Chair’s Statement:

“Europe and Asia: Global Partners for Global Challenges”

1. Model ASEM Bratislava Spin-off was held on 26-28 October 2018 at Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Bratislava, Slovakia, in the gap year of the 13th and 14th ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (ASEM FMM13 and ASEM FMM14). Under the theme “Europe and Asia: Global Partners for Global Challenges” more than 30 student delegates from 21 ASEM Partner countries attended the meeting. Model ASEM is a political simulation of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (ASEM FMM) where participants are invited to role-play their respective ASEM Partners’ positions and negotiate in order to develop a consensus-based Chair’s Statement.

2. United in the belief of the strengths of cultural diversity and transcontinental prospects for peace and stability, the Model ASEM Leaders raised major areas of concern on Asia-Europe relations and cooperation in accordance with this year’s theme, which mirrored the theme of the 12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM12), “Europe and Asia: Global Partners for Global Challenges”. These were organised across three thematic areas – Political, Economic and Socio-Cultural – in order to comprehensively promote cooperation among ASEM Partners.

A. Political Pillar

3. The Model ASEM Ministers reiterated their commitment, in view of human rights violations in Euro-Asian countries and particularly in conflict areas, to promote and protect human rights in accordance with the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, where applicable, international human rights treaties and instruments, and pledged to further strengthen cooperation within the ASEM Process, including the exchange of experiences and sharing best practices at various ASEM Meeting and Initiatives.

4. The Model ASEM Ministers underlined the importance of cooperation in the field of security, specifically a better exchange of relevant information between security agencies of the ASEM Partners, thereby tackling terrorism and international crime.

---

1 As Model ASEM is a simulation-based project, the points listed in this Chair’s Statement do not necessarily correspond with the official positions of ASEM Governments, the organisers or views of the individual participants.
5. The Model ASEM Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to promote disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and encouraged nuclear powers to realise their responsibility to humankind and look for a path to resolve international confrontations.

6. The Model ASEM Ministers highlighted the importance of dialogue in the field of refugee policies in accordance with the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

7. The Model ASEM Ministers emphasised the importance of the challenges posed by climate change, urging countries in accordance with their possibilities to create policies supporting low-carbon and environment-friendly energy sources and remaining ambitious in pursuing of the Kyoto Protocol and extending support of the Paris Agreement.

8. The Model ASEM Ministers expressed their deep concerns on recent issues that endanger maritime security, freedom of navigation and cooperation at sea. At the same time, the Model ASEM Ministers reaffirmed that countries should refrain from the use or threat of force, and that any disputes shall be resolved in accordance with the principles of international law, the UN Charter and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

9. The Model ASEM Ministers expressed unanimous commitment towards resolving, anticipating and settling cybersecurity challenges, stressing the importance of digital education among less technically developed countries that will be provided by the more experienced ones, and underlining the need for a multilateral approach and cooperation.

10. The Model ASEM Ministers strongly condemned all acts and forms of terrorism and violent extremism and vowed to cooperate in order to effectively counter and combat terrorism in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and international law, including international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

11. The Model ASEM Ministers acknowledged the necessity of a more extensive and closer cooperation on counter-terrorism efforts and proposed that the previous practice of organising ASEM Counter-Terrorism Conferences (ASEM CTC) ought to be revitalised. The ASEM CTC was and should again be a platform for exchange of ideas and practices, with the participation of public officials, experts, academia and civil society actors from all ASEM Partners. The Model ASEM Ministers expressed hope that such events would contribute to converging counter-terrorism policies and capacities.

12. The Model ASEM Ministers recognised the importance and underlined the need for a peaceful resolution as well as promotion and strengthening of the dialogue and cooperation on common regional security concerns. The ASEM Partners committed to existing bilateral and UN Security Council resolutions regarding these conflicts.
B. Economic Pillar

13. The Model ASEM Ministers agreed on the necessity of a WTO reform amid the rise of protectionism, and at the same time underlined the importance of compliance with the WTO rules until WTO is reformed.

14. The Model ASEM Ministers highlighted the importance of multilateralism and free trade.

15. The ASEM Minister emphasised the measures in the field of infrastructure concerning 1) the development and upgrading of the Eurasian transport network and 2) the provision of a clear framework for trade to enable local SMEs and communities to have access to markets in Asia and Europe.

16. The Model ASEM Ministers emphasised the importance of eco-friendly transport of goods including green shipping.

17. The Model ASEM Ministers reaffirmed the necessity to revisit provisions to address discrimination to improve women’s access to the labour market and the economy.

18. The Model ASEM Ministers encouraged developing the eco-friendly economy in accordance with the SDGs. Particularly related to the SDG number 7 and SDG number 13, the Model ASEM Ministers emphasised research and development cooperation regarding cost-effective renewable energy and the necessity to foster renewable energy business.

