

'Asia in the Eyes of Europe'

Venue: 8 research locations in Europe

Date: January 2010 – December 2011

BACKGROUND

The 'Asia in the Eyes of Europe' research project offers a very timely and unique opportunity for Asia and Europe to gauge their respective understanding of one another, through examining European public, media and opinion leader's attitudes, knowledge and perceptions of Asia. The project has evolved from the ongoing ASEF initiative, 'The EU through the Eyes of Asia', which has carried out research looking at the perceptions of the EU in Asia across 12 research locations since 2005. The 'Asia in the Eyes of Europe' research project will provide valued comparability to the findings of the 'EU through the Eyes of Asia'. The project will be undertaken to improve the understanding of Asia in Europe and to create a permanent platform to enable civil society, business, researchers, students, policy makers, media gatekeepers and a broad range of cross-sectoral stakeholders to understand one another better.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 2 year research project will be carried out similarly to the 'EU through the Eyes of Asia', with a multi level and multi-faceted methodology. The methodological approach, as formulated through external expert consultations, will phase the research to carry out a representative sample of 8 EU countries (listed below) and will examine the perceptions of Asia in Europe in three distinct arenas;

- **Public Opinion:** The public opinion survey will be carried out in June and July 2010 across 8 EU countries with varying samples of 2000 or 1000 respondents depending on the size of population, countries include Austria (1000), Belgium (2000*), Denmark (1000) France (2000), Germany (2000), Italy (2000), Romania (1000), United Kingdom (2000). The public opinion survey will be carried out in collaboration with the 'European Identity' project by the London School of Economics.
- **Media Analysis:** The Media analysis aspect of the project will seek to gauge the representations of Asia in European media over a period of three months from September to November 2010 (inclusive). The research will look at three media outlets in each location: a national reputable newspaper (broadsheet or equivalent) with the highest readership, a national popular newspaper (tabloid or equivalent) with the highest readership and the most popular TV news broadcast (Public Service Broadcaster if applicable). An additional aspect of the media analysis will be the inclusion of a European-level media analysis tracking news from media outlets such as Euronews and European Voice. The Media Analysis phase of the research will feature a short piloting of the methodology, thus the above methodology may be subject to change.
- **Opinion Leader Interviews:** The interviews will seek to access the perceptions of Asia amongst European Opinion leaders from the media sector adding to the validity and the scope of the data collected. Specially trained researchers will seek to carry out interviews with approximately 12 interviewees drawn from the media sector, interviewees will include editors/news directors and lead reporters of media outlets that are leaders in Asia coverage. In addition to these interviews researchers and partner research institutes will be actively encouraged to carry out further independent interviews with opinion leaders from other sectors. The additional sectors would include business (*members of national and European business, employers & labour associations*), politics (*relevant government officials & parliamentarians*), civil society/academia, as well as Brussels-based EU opinion leaders. This would provide a further boost to the overall validity and scope of the data.

The research methodology will also track the perceptions of the ASEM process in addition to perceptions of Asia.

* Belgium will include 1000 respondents from each of the French and Flemish speaking population.

OBJECTIVES

The 'Asia in the Eyes of Europe' project aims to specifically:

- Produce scientifically valid feedback on the perceptions of Asia in Europe.
- Develop an extensive dataset of information, shared freely online to promote new research on how Europe perceives Asia.
- Communicate core policy recommendations clearly to relevant policy makers and opinion leaders in major policy fields including Economics, Environment and Energy, Security, and other global challenges.
- Forge strong and sustainable partnerships between European research partners that monitor Europe's relations with Asia.

TARGET GROUPS

"Participation/Producers"

The implementation of the project will seek active partnership and participation from academic institutes, the media sector, experts and think tanks in each locality and across Europe. These partnerships will include providing research teams, made up of PhD candidates and experienced Academics to ensure the research is carried out to the highest standard.

In addition, we will also seek to include the methodological expertise of ASEF's partners for the 'EU through the Eyes of Asia' study, the National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE), to assist with training the researchers and monitoring the research.

