

**FOCUS**

## Fifth Anniversary of Asia-Europe Foundation

15 – 16 February, Singapore



Executive Director Amb. Colomé as the maestro at the Asia-Europe music concert

**Asia-Europe Foundation celebrates its five years since inauguration on 15 February 1997.**

The commemorative events in Singapore commenced with a public lecture by the guest-of-honour from Brussels, EU Commissioner for Trade, Pascal Lamy, entitled *Asia-Europe Relations in the 21st Century: A Joint Partnership for Harnessing Globalisation*, which was attended by a large audience from business, diplomatic corps, academia, and media. The Second Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore, Lee Yock Suan was also present.

The lecture was followed by the official launch of the revamped ASEF website, [www.asef.org](http://www.asef.org). Among its newly added features, the website will allow the users to register for ASEF projects directly on-line, facilitate communications among the ASEF Alumni, while the enhanced search

engine makes it much easier to locate the wanted documents and news clippings on ASEF and ASEM.

In the evening, the Singaporean Minister for Foreign Affairs, Prof. S Jayakumar delivered a speech on the progress of Asia-European understanding during the official reception in the premises of ASEF. In the following evening, a joint concert by a visiting European orchestra and an Asian orchestra took place on the lawn of ASEF, where the Executive Director of ASEF, Amb. Delfin Colomé conducted a musical piece that he himself had arranged.

Speech by Commissioner Pascal Lamy available for download at:

<http://www.asef.org/documents/pascallamy.doc>

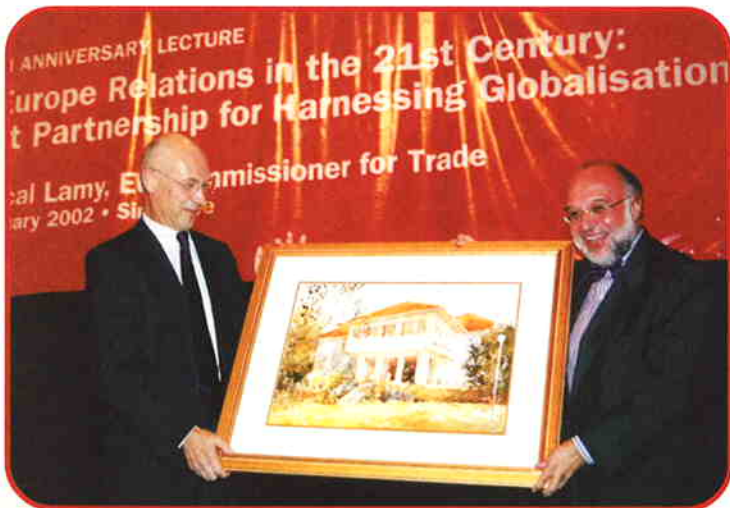
Speech by Prof S Jayakumar available for download at:

<http://app.internet.gov.sg/data/sprinter/pr/weekly/2002021504.htm>

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# Celebrating the 5th Anniversary of ASEF



Commissioner Lamy receives gift from Amb. Colomé following the lecture

*Since its inception in 1997, ASEF has played an extremely constructive role in building bridges between Asia and Europe, complementing the government-to-government dialogue of ASEM through people-to-people contacts.*

**Pascal Lamy, EU Commissioner for Trade**



EU Commissioner for Trade Pascal Lamy

*The present world situation is volatile at best and efforts to promote understanding between peoples of different beliefs and cultures are more important than ever. By means of well-defined projects, ASEF has brought Asians and Europeans of all walks of life closer together for the past five years. On this anniversary, the dedication of the ASEF staff members deserves recognition: I congratulate them and wish them well for the future.*

**Eric Duchêne, ASEF Governor for Belgium**



(L-R) Prof. Tommy Koh, Amb. Vitthya Vejajiva, Amb. Delfin Colomé, Singaporean Foreign Minister S Jayakumar

*I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate ASEF on her 5th birthday. I believe with an [...] even more active participation and even more vigorous efforts, we will develop ASEF into an indispensable bridge for exchanges between Eastern and Western civilisations, thus to facilitate an even more comprehensive and in-depth co-operation between Asia and Europe.*

**Wang Min, ASEF Governor for China**



(L-R) Commissioner Lamy and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore, Lee Yock Suan



(Above) Prof. S. Jayakumar speaking at the anniversary reception at ASEF, 15 February



(L-R) Graham Watson, Member of the European Parliament; Prof. Tommy Koh, Director of Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore; Amb. Wiryono, ASEM Governor for Indonesia

