



PRESS RELEASE

Press release no.: 120216_PR1203
16 February 2012

Regional and national human rights mechanisms examined

The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) will hold its Second Meeting on the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration on 17-19 February in Jakarta, Indonesia following a pledge by its Chairman to finalise the draft within the year. On the eve of these discussions, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) has released a report capturing the current state of human rights mechanisms across Asia and Europe.

The report reflects the findings of the 11th Informal Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Seminar on Human Rights. On the theme “National and Regional Human Rights Mechanisms”, the event took place in November 2011 in Prague, Czech Republic. The AICHR representatives of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand were among the more than 100 participants representing Asian and European governments and civil society at the seminar.

Eminent human rights practitioners – Mr Kieren Fitzpatrick, Director of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, and Professor Michael O’Flaherty, Vice Chair of the United Nations Human Rights Committee – led the writing of the report. The document provides key observations on current mechanisms for promoting and protecting human rights at both national and regional levels.

The report suggests that “there is value in exploring the development of minimum international standards for regional human rights mechanisms”, as no such standards currently exist. The effectiveness of regional mechanisms is dependent on the willingness of states to support their work and to constructively engage with them, according to the report. The support of civil society organisations is likewise crucial for the effectiveness of regional bodies.

The report is an essential resource for both practitioners and scholars who work on human rights issues, particularly in Asia and Europe. Fitzpatrick and O’Flaherty also wrote a [background paper](#) that provides a useful overview of existing mechanisms at international, regional and national levels.

Attorney Ray Paolo Santiago, Secretary-General of the Civil Society Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, and Prof. Florence Benoit-Rohmer, Secretary-General of the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation, also contributed to the report.

The Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights series is co-organised by the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Raoul Wallenberg Institute (delegated by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, and the Asia-Europe Foundation.

The 12th seminar in the series will address, “Human Rights and Information and Communication Technology”, on 27-29 June 2012 in Seoul, Korea.

To access the report:

http://www.asef.org/images/docs/11thHRS_Report.PDF

For more information on the 11th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights:

<http://asef.org/index.php/projects/themes/human-rights/1989-11th-human-rights>

Programme contact: Ms Anjeli Narandran, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

T. +65 6874 9755 | F. +65 6872 1207 | E-mail: anjeli.narandran@asef.org

Media contact: Ms Debasmitta Dasgupta, Public Affairs, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

T. +65 68749739 | E-mail: debasmitta.dasgupta@asef.org

About the Organisers:



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*). ASEF was established in February 1997 by the participating governments of ASEM and has since implemented over 500 projects, engaging over 15,000 direct participants as well as reaching out to a much wider audience in Asia and Europe. www.asef.org

* ASEM now brings together 46 member states (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam) plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. www.aseminfoboard.org



The Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law is an independent academic institution dedicated to the promotion of human rights through research, training and education. Established in 1984 at the Faculty of Law at Lund University, Sweden, the institute is currently involved in organising in Lund two Masters Programs and an interdisciplinary human rights programme at the undergraduate level. Host of one of the largest human rights libraries in the Nordic countries and engaged in various research and publication activities, the Raoul Wallenberg Institute provides researchers and students with a conducive study environment. The Institute maintains extensive relationships with academic human rights institutions worldwide. www.rwi.lu.se



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