8th ASEF Editors' Roundtable

Asia-Europe Digital Connectivity

13-16 July 2016
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

THEME

Introduction

A key theme emerging from the 10th ASEM Summit, 2014 in Milan was the significance of connectivity between Asia and Europe. At a special edition of the Editors' Roundtable in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in July 2016, ASEF will explore connectivity from a media perspective. It will focus on **connectivity between the two continents**, especially on digital platforms. A related area of focus will include the responsibility of media **in connecting communities and sharing information.** These themes will be discussed at two supplementary journalists' workshops with inputs from an online survey to the broad community of journalists in Asia and Europe.

The Role of Media

The media's role as the purveyor of information is being increasingly challenged by on-going, fast paced developments in technology and digital platforms. Over just two decades the digital and internet landscape has become one of the main pathways for people's daily interactions. These include personal communication, news, information, entertainment, creating content, gaming, trade and investment (including international e-commerce and online ordering), banking, share trading and collaborative projects that occur between diverse organisations.

The role of media in the current digital age is to both inform and entertain as well as to connect people through new and emerging platforms. Media content also informs people about new pathways and platforms for business and trade, investment and services as well as offering information about new mechanisms for exchanging information regarding practically every topic, issue and or activity that is undertaken in diverse communities around the world. There is a strong need for media practitioners and editors to understand and facilitate the opportunities arising from existing and emerging digital platforms.

All these interactions occur within national boundaries as well as at a global level. The **sharing of knowledge and ideas between institutions and individuals** has grown immensely over these twenty years. This has allowed people from almost anywhere to have access to resources and activities without the need to be physically on site. They can download books, undertake online educational courses, operate business activities, go shopping, play games, download music and videos, consume news and other informative content and they can do all of this from the comfort of home or even while travelling using mobile devices. All these activities can be undertaken anywhere at any time.

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However, the diverse global media environment does not make international connectivity universally available to all people. Factors including language diversity, social interests, level of digital literacy, availability of resources, levels of education, state of telecommunications infrastructure and cultural expectations can all lead to significant disparity of digital connectedness between people in different communities.

To enhance the capacity for more people to form linkages between Asia and Europe a fresh approach to improving opportunities and mechanisms for connectivity would be advantageous.

Discussion Points

The themes for dialogue at the two Journalist Workshops and the Editors Roundtable will include:

- Asia Europe digital connectivity
- Asia Europe mainstream media connectivity
- Linking people and institutions across the regions
- Business activity across the regions through connected people
- Connected communities sharing knowledge and ideas
- Knowledge sharing for a sustainable future
- Connecting people responsibly – to improve prosperity
- Cyber security
- Impact of news on the different regions
- Digital Media and its interaction with audience / communities
- "Prosumers'" (consumers and producers of content) habits on sharing information
- Barriers to connectivity – language, platforms, devices, digital literacy
- Current or future opportunities that may enhance digital connectivity between Asia and Europe

Conclusion

To this end the 8th ASEF Editors' Roundtable will be able to produce much more productive outcomes if the dialogue centres on the theme of Asia-Europe Digital Connectivity. This will focus on informed understanding of the issues, opportunities and challenges that face media practitioners, stakeholders and community members in harnessing the power of digital platforms and improving the way they connect and interact with people across the two continents.

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METHODOLOGY

The project commenced in October 2015 and will continue until completion of the final publication following the conclusion of ERT8 in Ulaanbaatar in July 2016. The key activities of the full ERT8 Asia-Europe Digital Connectivity project are outlined below.

Online Survey

To publish a standard web based electronic survey, for journalists in ASEM member countries. This will contribute to the project by assessing the impact of information flow and digital connectivity between Asia and Europe and to identify trends in the reporting on Asia-Europe and ASEM-related matters. The survey will assess trends, opportunities and pathways for digital connectivity between Asian and European people from the perspectives of journalists and communications stakeholders.

Journalists Workshops

Using the Asia-Europe Digital Connectivity project discussion points these workshops will explore the current environment of digital connectedness for journalists and the wider community as well as the role of journalism in reflecting and facilitating connectivity between diverse communities.

Discussion Paper

Outcomes from the two Workshops, the Online Survey and stakeholder feedback will be included in the Discussion Paper and circulated well in advance of the ERT8 meeting in Ulaanbaatar.

Editors' Roundtable

ERT8 discussions will be held over two days in July 2016 in Mongolia and will incorporate inputs from national leaders at the ASEM meeting, in addition to key information, topics and themes outlined in the Discussion Paper. By sharing knowledge of how people connect and use digital platforms for media consumption and daily life activity, it is envisaged that there will be increased understanding of how media can reflect issues and connect people of Asian and European communities.

Publication

The ERT8 Summary document including contributions, dialogue and conclusions from the online survey, the two journalists' workshops and the ERT8 Roundtable will be published by ASEF during the last quarter of 2016. The publication will include info-graphic charts and diagrams as well as detailed discussions to reflect the findings,

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

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). www.asef.org

The **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)** is a political foundation named after the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer. His name is synonymous with the democratic reconstruction of Germany, the firm alignment of foreign policy with the trans-Atlantic community of values, and the vision of a unified Europe. The KAS Media Programme Asia's mission is to strengthen the dialogue between media and politics, to monitor and highlight current media trends in the region through publications and events and to support the training of journalists towards a free, ethical and responsible press. www.kas.de/mediaasia