

PRESS RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE****EVENT DATE &
LOCATION**23 to 27 November 2026
Ljubljana, Slovenia**CONTACT**

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New partnership between ASEF and Motovila Institute

ASEF LinkUp | Asia-Europe Cultural Diplomacy Lab 2026

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and Motovila Institute are co-organising the [4th edition of ASEF LinkUp | Asia-Europe Cultural Diplomacy Lab](#) in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Developed in cooperation with Slovenian partners — including the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Center Rog — the programme brings together 20 representatives from the arts and government sectors to rethink cultural relations together.

Led by the overarching theme ‘Sustainability, Ethics and Equity in International Cultural Relations’, [ASEF LinkUp](#) convenes arts and public sector representatives working in the international cultural cooperation field, to exchange ideas and reimagine cultural relations for today’s realities.

Moving beyond traditional, transactional approaches to international cultural relations, ASEF LinkUp responds to a growing demand for more reciprocal, equitable and co-created forms of engagement, where artists and cultural professionals can connect, listen, share and learn alongside policymakers, governments and public institutions.

Following on from the previous editions of ASEF LinkUp, this year’s programme will tackle challenges in implementing more sustainable and ethical international cultural relations, rethink the conditions under which cultural cooperation can take place and explore the role of smaller states in the field, amidst navigating a more complex social-political and cultural environment.

This year’s ASEF LinkUp began with an alumni co-design phase (April to July), where former fellows developed thematic directions and background notes, that will shape the 2026 programme. This is followed by an open call for the arts and cultural sector participants (30 July to 27 August), where up to 10 professionals who demonstrate a strong passion for facilitating international cultural exchanges will be selected. The remaining 10 government, public sector and institutional representatives will join via nomination.

Participants can look forward to: Five online pre-sessions (October to November), and an in-person Lab in Slovenia (23 to 27 November), comprising workshops, visits and presentations in Ljubljana and Kranj. The programme will culminate in the publication of the **ASEF LinkUp Fieldbook**, a report co-written by the participants, featuring insights and recommendations that will inform approaches to Asia-Europe cultural relations.

Since 2023, more than 54 artists, cultural practitioners, diplomats, policymakers and academics from 22 countries have taken part in the programme. Together, through ASEF LinkUp, ASEF and Motovila seek to foster alternative understandings of international cultural relations and advocate for innovative and collaborative ways of working across borders.

About the Asia-Europe Foundation

ASEF is an inter-governmental 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 peoples, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF has run more than 280 projects, mainly seminars, workshops and lectures, together with over 230 partner organisations. <https://ASEF.org/>

About the Asia-Europe Meeting

ASEM is an inter-governmental process established in 1996 to foster dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. ASEM addresses political, economic, financial, social, cultural and educational issues of common interest, in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership. It comprises 53 partners: 21 Asian and 30 European countries, the ASEAN Secretariat and the EU. www.ASEMinfoboard.org

About Motovila Institute

Motovila Institute is a non-governmental and non-profit institute based in Ljubljana, Slovenia, working in the public interest in the field of culture. It supports international and cross-sectoral cooperation in the cultural and creative sectors through information, advisory services, training and capacity building. Since 2014, Motovila has hosted Creative Europe Desk Slovenia, the national information and support office for the EU Creative Europe programme. Through its work and European networks, Motovila contributes to stronger international cultural cooperation, cultural mobility and sustainable development in culture. www.motovila.si/en