



**4<sup>TH</sup> CONNECTING CIVIL SOCIETIES OF ASIA AND EUROPE CONFERENCE**  
**Changing Challenges, New Ideas**  
*An official side-event of the ASEM8 Summit*  
1-3 October 2010, Brussels

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## **Vanackere to address civil society conference in Brussels**

Belgian Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Steven Vanackere will address nearly 150 participants from 34 Asian and European countries at the Connecting Civil Societies (CCS) conference, "Changing Challenges, New Ideas", which will take place from 1 to 3 October 2010 in Brussels.

Mr Vanackere will deliver the opening keynote address on the first day of the conference, which is organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in partnership with several other Asian and European organisations.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Summit of Leaders of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM8) will gather in Brussels leaders of 46 Asian and European countries plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat on 4 and 5 Oct. The CCS conference is an official side event of the ASEM8 Summit comprising seven workshops and a roundtable discussion. It will involve civil society voices from both regions and reflect their common concerns. The unconventional mix of participants includes leading government and non-government representatives working in the following areas: education, public health, research and think tanks, governance, urban planning, the arts and the media.

Conference participants will discuss and study a number of specific and difficult issues, including regional conflict management; regional integration; the financing of higher education; challenges in lifelong learning policies; the role of youths in promoting public health; the right to information for environmental protection, development and anti-corrupt practices; and the role of arts in globalized urban contexts. There will also be a roundtable discussion by senior editors of the European and Asian media who will deliberate on "Asia and Europe: Engaging for a Post-Crisis World."

Participants will take stock of recent trends and developments as well as examine and share best practices that can provide common ground between Asia and Europe for more cooperation in addressing such global concerns. A report of the Conference deliberations and recommendations will be submitted to the ASEM8 Summit for the consideration of ASEM Leaders.

This conference will take place at the newly renovated Square-Brussels Meeting Centre.

*(continued on next page)*



"It will be the fourth time that ASEF is accompanying the ASEM Summit with a civil society conference," said ASEF Executive Director Ambassador Dominique Girard, adding, "This is in line with our mission to include civil society concerns as a vital component of the ASEM dialogue." A career diplomat from France, Ambassador Girard was appointed the fourth ASEF Executive Director in November 2008.

The ASEM process is set to mark another milestone with the formal admission of Australia, New Zealand and Russia at the ASEM8 Summit, making this the third enlargement of the inter-governmental dialogue process since its inception in 1996.

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**Or visit our Conference webpage**

[http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com\\_project&task=view&id=630](http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com_project&task=view&id=630)

**About the Organisers:**

***Asia-Europe Foundation***

ASEF promotes greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges. Through ASEF, civil society concerns are included as a vital component of deliberations of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). ASEF was established in 1997 by the participating governments of ASEM. ASEF has since implemented over 450 projects, engaging over 15,000 direct participants and reaching out to a much wider audience in Asia and Europe. ASEM now brings together 43 member states, the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. [www.asef.org](http://www.asef.org)

***Europe-Asia Policy Forum (EUforAsia)***

The Europe-Asia Policy Forum (EUforAsia) has been set up with the support of the European Commission to improve Europe's understanding of Asia and to provide a growing rapport between the two regions. It is based on an extensive academic network of institutes, universities and think tanks in both Europe and Asia. The EUforAsia Policy Forum aims to strengthen knowledge and understanding of EU-Asia relations and contribute to EU policy formulation towards Asia. The EUforAsia is managed by a consortium of four partner organisations, each with vast experience in the field of Asian Studies and Europe-Asia relations. These partners include the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the European Policy Centre (EPC), the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and the Singapore Institute of International Affairs. [www.euforasia.eu](http://www.euforasia.eu)

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**About the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)**

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) now brings together 43 member states (Austria, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam) plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. Australia, New Zealand and Russia will be formally admitted into ASEM during the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit in Brussels on 4-5 October 2010. [www.aseminfoboard.org](http://www.aseminfoboard.org)