ASEM meet to benefit RP, others

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The 8th Asia-Europe Meeting of Foreign Ministers Meeting closed in Hamburg last month with encouraging and meaningful discussions for all member countries, the Philippines included.

At the two-day meeting chaired by the EU Presidency, German Foreign Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier on May 28-29, the foreign ministers discussed a broad range of issues of common interest. These issues included energy and climate change, counter terrorism, non-proliferation, world trade and the United Nations, issues on Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and the Korean peninsula, the Middle East, recent developments in Asia and Europe.

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana said the meetings were interesting.

“Very interesting, you learn. You don’t know with this kind but you learn something. You abandon this meeting thinking that you’ve completed what you talked. Now this is one of those meetings. The atmosphere has been splendid. With 46 countries, this year we have had a lot of discussions on difficult issues,” Solana said.

The ministers agreed to continue to make the utmost use of the ASEM dialogue and cooperation, being a unique, practical, flexible and comprehensive platform for the Asia-Europe partnership in view of finding joint responses to global challenges.
Pakistani foreign minister Khurshid Kasuri was happy that one of the topics discussed is the situation in Afghanistan.

“I think it’s a good idea that we’re meeting with common friends. Most of the countries represented in the G-8 have a fundamental interest in peace and stability in that area (Afghanistan) and nobody could have a greater interest in that than we have, so I think it’s a good forum,” Kasuri said.

Steinmeier said that ASEM, which is only on its 11th year, is still very young but it becomes a very big venue for EU and Asia to hold 60 bilateral meetings. He said that it’s very important that Asia and Europe can speak with one voice.

Steinmeier also said that globalization has both a good and bad side but that it offers an opportunity for all because a fair structure is needed in the world. One of the biggest discussions is between the EU and China on climate change.

Steinmeier said that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s deadline of 15 years to put their act together remains a very big challenge otherwise it will be catastrophic for the world.

China’s Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi said that it appreciates the efforts of the EU, particularly Germany, in its part to respond to climate change issues.

But he passed on to the developed countries with sophisticated and advanced technology the responsibility to cut emissions and help the underdeveloped countries fight climate change.

“With regard to the efforts in terms of dealing with climate change and environmental protection, our view is that we should work together to make sure that the development needs of countries will be met and this is one of the key ways to improve the people’s living standards,” Yang said.

“One the other hand the environment is very important and for sustainable development one has to give up those efforts to environmental protection and to cope with climate change to handle the issue,” Yang said.
He added: “All countries should work together in terms of exploring new sources of energy or alternative energy or clean energy. In this respect, perhaps the developed countries can do more.”

He said that between 2006 and 2010, the per unit GDP will be down by about 20 percent and that there will be a reduction on the total amount of pollutants by about 10 percent.

The Philippines was represented by Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Erlinda Basilio.

She reported on the positive outcome of the 2nd East Asia Summit which was held in Cebu where the Cebu Declaration of East Asian Energy Security was signed.

The Cebu declaration recognizes the urgent need to address global warming and climate change, the need to strengthen renewable energy development such as the sustainable development of bio-fuels as well as goals and measures as spelt out in the declaration.

The Cebu summit had agreed to initiate concrete projects in priority areas of cooperation, namely energy, education, finance, avian flu, national disaster mitigation and poverty reduction.

ASEAN secretary-general Ong Keng Yong gave a very concise view to ABS-CBN Europe, on the progress of the Association of South East Asian Nations.

“We have been doing quite a lot of things and I hope all these things can be done effectively and give us the result that we wanted,” Ong said.

Cho Won-il, Asia Europe Foundation executive director, presented to the foreign ministers, ASEF’s achievements in the last ten years where it has played an active role in promoting dialogue on major issues such as human rights, interfaith, youth exchanges, art, culture and media cooperation.

China, seeing ASEF’s significant role, announced an increase by 20 percent of its contribution to the foundation beginning this year. China said it recognizes the need to fund the organization which puts
together the 45 ASEM partners representing 50 percent of the world GDP, 58 percent of the world's population and 60 or world trade.

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OTHER STORIES

Filipino crew being airlifted from stricken ship in Australia
A coal ship with 21 Filipino crewmembers was swept by strong waves to Newcastle's shoreline in Australia Friday, ANC reported.

Arroyo administration gets failing grade on HR
The Commission on Human Rights on Friday gave President Arroyo's administration a failing grade for its efforts to solve cases of human rights violations in the country.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/8/2007 12:37:44 PM)

RP eyed as mining country by 2010
Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes expressed confidence Thursday that the Philippines will become a major “mining country” by 2010 with the increase in exports next year.

JDV resurrects shift to parliament system
Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. effectively resurrected the administration’s failed Charter change (Cha-cha) initiative by making a pitch for a shift to the parliamentary system on the centenary of the first Philippine legislature.

Senate adjourns without passing pertinent bills
The Senate adjourned sine die Thursday without passing any priority legislation, to the disappointment of the principal sponsors.

