



# PRESS RELEASE

[info@asef.org](mailto:info@asef.org)  
Tel. +65 6874 9727  
Fax. +65 6872 1207

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## **SECOND GENERAL MEETING ON THE ASEM EDUCATION HUB** **2 - 5 November 2003** **Singapore**

Close to 100 delegates representing more than 65 universities and other stakeholders institutions in the field of higher education from 25 ASEM countries gathered in Singapore this week for the Second General Meeting on the ASEM Education Hub (AEH). The four-day meeting was organised by Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).

The cornerstone of the AEH is the Education and Research Network (AEH-EARN), a network of universities in Asia and Europe that offer exchange scholarships in different academic fields to encourage students from one region to study in the other. Information on these scholarships are available on-line on [www.asef.org/aeH](http://www.asef.org/aeH).

The Second General Meeting of the ASEM Education Hub, which was officially opened by the Acting Minister for Manpower and Minister of State for Education of Singapore, Dr Ng Eng Hen, succeeded in injecting new momentum in efforts to strengthen inter-university linkages and co-operation between Asia and Europe. It also provided an important platform for representatives of universities and other stakeholder institutions, including ministries of education, academic exchange institutions and regional university networks, to discuss different aspects of international education.

The participants reviewed the current situation in the mobility of students, researchers and faculty between Asia and Europe, as well as joint research and curriculum development activities between the two regions. They also discussed the merits of an inter-regional credit transfer system, as well as potential for closer co-operation between Asia and Europe in the field of borderless and continuing education.

The participants recognised the vital role of education in efforts to build strong ties between Asia and Europe and further recognised that it was in their mutual advantage to promote closer co-operation between the two regions in higher education.

After two days of discussions, the participants identified the key issues and drew up a plan of action that would address some of the major structural issues that presently restrict greater exchanges and co-operation in the field of higher education between Asia and Europe. These recommendations are captured in the **AEH Action Plan for Higher Education Co-operation between Asia and Europe** (attached). Some of the key recommendations include:

- The call on ASEM countries to fully implement and support programmes and networks that would enhance inter-regional student mobility, in particular the ASEM DUO Fellowship Programme and the ASEM Education Hub - Education and Research Network (AEH-EARN);
- The organisation of joint workshops to develop an intra-ASEM credit transfer system, based on existing regional mechanisms such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme the find points of convergence (UCTS).
- The organisation of seminars on strategic management and institutional development of universities and institutions of higher education that would help establish acceptable indicators and minimum requirements for quality standards among Asian and European institutions of higher learning.
- The creation of a database on academic mobility programmes between Asia and Europe.

For further information, please contact:

Office of the Co-ordinator  
ASEM Education Hub, People-to-People Exchange  
Asia-Europe Foundation, No. 31 Heng Mui Keng Terrace, Singapore 119595

Tel: (65) 6874 9713 Fax: (65) 6872 1206

E-mail: [aeh-coordinator@asef.org](mailto:aeh-coordinator@asef.org)

Website: <http://www.asef.org> and <http://www.aeh.asef.org>

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ASEF was created in February 1997 by members of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). It is located in Singapore and reports to a Board of 26 Governors comprising representatives from: Austria, Belgium, Brunei, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam and the European Commission.

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