

**“Perceptions of Asia and Europe?
The case of Belgium”**

A briefing on the results of the “EU through the Eyes of Asia” & “Asia in the Eyes of Europe” research projects, presented by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies

Tuesday, 19 June 2012, 4:00pm-5:45pm
Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies (BICCS),
Pleinlaan 5, Karel Van Miert Building, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

Synopsis

ASEF, in partnership with the **Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies (BICCS)** will organise a public briefing “Comparing Perceptions of Asia and Europe” at BICCS on the 19th of June 2012. The briefing will analyse the outcomes of the unique study, “**Asia in the Eyes of Europe**”, which examines media and public perceptions of ‘Asia’ in 8 EU member countries - namely Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Romania and the United Kingdom. The main feature of the briefing will be an in depth analysis of how ‘Asia’ is perceived by the public and media in Belgium.

The study has captured and analysed over 2,700 news items from 29 media outlets, interviewed over 100 top media professionals, and conducted a survey of over 6,000 respondents to develop a unique understanding of how Europeans perceive Asia. The findings shine a very important light into how Europeans see Asia through various lenses; be it spontaneous images relating to ‘Asia’ as geographically vast and culturally rich; to the prominent Asian countries that define Asia’s rising role in the world; right through to how Asia is reported and framed in news media across Europe.

The briefings will also include a presentation from a mirror study examining how the EU is perceived in 10 countries across Asia, shining further light on the current state of Asia-EU relations in this era of economic uncertainty and shifting global power. The “EU through the Eyes of Asia”, has analysed over 7,000 news items, interviewed over 300 opinion leaders and surveyed over 10,000 public respondents on their perceptions of the EU during a period of economic and political difficulty for the EU.

The event will also feature an official launch of the publication, “**Asia in the Eyes of Europe – Images of a Rising Giant**”.

3:45pm	Registration
4:00pm	Introductory Remarks Prof. Gustaff Geeraerts , Director, Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies Mr. Ronan Lenihan Project Executive, Asia-Europe Foundation
4:10pm	Presentations “The EU through the Eyes of the Asia-Pacific – Post-Lisbon Perceptions of the EU” Prof. Martin Holland - National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE) “Asia in the Eyes of Belgium” Mr. Duncan Freeman, Research Fellow, BICCS “Asia in the Eyes of Europe – Asia’s Rise as seen from Europe” Dr. Sebastian Bersick, School of International Relations and Public Affairs (SIRPA), Fudan University and Associate Fellow, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)
4:55pm	Questions & Answers Session Moderator: Prof. Gustaff Geeraerts
5:35pm	Concluding Remarks and Launch of publication Mr. Karel Kovanda Governor for the EU, Asia-Europe Foundation
5:45pm	End of Event

Speakers Profiles

Prof. Gustaaf Geeraerts

Director

Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies



Gustaaf Geeraerts is Professor of International Relations and the Director of the Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies (BICCS), both at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). He is also an Editorial Board member of *Global Society: Journal of Interdisciplinary International Relations* and a member of the Academic Board of the Contemporary China Research Center of Fudan University, Shanghai. From 2006 to 2008 he was the Dean of the Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences & Solvay Business School of VUB. Among his latest publications are "China, the EU, and the New Multipolarity", in *European Review*, Vol. 19, (2011), No. 1, pp. 57-67 and (with Duncan Freeman), "Europe, China and Expectations for Human Rights", in *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 4, (2011), No. 2, pp. 1-25, and the edited volume (together with Eva Gross), *Perspectives for a European Security Strategy towards Asia*, Brussels, 2011.



Mr. Ronan Lenihan

Project Executive

Asia-Europe Foundation

Mr. Ronan Lenihan, is Project Executive for the European Studies in Asia (ESiA) network, an initiative of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). In this role he works as part of a research co-ordinating team for the EU through the Eyes of Asia and the newly implemented mirror project, Asia in the Eyes of Europe. He also works on ASEF activities focusing on regional economic integration including a research project focusing on foresight strategies for regional financial integration mechanisms in Asia and Europe.

