



ASIA-EUROPE ENVIRONMENT FORUM



**Asia-Europe Lecture Tour
“TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH COOPERATION”**

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ABSTRACT

In 1989 international experts developed the concept of employing environmental issues as vehicles for democratisation and change. By today this model has integrated environmental cooperation as an engine for good governance and stability as well.

The REC as an international organisation has assisted the global effort on environmental issues and sustainable development with local and regional initiatives and solutions fitting the needs of the beneficiaries through an innovative and flexible mechanism initially to harmonise donor efforts in its beneficiary region and by now beyond.

The REC works in various fields of sustainable development. It has gained experience by implementing more than 4000 projects (in the value of 138 million Euros), bridging solutions and all types and levels of stakeholders on issues such as environmental policy, climate change, energy security, renewable energy, energy efficiency, environmental investments, law compliance and enforcement, sustainable consumption and production using the Aarhus tools (public participation, access to information and justice), while deeply engaging in all levels of sustainable development training and capacity building.

During this presentation a carefully selected mix of the key REC projects will be **elaborated in order to demonstrate that environmental cooperation can act as a motor for good governance and stability**. The speakers will further identify areas of interest for joint cooperation between the REC and our Asian partners and colleagues. Among others, the selected examples include:

- The Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe (REReP), a participatory, flexible and transparent process. It aims at ensuring that environmental protection is systematically considered a top priority during efforts of physical and economic reconstruction in a region having faced political and economic instability in the past.
- Regional activities under the umbrella of education for sustainable development which target the young generation as well as senior officials and experts of the governmental and business sectors – thus ensuring future stability.
- Within the framework of Local Initiatives, the REC aims not only at promoting sustainable development, but at mobilising the local community by building their capacities with a regional outlook.

The lecture will demonstrate all these key efforts and more that could be implemented in the Asian region and introduce recent strategic tools and initiatives of REC’s donor and beneficiary community in order to foster the transition to a stable and sustainable carbon-free society both on a local and a regional level.

PROFILE OF SPEAKER



Born in London to Hungarian parents, Marta Szigeti Bonifert travelled and studied in China, Ghana, Japan, Kuwait, Sweden, and the USA. She has spent 17 years working for the environment in various capacities at organisations such as the Environment Institute and the Environment and Water Ministry in Hungary. Before joining the REC, she spent 10 years in business working for multinational companies in various senior positions ranging from human resources director to commercial director for the CEE region at companies such as UB/McVitie`s, Vivendi Telecom Hungary, and the ING Group in Hungary.

Szigeti Bonifert earned her masters of business administration from the Katz Graduate School of Business from the University of Pittsburgh with a focus on strategy and human resources. She has a degree in management from the International Management Center of Central European University and has a bachelor of science in psychology/biology from the University of Kuwait.

Szigeti Bonifert is a member of the Environmental Management and Law Association (EMLA) and was its first managing director. She is a founder and board member of the CEE Network for Gender Issues, vice-president of the Hungarian Foundation for Real Equal Opportunities and Hungarian civil focal point for the Gender Task Force of the Stability Pact. She is board member of the Europrosperitas 2010 Foundation; advisor to Agroinnova/Torino University Scientific Committee; head of the environmental committee of the Hungarian Business Leaders' Forum (HBLF), member of EBRD's environmental advisory council (ENVAC) and Chair of the Environment and Security Initiative in 2007 (ENVSEC).

She became executive director of the REC in May, 2003.

ABOUT THE ASIA-EUROPE FOUNDATION

The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** seeks to promote better mutual understanding and closer cooperation between the people of Asia and Europe through greater intellectual, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges. These exchanges include conferences, lecture tours, workshops, seminars and the use of web-based platforms. The major achievement of ASEF is the establishment of permanent bi-regional networks focused on areas and issues that help to strengthen Asia-Europe relations.

Established in February 1997 by partners of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)¹, ASEF reports to a board of governors representing the ASEM partners. ASEF is the only permanent physical institution of the ASEM process. Having completed over 310 projects, involving over 13,500 individuals ('ASEF Alumni'), ASEF works in partnership with other public institutions and civil society actors to ensure its work is broad-based and balanced among the partner countries.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.asef.org>

This particular lecture is organised under the ASEF Environment and Sustainable Development Series. The Series is a platform to promote cooperation in environment and sustainable development issues in Asia and Europe.

¹ **ASEM** (the Asia-Europe Meeting) is an informal process of dialogue and cooperation. It brings together Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, The Netherlands, Pakistan, The Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam, the ASEAN Secretariat and the European Commission. <http://www.aseminfoboard.org>