

PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

PR 2012 0606 006

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How the EU is perceived in Asia

SINGAPORE – Public Briefing “EU through the Eyes of Asia” was held in Singapore on Wednesday 6 June 2012. The event was organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation with the EU Centre in Singapore and Konrad Adenauer Foundation. This briefing was one of the platforms to share the outcomes of a pan-Asia research project. The study looked at the perceptions of the European Union through the eyes of the public, media and elite.

“If you want to read news about the EU in Asia, its best that you live in China or Japan” remarked Prof Martin Holland, Director, National Centre for Research on Europe, University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Prof Holland is a coordinator of this project and a leading expert in EU affairs.

Sharing his views during the public briefing, he highlighted the outcomes of the unique study tracking the perceptions of the EU across Asia, including Singapore. The study has examined 40 media outlets across Asia, analysing over 6,000 articles in 7 countries. A survey of 7,000 public respondents was conducted, while nearly 200 opinion leaders from business, civil society, media and political sectors were interviewed on their perception of the EU.

The results from Singapore showed some very interesting insights into how the media reported on the EU during this difficult period. Over 1,000 articles were collected from 6 months of daily analysis of the Business Times, Straits Times, Channel 8 News and Lianhe Zaobao in 2011. Only the media in Japan and China reported more on the EU. Significantly, 73% of the articles focused on the EU in economic related news, with only 17% looking at political news, 7% on social issues and 3% on environment news. These issues related mostly to the Eurozone crisis, but many articles also focused on trade between the EU and Singapore.

Ambassador Marc Ungeheuer, Head of the European Union Delegation to Singapore, had earlier said “The people's perceptions of the EU are largely influenced by what's tabled in the media; but the EU works beyond just economic and financial issues. Many success stories in environment and climate change, for example, need to be highlighted to increase the public's awareness on what the EU does to improve lives”.

The study asked 1,000 Singaporeans who was the most important partner for Singapore, with China taking the top spot, followed by Japan and the US, with the EU in 5th place. An interesting finding, especially as the EU is the 2nd largest trade partner and largest source of Foreign Direct Investment for Singapore.

The briefing is the first stop on a tour of 7 cities in Asia and Europe (Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Beijing, Shanghai, Singapore, Tokyo) to highlight the findings of the unique study.

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS



Asia-Europe Foundation

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Through ASEF, civil society concerns are included as a vital component of deliberations of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), which currently comprises of 46 member states plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat (www.aseminfoboard.org) ASEF was established in February 1997 by the participating governments of ASEM and has since engaged over 17,000 direct participants through more than 550 projects in the realms of economy and society, environment, education, public health, arts and culture, human rights and governance, and inter-communal dialogue. www.asef.org

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