*Asia and Europe have much to gain in an increasingly globalised world that has shrunk to a single neighbourhood. [...] For their co-operation to be effective, however, they must be able to communicate with each other. Concerted action requires agreement, which entails successful dialogue. Of course, there are many barriers to effective communication between the two regions. [...] But these barriers, formidable as they are, can and must be overcome – if each side took a genuine effort to study and appreciate the other, and to listen with an open mind to what the other is trying to say. Communication goes on two levels – head to head and heart to heart – and therefore we need to be able to communicate not only intelligently but also sensitively.*

**Ambassador S. Wiryono, ASEM Governor for Indonesia**

*The creation of the ASEM process has opened a new era in the relations between the European Union and East Asia. The success of the three summits and the preparations of the Copenhagen Summit show how positive the existence of the ASEM framework for multilateral co-operation between the two continents has been. But in the era of globalisation it is important to establish relations beyond the traditional contacts between governments and administrations. The relations between civil societies have an increased importance in global and inter-regional relations. This is especially true in the case of East Asia and the E.U., because up to now, those civil society relations have been rather weak.*

*That is why in the Bangkok Summit one organisation was created: namely ASEF to develop relations between the civil societies of the 25 member countries.*

*The results of the five years of existence of ASEF show how clever were the decision taken in Bangkok. I wish to express my admiration for the work of the Executive Directors Tommy Koh and Delfin Colomé and their teams of collaborators in Singapore. The future of ASEF –with the backing of ASEM– will be bright and beneficial for the peoples of East Asia and the European Union.*

**Amb. Camilo Barcia, ASEM Governor for Spain and Chairman of the Board (May 2001 – May 2002)**



*I remember that five years ago, then Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo of Netherlands (who was then EU President), and I launched ASEF in this very same building. The ASEM Leaders decided on ASEF at the inaugural ASEM Summit in Bangkok in 1996, thereby underlining the crucial importance of building up contacts not just at the political and economic levels, but also at the cultural, intellectual and people-to-people levels. They correctly recognised that the foundation for Asia-Europe links must be supported by close interaction among peoples from all walks of life from Asia and Europe.*

Prof. S Jayakumar, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Law, Singapore



Asia-Europe Concert: A Musical Experience at the ASEF lawn, 16 February

*In the mid-1990's Professor Samuel Huntington of Harvard University published his thesis about 'Clash of Civilisations'. ASEF is a political response to this academic thesis. And the response is, "we do not want this to happen." In present circumstances, the world seems to be heading toward confirming Professor Huntington's thesis. Those who are determined to change the course for the better and bring about mutual understanding and trust face an uphill battle. As Winston Churchill once minuted on a note to his staff: "Don't argue the matter, the difficulties speak for themselves."*

*So it is. ASEF is only a small wheel, but it is well-oiled and has taken a clear stance among those trying to stem the rising tide of intolerance, violence, mutual distrust and cultural arrogance.*

Amb. Jørgen Ørstrøm Møller, ASEF Governor for Denmark

*To commemorate the ASEF anniversary, I propose a piece from the Irish poet Yeats, a Nobel laureate with a deep interest in the East, which is reflected in his mature mysticism. This is the final stanza from my favourite Yeats poem:*

### *The Song of Wandering Aengus...*

*Though I am old with wandering  
Through hollow lands and  
hilly lands,  
I will find out where  
she has gone,  
And kiss her lips and  
take her hands;  
And walk among  
the long dappled grass,  
And pluck till time and  
times are done  
The silver apples of the moon,  
The golden apples of the sun.*

Tom Hardiman, ASEF Governor for Ireland

# ASEF Website Gets a *Facelift*

**The newly revamped ASEF website was officially launched on 15 February 2002 as part of the 5th Anniversary celebrations.**

The new website will allow the users to register for ASEF projects on-line, facilitate communications among the ASEF Alumni, while the enhanced search engine makes it much easier to locate wanted documents. Special features included in the revamped website will also include:

## Auto-Calendar Feature

The calendar is programmed to automatically update the site when an event is approaching or when the event has passed. Only the most up-to-date information will be highlighted.

## Comprehensive Project details

Information regarding particular projects, related photographs and documents are easily accessible online. The search engine is more reliable and the information is automatically archived. Each portfolio department is able to manage the contents of their own sections.

## 'For Press' Section

Exclusively open to the press who have signed up as members, the section gives access to information catered specifically for them. This would include details on press events, embargoed speeches, programmes, etc. Press members must be 'invited' and will be allowed access only after their e-mails have been verified.



