



Press Release

2nd Asia-Europe Education Workshop *Knowledge Societies: Universities and their Social Responsibilities*

5 – 7 June 2011 | Innsbruck, Austria



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Universities shape people, not just produce mere knowledge

17 June 2011 – The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the University of Innsbruck, Austria have successfully convened the 2nd Asia-Europe Education Workshop “Knowledge Societies: Universities and their Social Responsibilities“ (6-7 June 2011).

The two-day experts’ workshop was attended by university leaders and staff, researchers and students, policy makers and business and media practitioners. They made a strong case for University Social Responsibility (USR). While multifaceted in its practice and understanding across ASEM countries, USR needs to be promoted and supported through the continuous dialogue of stakeholders – universities, communities, industries and governments alike.

Universities often revisit the original understanding of *universitas* – a community of scholars at the service of society. These debates must consciously factor in the changing realities on the ground. The transformation of universities should not be detached from societal developments. As ASEF Deputy Executive Director Ambassador Nguyen Quoc Khanh underscored in his welcome statement, “The contribution of universities to the global knowledge society is multifaceted and context-bound.”

Magister Elmar Pichl, Chief of Cabinet to the Minister for Science and Research and Deputy Director General of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research, highlighted in his keynote address that “higher education policy should be a new social policy.”

Tan Sri Dzul kifli Razak, the Vice-Chancellor of the University Sains Malaysia (USM), proposed “**humaniversity**” as a new path for universities. In affirmation of the same view, Prof. Teay Shawyun, the President of the Southeast Asian Association for Institutional Research (SEAAIR), remarked: “Universities do not produce mere knowledge but people, and knowledge is within the people.” Another crucial aspect of USR is access to quality higher education, about which Florian Kaiser, from the European Students’ Union (ESU), commented: “the restriction of access should only be based on ability, nothing else.”

A compendium containing the highlights of discussions and selected case studies will be published in the 2nd half 2011. It will be presented at the 3rd edition of the ASEM Rectors’ Conference (2012) as well as at the 4th Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (2013).

ASEF’s [Asia-Europe Education Workshop](#) is a venue for focussed discussions on the changing context that affects or influences the education sector.

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Programme contacts:

Ms. Helen Sophia Chua Balderama, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
T. +65 6874 9715 | F. +65 6872 1207 | E-mail: helen.chuabalderama@asef.org

Prof. Erich Thöni, University of Innsbruck, Austria
T. +43 (0) 512 507 7154 | F. +43 (0) 512 507 2788 | E-mail: erich.thoeni@uibk.ac.at

About the Organisers:



The Asia-Europe Foundation

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 15,000 direct participants as well as reaching out to a much wider audience in Asia and Europe. www.asef.org

* 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. www.aseminfoboard.org

University of Innsbruck



The University of Innsbruck was founded in 1669 and is the biggest and most important research and education institution in western Austria, today comprised of almost 26,000 students and more than 4.000 staff and faculty members. Located in the heart of the Alps, the University of Innsbruck offers the best conditions for successful research and teaching, and international rankings confirm the University's leading role in basic research. www.uibk.ac.at