualising and designing a game and gather peer evaluation from their online team partners.

Project Co-ordinator:

Ms Yong Caiyu (Teacher, Pioneer Secondary School, Singapore)

- **WHAZZUP?**

The "WHAZZUP?" project provides a common platform for participating students to share their interests, passions and concerns through personalised accounts and blogs. Students' curiosity is invoked and the learning process is natural. Through externalising and conceptualising their learning and then getting feedback and responses from their peers, they will be able to gain a deeper understanding of whatever it is they are studying.

Project Co-ordinators:

Ms Sinikka Laakio-Whybrow (Teacher, Kaarina Senior High School, Finland)

Ms Merja Laine (Teacher, Kaarina Senior High School, Finland)

**Press Conference: Announcement of 2009 AEC Award Winners**

Date: 27 October 2009 (Tuesday) | Time: 6:00 PM

Venue: Hesteskoen, Hotel Comwell (Rosengade 2, 6400 Sønderborg, Denmark)

Kindly R.S.V.P. by 23 Oct 2009 to [laiyee@asef.org](mailto:laiyee@asef.org)

To schedule media interviews, please contact:

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