PR10/04
3 June 2004

Democracy views similar for Asia, Europe

SEOUL--When it comes to the concept and reality of democracy, a conference on democracy in Asia and Europe found that there is little evidence of an interregional divide between the two regions. Thirty international scholars on democracy and about 50 members of the local academic circle gathered in Seoul today for the 2-day conference “Democracy in Asia, Europe and the World” organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the Korean Association of International Studies (KAIS).

Mr. Ki-Moon Ban, Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, mentioned in his keynote speech that: “we have high hopes that a union of peace and prosperity which is modelled after the European Union can be realised in Asia in the not-so-distant future. In Europe, we see the future of East Asia.”

ASEF Executive Director Ambassador Delfin Colomé emphasised that “understanding democracy and the process of democratisation is a fundamental preoccupation in our two regions particularly now that many of the large countries in both regions have just held or are about to hold elections.”

The conference is held back-to-back with the inaugural meeting of the Asian Consortium on Political Research, to be held in the same venue on 4th June. KAIS President Prof. Chung-si Ahn was particularly happy that after several years of working with the European Consortium on Political Research, its Asian counterpart would now be institutionalised. “It was an idea over ten years ago, and now it is finally a reality”, Prof. Ahn enthused.

The conference was punctuated by presentations senior and emerging scholars of democracy, notably luminaries of the International Political Science Association such as former IPSA president Prof. Jean Leca of the Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris, Professor Emeritus Jean Blondel of the European University Institute, and Prof. Takashi Inoguchi of the University of Tokyo.

Please visit the Asia-Europe Foundation website: http://www.asef.org/democracyweb for more details.

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