I. INTRODUCTION

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) was established in February 1997 under the framework of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process, which groups together 43 countries from Asia and Europe\(^1\) and the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. ASEM was launched at a summit meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, in March 1996 to inject greater impetus to efforts to strengthen relations and linkages between Asia and Europe at all levels - political, economic and social. ASEF was set up pursuant to the third (social) pillar of ASEM, and has been mandated to create better mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through greater intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

Formerly known as the ASEF Summer School, the ASEF University is a flagship project of ASEF that is aimed at promoting inter-cultural exchanges among university students from Asia and Europe. The ASEF University is a two-week intensive enrichment programme that is held once a year at venues alternating between Asia and Europe. The programme offers a unique opportunity for up to 43 bright and promising undergraduates, preferably in their final year, to broaden their horizon and deepen their insight into contemporary international issues and their significance for Asia and Europe in a multi-cultural setting.

\(^1\) On the Asia side are 16 East Asian countries (Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) and on the European side are the 27 members of the European Union (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom).
II. OBJECTIVES

The ASEF University Programme aims to:

- Provide a positive environment that fosters inter-cultural dialogue among university students from Asia and Europe on a broad range of issues with a view to reducing points of divergence and increasing points of convergence between the two regions;

- Inculcate in university students of Asia and Europe a better appreciation of the history, culture, economics, politics of the other region and of the current co-operation between Asia and Europe;

- Foster the establishment of people-to-people linkages and a strong and sustainable network among top university students from Asia and Europe, who have the potential to become part of the future intellectual elite in Asia and Europe.

III. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Each session of the ASEF University can accept up to 43 outstanding undergraduates from universities in the 43 ASEM partner countries. Given the limited number of places, the following points should be noted about the selection process:

- All applicants would need to comply strictly with the stipulated criteria for selection.

- ASEF will ensure that students from different universities in each ASEM member country are given the opportunities to participate in the programme. However, this shall be without prejudice to the need for ASEF to ensure that the selection criteria be closely adhered to.

- The final selection of the participants will be done by ASEF.

All applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Academic records.** Participants must have excellent academic records.

- **Leadership and other qualities.** Participants must demonstrate good leadership qualities through their involvement in extra-curricular activities, and interest in areas beyond their studies. Participants should also possess good interpersonal and communications skills.

- **Knowledge of and interest in theme.** Participants must have adequate knowledge and interest in the theme of the programme or discussion topics. This would be determined through their responses to a questionnaire relevant to the theme and short essays.

- **Knowledge of their own country.** Participants are expected to have good knowledge of the history and recent developments of the countries they represent, with the view to contribute
national perspectives to the international makeup of the group. (The responses to the questionnaire will be used as a basis of assessment.)

- **Age and area of study.** Participants are usually not more than 25 years old and should preferably be in their final undergraduate year. Generally, the programme would benefit students pursuing the following areas: international relations, international economics/business, international law, political science, social science, history, Asian studies and European studies. Applications from those pursuing other areas will also be considered.

- **English proficiency.** Participants must be proficient in English. This means that they must have the ability to clearly articulate their views in English and comprehend lectures on the relevant issues and topics delivered in English.

### IV. PROGRAMME FORMAT

The programme of each session of the ASEF University comprises a leading theme and a main agenda, which is discussed and agreed upon by ASEF and the host university. Different discussion and meeting formats would be employed depending on the subject matter. These include lectures at plenary sessions, working group discussions facilitated by a moderator, case studies and panel discussions. Cultural visits will also be weaved into the two-week programme to add experiential learning.

#### A. ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

The academic programme aims to give participants a better understanding of the history, culture, economics, politics and current social developments in Asia and Europe. In this respect, modules on developments in the ASEM process and regional integration process in both regions would be featured. In addition, modules that will provide the participants with an understanding of the perspectives from Asia and Europe on selected key global developments and trends will also be included in the programme.

Lectures at the ASEF University are given by highly regarded academics and experts from universities, research institutes, governments and international organisations from Asia and Europe.

#### B. INTERCULTURAL PROGRAMME

To complement the academic programme, the ASEF University also offers outdoor programmes that enable participants to experience key aspects of the social, economic and cultural life of the host country. In this regard, the programme may involve visits to historic or cultural sites, local industries and important socio-political institutions. The programme may also include activities that would give participants hands-on experience or close-encounters with local people, such as home visits, and interaction with local students or their families. The social and cultural programme should be designed bearing in mind the need to provide the participants with maximum opportunities to interact with one another outside of the working sessions.
# Past Sessions of the ASEF University

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The First ASEF University
12 – 24 July 1998
Reutlingen, Germany

The 1st ASEF University was held at the Reutlingen University in Southern Germany from 12-24 July 1998. It was co-organised by ASEF and the Research Institute of the German Society of Foreign Affairs (DGAP). This landmark initiative was themed ‘Asia, Europe and the Challenges of Globalisation.’

