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14th East Asia - Europe Think-tank Dialogue: Engendering Inclusive Growth

A Common Challenge for Strong Bilateral Relations Between Asia and the European Union - Social Cohesion Debates and Policies in Asia and Europe
12- 13 September 2012, Vientiane, Laos

10 September, SINGAPORE – With only two months to go before world leaders gather for the 9th Summit of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), ASEM watchers will be analysing the actual state of the ASEM process and the consequences of the EU debt crisis on bi-lateral relations between the two regions.

Social cohesion was re-affirmed as a priority for ASEM leaders at the 8th ASEM Summit in 2010. However, given the economic crisis, progress in ensuring access to decent work, civil society engagement and inclusive growth may have been limited. Cutbacks from the austerity measures imposed by many governments have a tendency to strongly impact social development programmes. Therefore alternatives have to be sought at the national and international levels to protect the most vulnerable.

As Dr Wilhelm Hofmeister, Regional Representative for Politics at the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, notes 'The challenges faced today can only be addressed collectively, especially when it comes to social integration issues where both regions face similar challenges. Since political agendas are shaped by expert opinions and voices, the Think Tank Dialogue provides the opportunity for renowned Think Tanks from Europe and East and Southeast Asia for policy oriented collaboration on bi-regional relations between Asia and Europe'.

Speaking on behalf of the Asia-Europe Foundation, Executive Director Ambassador Michel Filhol points out the relevance of the Think-tank dialogue, 'At a time when ASEM leaders are gathering, it is important to reflect on how current attitudes towards bi-regional cooperation will shape future Asia-Europe relations. The Think-tank Dialogue provides the perfect opportunity to feel the pulse of current social integration debates beyond state boundaries'.

The 14th East Asia-Europe Think Tank Dialogue is co-organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, the Institute of Strategic and Development Studies and the Institute of Foreign Affairs. The Meeting will take place on 14-15 September 2012, at the Hotel Plaza Laos in Vientiane.

Ambassador Sayakane Sisouvong, Permanent Secretary of Cabinet, Laos Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will deliver the keynote speech during the opening plenary on 12th September.

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS	
	<p>The Institute for Strategic and Development Studies (ISDS Philippines) is an independent non-profit, policy research and advocacy institution that is also involved in training activities in cooperation with other training institutions at home and abroad. It was founded by a group of academics from the University of the Philippines Diliman in April 1991. It was established in response to the need for an ongoing evaluation and interpretation of the changes in national and international affairs by serious international, regional, and national analysts. It was also aimed at responding to the need to provide academics a venue for research to enrich teaching and to provide inputs to policy-making.</p> <p>http://www.isdsphilippines.org/</p>
	<p>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</p> <p>In 2012, ASEF is commemorating its 15th Anniversary and invites everyone to take part in celebrating Connected Histories, Shared Future.</p>
	<p>The Institute of Foreign Affairs of Laos</p> <p>http://www.mofa.gov.la</p>
 <p>Konrad Adenauer Stiftung</p>	<p>The Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany. Through its international activities and projects it promotes democracy and the respect of Human Rights, the rule of law and a social market economy, a peaceful resolution of conflicts and the exchange between cultures and religions. Its regional office in Singapore organises and sponsors international conferences and seminars around the ASEAN+3 Region and promotes the strengthening of the relations between Asia and Europe. The European Office in Brussels provides knowledge on European policy and networks with institutions in and outside the EU.</p> <p>www.kas.de</p>