Seminar to focus on democracy in Asia and Europe

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Around 30 distinguished academics from Asia and Europe will gather this week in Seoul, South Korea, to discuss the concept of democracy in both continents and the possibility of preparing common theoretical ground toward a universal definition, a Singapore-based international foundation said.

"The scholars will provide an in-depth discussion on the usage of the concept of democracy and an explanation of its realities in their countries during an academic conference. They will also discuss general and theoretical issues related to the conceptions of democracy in Asia and Europe," Asia-Europe Foundation director for public affairs Albrecht Rothacher told the *The Jakarta Post* recently.

The main aim of the two-day conference, titled *Democracy in Asia, Europe and the World: Toward a Universal Definition?* is to encourage Asian and European political scientists to analyze the theory and reality of democracy from a comparative perspective and powwow the possibility of finding a common theoretical ground, Rathacher said.

Prominent political scientists like Tatu Vanhanen from the University of Helsinki (Finland), Takashi Inoguchi from the University of Tokyo (Japan), Ferdinand Mueller-Rommel from the University of Lueneburg (Germany), Olivia Caoli from the University of the Philippines and Pratikno, the vice dean for academic affairs of Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, will be attending the conference.

South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs Ki Moon-ban will deliver the keynote speech at the conference, which will be jointly organized by the ASEF and the KAIS.

ASEF is an organization -- created by the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) heads of state in 1997 -- that works for intellectual, cultural, and people-to-people exchange among ASEM member countries in Asia and Europe with an aim to contribute to policy debate and strategic thinking on themes of current and future interregional importance between the two continents.

KAIS is an academic association of South Korean researchers in the field of international studies. It was founded in 1956 and publishes the *Korean Journal of International Studies* in Korean and English.