Party-list winners proclaimed next week
The Commission on Elections resumes Friday canvassing of votes and poll officials may proclaim the winners in the party-list group elections next week.

Lacson to reopen probes on controversies involving Arroyos
Re-elected Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson on Thursday said he will try to reopen unfinished investigations on various scams and controversies, including the Jose Pidal and "Hello Garci" issues, when the 14th Congress opens in July, DZMM reported.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 10:25:07 PM)

Debate hounds Congress rites
Several lawmakers criticized the celebration marking the centenary of Congress Thursday at the House of Representatives in Quezon City.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 9:44:58 PM)

SC lauded on human rights, urged to do more to stop violations
Activist groups and solons lauded the statement on Wednesday of the Chief Justice reiterating the Supreme Court’s (SC) commitment to enhance the promotion of human rights in the country even as they urged the high court to do more to stop and prevent abuses.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 7:49:29 PM)

Romulo to visit N.Korea this month
The Philippines' foreign minister would meet his North Korean counterpart in a three-day visit to Pyongyang this month, a senior official at the Department of Foreign Affairs said on Thursday.
Reuters/abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 5:14:57 PM)

Arroyo to lead House centennial celebration
Fresh from her trips abroad, President Arroyo will lead the centennial celebration of the House of Representatives Thursday afternoon at the Batasang Pambansa Complex in Quezon City amid criticisms.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 4:27:53 PM)

Trillanes asks leave to attend proclamation
Anticipating his victory in the Senate race, Genuine Opposition candidate Antonio Trillanes IV on Thursday asked the Makati City Regional Trial Court (RTC) for a one-day leave from detention to attend his impending proclamation.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 4:22:19 PM)
Arroyo: RP to open consulate office in central China
Malacañang on Thursday announced that the Philippines will open a new consulate office in central China as promised by President Arroyo during her meeting with local officials there.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 3:26:25 PM)

Intl group alarmed over rising Asian trade in human organs
The International Organization for Migration (IOM) expressed alarm on Thursday over rising cases of trade in human organs in Asia, and said globalization had increased risks of human trafficking.
Reuters/abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 3:06:29 PM)

DFA: Rescued Pinoys in Nigeria return home
The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on Thursday announced that the two Filipino seamen who were abducted and later released in Port Harcourt, Rivers state, Nigeria returned home Wednesday.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 1:54:14 PM)

Lakas solons deny Garcia’s ‘twisted’ claim on impeachment plan
Two Lakas Christian-Muslim Democrats congressmen on Thursday branded Cebu Representative-elect Pablo Garcia’s impeachment story as “twisted” and a “fantastic tale.”
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 1:51:01 PM)

Former terrorists receive $10M from US
Four former members of the Abu Sayaf Group on Thursday received $10 million in reward money from the United States government for helping authorities in locating and killing two leaders of the Qaeda-linked group, DZMM reported.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 12:24:34 PM)

Abalos reiterates failure of elections in Maguindanao
Commission on Elections Chairman Benjamin Abalos Sr. said Thursday that the poll body has all the reasons to declare a failure of elections in Maguindanao.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 11:56:26 AM)

Villar welcomes challengers to Senate presidency
Re-elected Sen. Manuel Villar said on Thursday almost all the senators are qualified to assume the Senate presidency as he welcomed discussions on the possibility of his being replaced as president of the Senate in the 14th Congress.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 11:34:40 AM)
'New impeach moves vs GMA to come from Lakas'
Any impeachment attempt will likely come from the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD) party members to force President Arroyo to support Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia Jr.'s bid for an unprecedented fifth term as Speaker of the House of Representatives.
The Philippine Star (6/7/2007 3:29:35 AM)

10 senators proclaimed
Election officials Wednesday proclaimed 10 new senators – mostly from the opposition – after weeks of an excruciatingly slow manual count and canvassing of votes marred by violence and allegations of massive cheating.
The Philippine Star (6/7/2007 3:29:08 AM)

HR bill certified by GMA as 'urgent'
President Arroyo Wednesday certified as urgent the passage of the human rights compensation bill in an attempt to guarantee the measure's approval before the termination of the 13th Congress.
The Philippine Star (6/7/2007 2:18:05 AM)

'Dead people voted'
The dead may have indeed risen from their graves and gone to polling precincts across the country to cast their votes in the last midterm election.
The Philippine Star (6/7/2007 2:17:26 AM)

Team of lawyers to monitor nursing exam retake on June 11
Hoping to put an end to the June 2006 nursing licensure examination controversy, the Department of Labor and Employment gave the go-signal for a team of Filipino lawyers to closely watch over the test retake on June 11.
The Philippine Star (6/7/2007 2:16:35 AM)

Ermita: No Cabinet revamp
Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita on Wednesday dispelled rumors of an impending revamp of President Arroyo's Cabinet after the administration took a "beating" in the recent senatorial elections.
abs-cbnNEWS.com (6/7/2007 1:39:24 AM)
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