



5<sup>TH</sup> ASEM | RECTORS' CONFERENCE  
& STUDENTS' FORUM

## OVERVIEW

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### BACKGROUND

The [1<sup>st</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference \(ARC1\)](#) took place in 2008 in Berlin, Germany, in response to the [1<sup>st</sup> ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting \(ASEM ME1\)](#) launched in the same year. Since then, ARC has been held biennially and in Asia and Europe alternately.

The [ASEM Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum \(ARC\)](#) is recognised as an Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEM ME. ARC is also one of the initial commitments to the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which is the successor to the United Nations Decade of ESD (2005-2014). It is one of the few existing large-scale inter-regional projects that aim to advance ESD-related policies.

ARC is an interregional dialogue platform on higher education. It follows a multi-stakeholder approach and connects with its 2 programme elements, a Rectors' Conference and a Students' Forum, university leaders with higher education beneficiaries. Past editions of ARC have brought together hundreds of Asian and European university leaders for solution-oriented discussions on emerging higher education issues concerning both regions. Simultaneously the Students' Forum allowed the students' voices to be integrated into this process.

The [5<sup>th</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum \(ARC5\)](#) will take place on 4-8 April 2016 at Charles University in Prague, the Czech Republic. ARC5 will focus on "Employability: Asia and Europe Prepare the New Generation". With increased numbers of unemployed and underemployed youth in Asia and Europe, employability is a core topic for policy makers, educators, researchers, businesses and young people. Due to growing demands from the labour market, a degree alone does not guarantee employment anymore. To better prepare and adapt the new generation for the labour market, the cooperation between universities, businesses and governments has to provide students with the necessary skills and competences. At ARC5, participants will share their thoughts and find answers to questions on employability issues.

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## PARTICIPANTS

More than 150 Rectors of renowned universities, business leaders, industry representatives and representatives from governments, international and non-governmental from up to 51 [ASEM member countries](#) will attend the ARC5 Rectors' Conference. Participation is by invitation only.

The ARC5 Students' Forum, which precedes the Rectors' Conference, will gather participants from the 51 [ASEM member countries](#) selected through an Open Call. The Open Call and selection process will ensure a geographical and gender balance as well as a diversity of participants from various fields, academic disciplines and other relevant experiences.

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## PROGRAMME

ARC5 consists of 2 core programme elements:

### 1. ARC5 Students' Forum

The ARC5 Students' Forum will take place on 4-7 April 2016. The Forum includes plenary and working group sessions, as well as skills and knowledge workshops. The students will jointly develop Policy Recommendations, which will be handed over to the ARC5 Rectors and the ASEM Ministers of Education at the ASEM ME6 in Korea in 2017.

To ensure close linkages between the Rectors' Conference and the Students' Forum, 4 Rectors will attend the Students' Forum as Mentors.

Additional elements of the ARC5 Students' Forum are:

**Online Survey:** Through the Open Call, an online survey is conducted on students' perspectives on employability skills, university-business partnerships and applicants' experiences. The online survey results will be presented at ARC5 and shared online.

**Online Preparatory Phase:** The selected participants will join an online preparatory phase which precedes the ARC5 Students' Forum for in-depth preparation and understanding of the selected topic.

### 2. ARC5 Rectors' Conference

The ARC5 Rectors' Conference will take place on 6-8 April 2016. The Rectors' Conference includes plenary and working group sessions, as well as provide for networking opportunities between rectors, students and businesses through unconventional concepts such as a human library. The Policy Recommendations developed by the Rectors will be handed over to the ASEM Ministers of Education at the ASEM ME6 in Korea in 2017.

During the Opening Ceremony and the first Plenary Session of the ARC5 Rectors' Conference, the ARC5 Students' Forum participants will be invited to not only learn from highly acknowledged speakers, but also present the Policy Recommendations developed during the ARC5 Students' Forum. 4 student participants will participate throughout the rest of the programme of the ARC5 Rectors' Conference.

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**TOPICS**

The Working Group sessions evolve around 4 topics:

**1. The Employment-Friendly Curriculum**

What would the optimal university curriculum look like to gain the right skills? Is there a right skill-set at all?

**2. Work-Study Balance**

What is a successful university life roadmap? How can students better acquire and combine study and work experiences? Is it necessary to build up working experience during your academic career?

**3. Thinking and Learning Beyond the Box – Extracurricular Activities and Exchanges**

What needs to be done to allow students an easier exposure to extracurricular activities and exchanges? How can the skills and competences gained through these be better recognised? Are extracurricular activities worthwhile or rather a distraction? Do international exchanges and student mobility serve as a decisive factor for better employability?

**4. Strategies for the New Economy**

Are existing areas of cooperation between universities, business and government sufficient? Which partnership models are required to boost employability in the new economy?

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**OBJECTIVES**

ARC5 aims to:

- Develop and contribute with 2 sets of Policy Recommendations developed from the Rectors as well as the Students to the [6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting \(ASEM ME6\)](#) (2017, Korea)
- Propose and implement ASEM perspectives on higher education's responsibilities in advancing socio-economic development
- Promote ASEM education cooperation among civil society stakeholders and reinforce their role in the official ASEM Education Process
- Strengthen the dialogue among ASEM education stakeholders by creating linkages between universities, the business and industry sector, governments and local communities
- Stimulate partnerships among universities across ASEM countries

## Co-organised by

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The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, economy, education, governance, public health and sustainable development. ASEF is a not-for-profit intergovernmental organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). Together with about 700 partner organisations ASEF has run more than 650 projects, mainly conferences, seminars and workshops. Over 17,000 Asians and Europeans have actively participated in its activities and it has reached much wider audiences through its networks, web-portals, publications, exhibitions and lectures.

For more information, please visit [www.asef.org](http://www.asef.org)



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PRAGENSIS

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For more information, please visit <http://www.cuni.cz/UKEN-1.html>

## In Partnership with

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## Supported by

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## In the Framework of

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The **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)** is an intergovernmental forum for dialogue and cooperation established in 1996 to deepen relations between Asia and Europe, which addresses political, economic and socio-cultural issues of common concern. ASEM brings together 53 members: Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, the Lao PDR, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and Viet Nam plus the ASEAN Secretariat and the European Union.

For more information, please visit [www.aseminfoboard.org](http://www.aseminfoboard.org)