

# 10<sup>#ARC</sup>

## 10<sup>th</sup> ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education [Un]debated Ways of Rethinking Higher Education

### OVERVIEW



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## The ARC Programme

The [ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education \(ARC\)](#)<sup>1</sup> is the Official Dialogue Partner of the [ASEM Education Ministers Meeting \(ASEMME\)](#). For the past 15 years, ARC has continuously evolved and contributed with various outputs (policy recommendations, research, and events) to the ASEM Education Process, and created opportunities for key Asian and European stakeholders to connect. ARC's role as a valuable dialogue partner has been reiterated in all ASEMMEs, and its outcomes and outputs helped to sustain a dynamic [ASEM Education Process](#).

The ARC programme cycle covers two years and is aligned with the timeline of the ASEM Education Ministers Meetings. Its results, including research, and policy recommendations, feed into the preparations for ASEM Education Senior Officials' Meetings (SOMs) and the ASEM Education Ministers Meetings (MEs), which ARC experts are invited to attend.

ARC's objectives are to:



### Facilitate intellectual exchange and networking

among policymakers, universities and student organisations in Asia and Europe



### Inform policymakers

by collecting evidence and conduct policy dialogues with stakeholders of the ASEM Partner Countries, the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat

In 2024, ARC begins its tenth edition which will run until the end of 2026, in sync with the ASEM Education Process cycle.

## Background of ARC10

In the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Education Ministers Meeting (ASEMME9), the Ministers underlined the continued importance of working towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contributing to achieving inclusive, equitable quality education through the implementation of SDG4. Fostering continued cooperation and dialogue as well as knowledge and people-to-people exchange between Asia and Europe were also supported, especially in the ASEM Education Process' key priority areas: 1) SDGs and Education, 2) Recognition and Balanced Mobility, 3) Lifelong Learning and TVET, and 4) Digitalisation.

These pronouncements, as detailed in the [ASEMME9 Chair's Conclusions](#),<sup>2</sup> stand as ASEFEdu's guideposts in pursuing the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC) Programme—the Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEM Education Ministers. ARC10 will revolve around the future of higher education in Asia and Europe, given the trends and developments that higher education must cope with. Racing to meeting the SDGs, climate change, geopolitical disruptions, inequalities and disparities on various fronts, and digital transformation are some of

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly called the ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC), From ARC8 onwards, the project will be renamed to the ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education, merging the Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum for greater synergies and impact.

<sup>2</sup> The Chair's Conclusions is a document that contains the highlights of the ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting and their call to action for various areas. As the Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEMME, ARC's role was acknowledged along with the ARC9 policy recommendations. ASEF was encouraged to continue working on ASEM Education Priority topics, organising policy dialogues, and supporting the work of the ASEM Expert Groups.

the most pressing developments that are changing the higher education landscape in various fronts. Current global challenges that affect how education evolves require new approaches and changes in strategies.

Higher education has a key role to fulfill in transforming our collective future, and as such, UNESCO calls for substantive changes to reinvent higher education and proposes multiple ways to do so in its recent reports:

- Reimagining Our Future Together: A New Social Contract for Education (UNESCO, 2021)
- Beyond Limits: New Ways to Reinvent Higher Education (UNESCO, 2022)
- Knowledge-driven Actions: Transforming Higher Education for Global Sustainability (UNESCO, 2022)

With the foregoing in mind, ARC10 will work on thematic papers leading to a publication, interactive webinars and policy dialogues focused on the theme “[Un]debated Ways of Rethinking Higher Education,” which will be divided into four sub-themes. These subthemes will explore what the ASEM Education Space hopes to achieve by 2030 and beyond in areas where a deeper global conversation is needed.



### Activities

#### Debate Webinar Series | October-December 2024 | Online

Select experts will be invited to share their perspectives on the future of higher education on a given sub-theme. We hope to produce thematic papers anchored in thought-provoking discussions based on diverse views that will capture a collective vision of how a key area of higher education will evolve in the coming years.

Below are the topics and tentative dates for the sessions:

Session 1: Rethinking Digital Transformation	17 October 2024
Session 2: Rethinking Equitable Access Success	07 November 2024
Session 3: Rethinking Recognition and Balanced Mobility	05 December 2024
Session 4: <i>Rethinking Lifelong Learning</i>	<i>Rescheduled for 2025</i>

#### Policy Dialogue Workshops | 18-22 November 2024 | Bangkok, Thailand

As ARC is the Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEMME, we will align with and complement the programme of the ASEM Intermediate Senior Officials Meeting (ISOM) to be hosted by Thailand. We will also be co-organising a panel discussion as part of the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development’s (SEAMEO RIHED) 2024 Inter-regional Research Symposium.

Both events will be held back-to-back in November in Thailand and will be an opportunity to hold dialogues with policymakers, university officials, and youth on select ARC10 subthemes.

### **Policy Dialogue Series** | Throughout 2025 | Online

Based on the outputs of 2024, our activities in 2025 will primarily focus on a series of policy dialogues to bring the Narrative Reports of the Debate Webinar Series closer to ASEF's partners and stakeholders. Through these policy dialogues, we will work in close collaboration with the ASEM Education Process Expert Groups and stakeholders and gather policy recommendations with the aim of forwarding these to the ASEM Education Ministers.

The main target groups for consultation are student and youth leaders, ASEM education policymakers, and university managers.

In addition to these dialogue opportunities, ASEFEdu will also participate in various events in Asia and Europe and present the highlights and milestones of the project.

### **The 10<sup>th</sup> ASEM Education Ministers Meeting (ASEMME10)** | Mid-2026 | Onsite

Towards the end of Year 2, preparations will be made to present all the policy recommendations gathered through various dialogues and dissemination events at the 10<sup>th</sup> ASEM Education Ministers Meeting in 2026.

### **Outcomes and Impact**

The project will generate various outcomes both tangible and intangible, such as:

- A Thought Leaders' webinar series on the ARC10 sub-themes
- A series of policy dialogues with stakeholders of the ASEM Education Process, such as policymakers, university managers, and student and youth leaders which will disseminate findings and gather policy recommendations
- Stronger networks that facilitate various exchanges (cultural, intellectual, and people-to-people) among participating individuals and organisations
- Increased knowledge on practices and plans aligned with the ARC10 subthemes
- Increased capacity of ASEM policymakers to contribute to the attainment of the Agenda 2030 and pursuing the New Social Contract for Education
- Enhanced knowledge among participants of the ASEM Education Process

ARC10's impact will focus on strengthening dialogue and connectivity among higher education stakeholders in Asia and Europe through:

- Evidence-based policy dialogues, exchange of good practices among ASEM Education stakeholders
- Content put into the policy dialogue process towards futuristic policies aimed at reimagining higher education at various levels, be it at the national, regional, and – representing the Asia-Europe position – global level
- Increased awareness and engagement on the role of higher education in transforming the future, especially with the Agenda 2030 and the New Social Contract for Education

**ORGANISED BY****Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)**

ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). 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, education, governance, sustainable development, economy, public health and media.

One of ASEF's flagship projects is the [ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education \(ARC\)](#), the Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEM Education Ministers Meeting (ASEMME) and the only bi-regional multi-stakeholder dialogue platform for university and student leaders, policymakers and ministers to discuss higher education issues and shape the education landscape in Asia and Europe.

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

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