While Europe and Asia are linked through the strength of existing economic, political, social and cultural partnerships, the understanding of the EU in Asia remains remarkably low. This communicative deficit breeds misperception and misunderstanding in terms of the clarity of EU objectives to promote stronger partnerships throughout Asia. To help address this weakness, the co-organisers of the Europe-Asia Policy Forum will hold a “Stakeholders” Roundtable to examine the issue of “How should the EU package itself to Asia?”. The meeting will take place on the morning of the 9th of April. The Roundtable will bring together opinion leaders drawn from Academia, the EU institutions, the Media sector and Brussels-based think tanks to discuss the visibility of the EU throughout Asia and examine the current policies in place to communicate the external image of the EU in Asia.

The Roundtable will draw on the findings of the ongoing research project the “EU through the Eyes of Asia”. A unique research project carried out by the partners of the ASEF initiative the European Studies in Asia (EStA) Network, which provides comparative and scientifically valid feedback of attitudes and citizens’ perceptions of the EU in Asia. In each locality, the project systematically assesses daily representations of the EU in reputable local news media, as well as the EU’s imagery among the general public and the EU’s vision among the national stakeholders and decision-makers.

The Roundtable plans to take advantage of the Global EU Centres Conference, organised by DG External Relations, European Commission, on the 12th and 13th in Madrid. The Conference will bring the Directors of European Union Centres from around the world and the roundtable will seek to involve some of the key European Studies figures from Asia to take part and share their expertise on how the EU is perceived in Asia.

The proceedings will feature two keynote presentations on the external perceptions of the EU and on the policy that drives the EUs image abroad. First to present will be Dr. Natalia Chaban, Deputy Director, National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE) – University of Canterbury, and the research co-ordinator for the “EU through the Eyes of Asia” project. Dr. Chaban will seek to present on the findings of the project to display the key elements of the EU’s external image throughout Asia, highlighting comparative and thematic examples where the image of the EU needs strengthening.

This will be followed by keynote presentation by Dr. Albrecht Rothacher from the Directorate General – External Relations, European Commission, who will discuss the development of External Relations policy within the EU towards Asia. The presentation will look at how the local delegations are providing much needed outreach on the ground in Asia and providing local stakeholders increased access in the EU.
The findings will be further enhanced by presentations drawing on regional expertise from ASEAN, East Asia, and South Asia to examine the relationships that drive the perceptions of the EU throughout Asia.

In addition, the event will feature a presentation on the newly implemented initiative, ‘Asia in the Eyes of Europe’. The interregional research project represents a major undertaking, as the project will forge partnerships throughout Asia and Europe to carry out rigorous perceptions research in eight locations across Europe, looking at media, public and opinion-leader perceptions of Asia. The data collected will provide both country and regional specific scientifically valid feedback that can input directly into policy dialogue throughout Asia and Europe.

The Roundtable seeks to generate high level dialogue and discussion on the current state of relations between Asia and Europe with a specific focus on how the two regions communicate and perceive with one another. The bringing together of regional experts and local Brussels based stakeholders provide a unique intellectual setting for the forging of better understanding and essentially better informed policy.

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**About the Europe-Asia Policy Forum**

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 will be based primarily in Brussels and managed by a consortium of four partner organisations, each with vast experience in the field of Asian Studies and Europe-Asia relations, the partners include the Asia-Europe Foundation, the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, and, the International Institute for Asian Studies. The EUforAsia Policy Forum aims to strengthen knowledge and understanding of EU-Asia relations and contribute to EU policy formulation towards Asia.