19. The Model ASEM Ministers recognised poverty as a global challenge, and thus emphasised the importance of technological innovation in the process of food production, transportation, and distribution in order to reduce food loss.

20. The Model ASEM Ministers underlined the importance of enhancing sustainable tourism to empower local communities and regions while protecting cultural heritage and environmental standards.

21. The Model ASEM Ministers recognised the need to work together to find solutions to prevent tax avoidance, evasion and fraud.

22. The Model ASEM Ministers suggested enhancing cooperation on the topic of future financial crises mitigation and prevention. The Model ASEM Ministers agreed to prepare on national level to further discuss the issue at the 14th ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (ASEM FMM14) in Spain in 2019.

23. The Model ASEM Ministers emphasised the importance of implementing micro-banking in order to foster entrepreneurship among young people, people living in poverty, and minority groups.

24. The Model ASEM Ministers suggested facilitation of the foreign private investment placement process for a general increase in the volume of private investments between Asia and Europe.
The Model ASEM Ministers agreed on the importance of fostering private-public partnerships in order to finance large-scale projects and initiatives.

The Model ASEM Ministers encouraged further development of internet network accessibility and digitalisation to foster the future economic cooperation.

The Model ASEM Ministers highlighted the benefits from the growing digital market, including lower barrier to market entry, reduction of transaction costs, and improvement of market efficiency.

The Model ASEM Ministers committed themselves to cooperate closely with the private sector to reap the benefits of industry 4.0, create employment and foster entrepreneurship.

The Model ASEM Ministers emphasised the importance of foreign investment in technology and innovation in promoting inclusive social economic growth and job creation.

**C. Socio-cultural Pillar**

The Model ASEM Ministers emphasised the necessity of promoting sustainable tourism between Asia and Europe in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in three dimensions: Economic, social, environmental.

The Model ASEM Ministers agreed to support initiatives such as the Kerala Tourism programme (India) which aims at the protection of nature and cultural heritage.

The Model ASEM Ministers encouraged improvement of communication between Asian and European countries and increase learning and understanding of local communities, proposing greater cooperation in the cultural and tourism industry.

The Model ASEM Ministers recognised the problems of discrimination based on religion and called for further dialogue and cooperation to tackle the challenge.

The Model ASEM Ministers agreed on further establishing an educational programme and a global forum based on data from the institute monitoring discrimination for cultivating awareness about religious diversity in order to avoid misunderstandings and to reduce fear.

The Model ASEM Ministers emphasised the importance of education as a human right for everyone.

The Model ASEM Ministers committed to cooperate in the field of short-term professional education that fosters an increasing workforce in a form of financial support of programmes like STEM education, ASEM Work Placement Programme and traineeship programmes.

The Model ASEM Ministers recognised the importance of building a comprehensive education system to enhance equality by supporting initiatives focused on
increasing literacy and inclusion of people from other countries, such as camps lead by volunteers and professional language teaching and other essential subjects.

38. The Model ASEM Ministers committed to raising the awareness and promotion of student mobility opportunities already offered by educational institutions, to achieve balanced mobility between the two continents. International and intercontinental mobility serves as a tool to incorporate intercultural awareness into education in order to break the stereotypes and avoid cultural misunderstandings.

39. Furthermore, the Model ASEM Ministers agreed on supporting the idea of the establishment of an ASEM education cooperation centre for STEM, innovation, technical areas, and provide a platform for Asian and European companies and institutions to share their experience.

40. The Model ASEM Ministers recognised the need to identify and work on the challenges of disabled people and emphasised the need of support and social inclusion. The Model ASEM Ministers committed to host seminars to share knowledge related to this issue in order to improve their living conditions and to provide a helping hand to locals on dealing with the challenge. The Model ASEM Ministers shall cooperate on this challenge, based on the leading role of United Nations and principles of the UN Charters.

41. The Model ASEM Ministers acknowledged and promoted the importance of cultural diplomacy, economic development and sharing, as a core interest among all ASEM Partners. The Model ASEM Ministers agreed to exchange Asian and European culture through cross-culture exchange programmes as a base to start any development, intercultural communication between the continents.

42. The Model ASEM Ministers supported the initiative to create more opportunities for the citizens to be included in international dialogue which discusses issues and through participation in discussion forums and debates.

D. Concluding Remarks

43. The Model ASEM Ministers expressed their sincere gratitude to all Model ASEM Bratislava Spin-off organisers and partners, in particular the Organising Committee, the Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, and the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), and to the host country Slovakia for the remarkable hospitality extended to all participants throughout their time in Bratislava. The Model ASEM Ministers also thanked the Government of Slovakia for its political and financial support of the Model ASEM project series, and ASEM Governments for their financial contributions to this edition. The Model ASEM Ministers recommended the continuation of this forum as the official youth side event of the ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (ASEM FMM) and encouraged ASEM Partners to support potential spin-off activities in their own countries.