Thirty-one bright young undergraduates were given the opportunity to experience the unique German culture, in a setting where modernity and antiquity meet and mix well. Tours to cultural and historical sites, standing as testament to a glorious past, were coupled with visits to multinational companies, signifying fast-paced modernity and high-end technology.

The Second ASEF University
22 August – 5 September 1999
Beijing, China

The 2nd ASEF University was hosted by Peking University, China, from 22 August to 5 September 1999. It was co-organised by ASEF and the Center for Overseas Exchange, Peking University. Thirty-four undergraduates attended an intensive programme of lectures and discussions on topics such as European Integration and Monetary Union, Western Democracy and Asia Values, and the ASEM Process.

Participants enjoyed a rich cultural programme as well as intensive academic discussions. The alumni of the AU2 subsequently organized an unofficial follow-up seminar in Brussels, Belgium, from 5 to 11 July 2000, including a visit to the European Parliament to deepen their understanding of the European integration process.

The Third ASEF University
6 – 19 August 2000
Lund, Sweden

The 3rd ASEF University was held from 6-19 August 2000 at the Lund University, Sweden. Co-organised by ASEF, the Centre for European Studies and the Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies, Lund University, the 33 participants...
experienced first-hand the culture offered by one of Europe's pioneer welfare states.

With the region of Southern Skåne as a backdrop, participants were happily "conquered" by the warm Swedish hospitality. Memorable moments included a visit to a medieval castle, a day at Ven island, a weekend excursion to Copenhagen, Denmark, and a visit to Ericsson company, a leading player in global mobile telecommunications.

The theme for the 3rd ASEF University ‘Asia and Europe: Regional Co-operation in a Globalising World’ gave the participants the opportunity to engage in stimulating discussions regarding issues surrounding democracy, regional integration, the relevance of international institutions, the challenges faced with the forces of globalisation, and the resulting new economy.

**The Fourth ASEF University**
14 - 27 January 2001
Singapore

Thirty-five outstanding undergraduates from 23 ASEM member countries gathered for an intellectually-stimulating and culturally-enriching fortnight.

The students, mostly final year students of social and political sciences, economics, business administration, and international relations, experienced an intensive programme of lectures and discussions by lecturers from universities, research institutes, and international organisations from Asia and Europe. Topics included Post-War History of Asia and Europe, the Implications of Globalisation for Governance in Asia, the Impact of Media and the Diffusion of New Technologies, among others.

The 4th ASEF University was co-organised by ASEF and National University of Singapore (NUS), Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

**The Fifth ASEF University**
22 July - 2 August 2001
Arrabida, Portugal

Twenty-eight outstanding undergraduates from 24 ASEM member countries convened for intellectual and cultural interaction at the historic Convento da Arrabida.

The students, mostly in their final year at their respective universities, from the fields of social and political sciences, economics, international law, geography and history,
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underwent an intensive programme of lectures and panel discussions focusing on the economic, social, political, ethnic and cultural conflict in the modern world, as well as on different models of regional and bi-regional co-operation and integration (i.e. ASEM, EU and ASEAN) that aim to overcome these conflicts.

The 5th ASEF University was co-organised by ASEF and the Fundarcao Oriente, and supported by the Universidade Aberta.

The Sixth ASEF University
28 July – 11 August 2002
Bangkok, Thailand

The 6th ASEF University, themed 'Asia and Europe: Towards Greater Inter-Cultural Exchanges,' was held in Bangkok, Thailand and was co-organised by ASEF and the Centre for European Studies at Chulalongkom University.

The 38 selected senior undergraduates discussed the prospects and challenges of different models of regional and bi-regional co-operation and integration, such as the EU and the ASEAN. The globalisation of culture and values was also addressed; at one of the sessions, the students attempted to outline the path towards an open dialogue on values.

The Seventh ASEF University
10 – 24 November 2002
Barcelona, Spain

The 7th ASEF University in Barcelona, Spain embodied the theme 'Regionalism in Asia and Europe and their Significance for Asia - Europe Relations.' It was organised by ASEF with Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona (UAB), the Fundacio Centre d'Informacio i Documentacio Internacionals a Barcelona (Fundacio CIODB) and the Casa Asia.

A public lecture was incorporated into the 7th ASEF University programme in which Dr Joan Colom, Vice President of the European Parliament, was invited to share his views on the EU enlargement. He recalled that the EU Parliament still needed to debate and to approve the accession treaties for the ten new EU member states by 2004.
The Eighth ASEF University
7 – 21 September 2003
Coventry, United Kingdom

The 8th ASEF University, entitled ‘The Future of International Order: Unilateralism or Multilateralism?’ was held from 7-21 September 2003 in Coventry, United Kingdom. The 8th ASEF University was co-organised with the Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation (CSGR), University of Warwick.