The new homepage



EU Commissioner Lamy and Executive Director Amb, Colomé launch the revamped website



### Roundtable with German Parliamentarians

6 February  
Singapore

**In collaboration with the Embassy of Germany in Singapore, ASEF organised a roundtable for a delegation of German Parliamentarians.**

The subjects presented and discussed were *Islam and Domestic Politics in South East Asia* by Dr. Anthony Smith (Fellow, Assistant Editor, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), *Strategic Current Situation* by Melina Nathan (Associate Research Fellow, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies) and *Economic Situation Assessment of the ASEM Process and the EU/ASEAN Dialogue* by Dr. Eric Teo (Council Secretary, Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA)). The German parliamentarians, who cover ASEAN in the *Bundestag*, were greatly drawn to the analytical in-depth updates on the current political and economic developments in the region.

### Roundtable Seminar by Czech Deputy Prime Minister Jan Kavan <EU Enlargement and Its Implications for EU-Asia Relations>

8 February  
Singapore

**ASEF and Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA) co-organised a roundtable seminar at ASEF on the occasion of the visit of H.E. Jan Kavan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, to Singapore.**

Jan Kavan, speaking about the ongoing efforts of the Czech Republic to join the European Union, underscored the interests of the Republic anticipated from joining the EU – getting back on track to follow Czech democratic tradition prior to 1939 and to implement market-based economic reforms. The Czech Republic's negotiations on EU accession began in March 1998. She has been closely monitoring EU's membership in foreign relations as well as the ASEM process, as one of the candidate countries for 2004, said Kavan. He made it very clear that the Czech Republic, like all other EU accession countries, will adopt the EU external relations *acquis* in full, including ASEM and ASEF membership, which he welcomed full-heartedly. Danish Governor for ASEF, Amb. Jorgen Moller and Professor Simon Tay of SIIA acted as the Commentators. The text of the speech can be requested from [info@asef.org](mailto:info@asef.org).



(L-R) Prof. Simon Tay, Chair of SIIA; H.E. Jan Kavan, Czech Deputy Prime Minister; Amb. Delfin Colome, Executive Director of ASEF; Danish Ambassador Jorgen Moller

### <Terrorism and the European Response> Public Lecture by Graham Watson, MEP

14 February  
Singapore

**Graham Watson, Leader of the Liberal Democrats at the European Parliament, delivered a public lecture on <Terrorism and the European Response> in Singapore.**

In jointly combating terrorism between the US and the EU, the Liberal leader voiced that the EU was “very concerned that any military action must be based purely on international law, that it must be proportionate, that it must be necessary and that it must be limited to taking out the infrastructure of the terrorist organisations.” He added that there were difficulties also on the judicial level due to the US setting up military tribunals, where the defendants would not have the kind of rights that they would be entitled to under European law. The Lecture was well covered by the international media based in Singapore. It was co-hosted by ASEF and Friedrich Naumann Foundation, based in Bangkok.



(L-R) Uwe Johannsen, Regional Director of FNF; Graham Watson, MEP

**Inaugural ASEF University Alumni Meeting and Event to Commemorate the Fifth Anniversary of ASEF**

**28 February  
Brussels, Belgium**



Executive Director Amb Delfin Colomé with alumni Ville Niinistö from Finland and Mega Irena from Indonesia



ASEF Alumni

***F***orty-five former participants of the past five ASEF University's attended a reunion in Brussels to consider the establishment of an official alumni network.



Participants of all past ASEF University Programmes from 18 ASEM countries attended the Meeting

It was the first occasion when all five batches of students that had participated in the two-week ASEF University Programme gathered at the same meeting. The participants, originating from 18 different ASEM countries, reached a consensus to formally launch the ASEF University Alumni Network (ASEFUAN).

The discussion covered the mission and objectives of the prospective alumni network, the scope of its activities, and its organisational structure. A *pro tem* committee was formed to act on behalf of the Network, in preparation for the Inaugural Meeting of the ASEF University Alumni Network in Bali in April 2002. The Committee is chaired by Jens Peter Bjerg, an alumnus from the First ASEF University.

The Executive Committee of the ASEF's Board of Governors (ExCo), which held an extraordinary meeting in Brussels at the same time, took the opportunity to meet the members of the ASEF University alumni. The ExCo was informed about the alumni's decision to launch the ASEFUAN. Ambassadors Camilo Barcia, Chairman of the ExCo, and Delfin Colomé, Executive Director of ASEF, welcomed this decision and stressed the importance ASEF attached to the potential contributions of the Network. They pledged ASEF's support for its activities.

The Fifth Anniversary of ASEF provided for the launch of the Network with over 150 people in attendance. Yasuko Muller, a participant of the 5th ASEF University from Luxembourg, announced the launch of the ASEF University Alumni Network. The Guest-of-Honour, Sr. Enrique Baron, Chairman of the European Socialist Party in the European Parliament, delivered a keynote address that spoke highly of ASEF's achievements and contributions, based on the important role ASEF plays in promoting greater inter-cultural dialogue between Asia and Europe.