"Consumers"

The project's outcomes are aimed at a multitude of actors. The primary target groups for the data are those actors shaping policy in Asia and Europe, so in this regard the outcomes of the project are directed at a diverse audience. The research will aim to provide feedback for policy makers on European perceptions of Asia as a whole, however the robust research methodology may highlight some interesting country specific outcomes. In addition to direct policy makers, the data can help to spur debate amongst those non-government actors shaping policy such as academia, the business sector, lobby groups, the media sector and think tanks.

OUTPUTS

Tangible outputs:

- Comprehensive & comparable data from public opinion poll, media analysis and opinion-maker interviews across 8 European institutions
- Dataset of findings made freely available to researchers
- 1 interim report, 1 final report, 1 publication on the findings & recommendations to European and Asian stakeholders
- Public events (book launches, lecture tours etc.)
- Wide dissemination of findings through ASEF and partners' networks in order to achieve maximum publicity
- 24 month collaboration between 8 European institutions and a core consortium of 4 partners from Asia and Europe

Intangible outputs:

- Better understanding of European perception of Asia
- Greater interest in the study of Asia in the EU
- Better informed policy dialogue

For possible future Impact

- Articles, academic theses and news analysis/reportage on findings

VISIBILITY

- A special section on the ASEF corporate website dedicated to Asia-Europe perceptions
- Media coverage of the initial findings

- A special presentation of initial findings (public opinion data and 3 months of media analysis) at the Connecting Civil Societies IV event at the ASEM summit
- A tie into the Asia Europe Insights programme presenting the findings to a wider audience
- Commission op-ed pieces in major print and online media with the initial findings, as well as reaching out to top academic journals
- Book launches and briefings events

PARTNERS

Co-Funders & Coordinators

Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)

National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE), University of Canterbury

Tsinghua University

Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF)

Research Partners

Austria – Austrian institute for International Affairs (OIIIP)

Belgium – Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies (BICCS)

Denmark – Asia Centre – Copenhagen Business School (CBS)

France – Centre Asie – Institut Francais des Relations Internationales (IFRI)

Germany – German Council for Foreign Relations (DGAP)

Italy – University of Siena

Romania – Romanian Institute for European - Asian Studies (IRSEA)

United Kingdom - London School of Economics (LSE)

IMPLEMENTATION/ARRANGEMENTS

- Core Partners: ASEF, DGAP, KAF, NCRE, and Tsinghua University..
 - All partners provide joint-decision on framework, design, concept, agenda, list of participants and visibility & communication efforts
 - NCRE is the methodology partner providing the EU methodology adaptation
 - DGAP through Dr. Sebastian Bersick provides the over-all research coordination
- Collaborating Research Institutes:
 - One Institute per country will be selected by 2010
- 1st Semester 2010
 - Securing Partnerships
 - Securing Funding
 - Finalise Public Opinion Survey Instrument
 - Research Partner Planning Meeting
- 2nd Semester 2010
 - Public Opinion Survey
 - Analysis & Writing
 - Release of Interim Report
 - Training on Media Analysis & Opinion Leader Interviews
 - Media Survey
 - Analysis and Writing
- 1st Semester 2011 (Indicative)
 - Training on Data Analysis and Opinion Leader Interviews
 - Opinion Leaders' Interviews
 - Analysis and Writing
 - Consolidation of Findings (possible 2nd Interim Report)
- 2nd Semester 2011 (Indicative)
 - Analysis and Writing
 - Publication preparation
 - Book Launches

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

- Dataset available on ASEF website
- number of reports disseminated
- Project agreements & participation in the 8 target countries
- Briefing held in 2010 prior to ASEM Summit

FOLLOW UP/SUSTAINABILITY

The project's primary aim is to communicate the core findings of the study to all ASEM partners. The final publication will be disseminated widely among ASEF's key alumni and will be developed as a key tool in ongoing academic work on Asia–Europe relations through the use of online tools and incorporating the findings into ASEF's ongoing activities. As mentioned above the findings will be disseminated widely through book launches and briefings in each of the research locations as well as other partners in Asia. Key figures in the research will take part in the Asia Europe Insights programme, which will seek to further disseminate the findings and spur dialogue amongst stakeholders in Asia and Europe.