He graduated from Dublin City University with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies in 2006 and following this completed his MA in Globalisation and International Relations at the Centre for International Studies at Dublin City University in 2007. Prior to joining ASEF, he worked for a period in the private sector with Rabobank International in Dublin.

Prof. Martin Holland

Director

National Centre for Research on Europe
University of Canterbury



Prof. Martin Holland holds a Jean Monnet Chair (ad personam), and is Director of the National Centre for Research on Europe in New Zealand.

Professor Holland is internationally recognised for his work on EU Development policy, Common Foreign and Security Policy and on the Perceptions of the EU, especially within the Asia Pacific region. He has written or edited more than 20 books and is a visiting lecturer at several EU Studies programmes in Asia and the USA. Previously he has been an EUI Jean Monnet Fellow (1987), an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow (1992-4) as well as a Rockefeller Bellagio Fellow (2000).



Duncan Freeman
Senior Research Fellow
Brussels Institute of Contemporary Chinese Studies

Duncan Freeman is Senior Research Fellow at the Brussels Institute of Contemporary Chinese Studies at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) where he teaches and carries out research on developments in the Chinese economy, domestic policy and EU-China relations. Among his current research interests are developments in China's outward investment, especially in Europe, the impact of the 12th Five Year Plan, and climate change policy, focusing on its relevance to industrial planning. He has also written on the relationship between human rights, democracy and economic development in China, and the role of the EU in their promotion. He is fluent in Chinese.

Dr. Sebastian Bersick
Associate Professor
School of International Relations and Public Affairs (SIRPA)
Fudan University



Dr. Bersick is Associate Professor in International Relations at the School of International Relations and Public Affairs (SIRPA), Fudan University, Shanghai, PR China. He is also Associate Fellow at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) in the China and Asia-Pacific Program and the Research Coordinator of the international research project Asia in the Eyes of Europe. He is a specialist in EU-Asia affairs, has published widely in this area and is a frequent commentator in national and international media. His main scholarly interests lie in Asian international relations, regional co-operation and integration in Asia-Pacific, interregional relations (esp. ASEM, EU-ASEAN) and the role of perceptions in EU-Asia affairs.

In 2002 he obtained his Ph.D. in political science from Free University Berlin. He studied political science, Sinology, and economics in Cologne and Berlin and Mandarin at Xiamen University, China. In 1998 he graduated from Free University Berlin. Between 2007 and 2009, he was Associate in the Research Division Asia at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin. From 2004 until 2007 he was Senior Research Fellow at the European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS) in Brussels and Lecturer in the Department of Government, National University of Ireland, Cork from 2009 until 2011.



Ambassador Karel Kovanda
ASEF Governor for the European Union

Ambassador Kovanda served as Deputy Director General of External Relations in the European Commission from 2005-2010, when he retired from the European Union. His areas of responsibility included the European Common Foreign and Security Policy; multilateral relations and human rights; and relations with Japan and Korea, Australia and New Zealand, North America, and other developed countries.

Ambassador Kovanda simultaneously served as the Commission's Political Director, both bilaterally and in the G8 context. In this role he was frequently involved in discussions with Asian countries, including China, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.

Prior to joining the European Commission, Ambassador Kovanda was a senior diplomat in the Czech Foreign Service. He served as his country's ambassador to NATO and the UN, including heading the Czech Delegation during its non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

In the late 1970s, he spent two years in China working for Radio Beijing. Ambassador Kovanda holds an undergraduate degree from the Prague School of Agriculture, a PhD in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and an MBA from Pepperdine University in California. He is fluent in Czech, English, Spanish, and French, and speaks Russian and German at a conversational level.

He is married to Noemi, a native of Slovakia, and they have three children. His interests include the theatre, reading, collecting stamps, and languages.