34 students attended the two-week congress to compare and contrast unilateralism versus multilateralism for future international order. The students were given an insight into the fundamentals of the world order, and were prompted to ascertain the prospective use of multilateralism pursuant to recent global problems. They were also introduced to a full-day scenario-planning exercise on the future of multilateralism in the final module.

Besides the academic aspect of the 8th ASEF University programme, the students also had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the rich history and culture of England through visits to Oxford, London, and Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Ninth ASEF University
1 – 14 February 2004
Manila, Philippines

The 9th ASEF University programme, ‘Asia-Europe Economic Partnership: Opportunities and Challenges for Enterprises in a Changing Global Environment’, was convened in Manila, the Philippines. It was the first time that the ASEF University programme focused on business and management issues. The two-week programme was hosted by the John Gokongwei School of Management, Ateneo de Manila University.

Thirty-four students of economics, business, and management from 21 ASEM countries learned about the challenges and opportunities for business enterprises in Asia and Europe against the backdrop of the changing global environment.

The highlight of the programme in Manila was the "Business Plan Competition," where participants were divided into multinational teams, comprising Asian and European students. Each team was tasked to identify a business idea that would harness the economic complementarities between Asia and Europe and formulate a coherent strategy to convert that idea into a viable business. The competition
provided the participants an opportunity to apply their knowledge of economic theory and business conditions in Asia and Europe. It also allowed them to experience a simulation of the challenges of doing business across cultural boundaries.

The collaborative efforts of the various teams generated many interesting business ideas, which bore testimony to their industry and creativity.

**The Tenth ASEF University**

22 May - 05 June 2004

Tokyo, Japan

The 10th ASEF University Programme – ‘Enlarging the European Union and Asia’ - was held in Tokyo, Japan. At this event, students discussed the implications of the topic at Japan’s oldest private university and one of its most renowned centres of academic excellence, Keio University. The timing of the programme provided an excellent occasion for the 38 scholars from 35 universities in ASEM countries to discuss the historic enlargement of the EU to include 10 countries in Central Europe and the Mediterranean and the implications of the enlargement and other initiatives by the EU to deepen regional integration.

The academic programme, which was organised around two modules - EU-enlargement and future and regional integration in Asia and Asia-Europe relations - featured not only distinguished lecturers from the host country, but also senior academics from a number of other universities in Asia and Europe. Also, the Head of the EU Delegation in Tokyo, Ambassador Bernhard Zepter, and the Deputy Head of the Delegation, who was formerly the ASEM Counsellor at the European Commission, Dr Michael Reiterer were invited to give lectures.

An interesting innovation introduced at the 10th ASEF University was the holding of two public symposia involving panel discussions by the guest lecturers. The symposia not only allowed the participants to listen to different perspectives of the experts on the key issues, but they also allowed the general student and academic community in the host university to benefit from the insights of the distinguished speakers.

**The Eleventh ASEF University**

12 - 26 February 2005

Paris, France

The 11th ASEF University: Liberty, Security and the New Global Order, took place from 12-26 February 2005 in Paris, France. Thirty-seven
undergraduates from 35 universities in 28 ASEM countries engaged in intensive discussions facilitated by ASEF and the Asia-Europe Centre at the prestigious Institute d’Etudes Politiques Paris, France.

Chen Zhimin, Chair of the Department of International Politics at Fudan University, and Yeo Lay Hwee, Director of the Singapore Institute for International Affairs, provided perspectives on the nature of ASEM and its role in the new global order. The inclusion of sessions devoted to the ASEM process was highly appreciated by the students, who commented that this unique inter-regional process should be given greater visibility among students and the general public.

Participants emerged from the programme with a heightened awareness of the developments and perspectives of counterparts in the other region; respect for cultural diversity; an appreciation of the value that Asia and Europe could add to each other; and an understanding that the existence of diversity between Asia and Europe is not an impediment to closer co-operation and partnership between the two regions.

The Twelfth ASEF University
9 – 22 July 2005
Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

The 12th ASEF University engendered the theme, "Asia-Europe Environmental Co-operation: Towards Sustainable Forest Management" in Brunei Darussalam from 9 - 22 July 2005. During the two-week programme, the participants attended lectures given by academics and practitioners from different countries on topics ranging from the Kyoto Protocol to the creation of sustainable cities at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD). HRH Princess Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah graced the 12th ASEF University.

Thirty-two university students of forestry, agricultural science, environmental studies, economics and geography exchanged perspectives on sustainable forest management and a possible vision for Asia-Europe co-operation towards environmental sustainability. It was the first time that an ASEF University focused on the environment.

Participants emerged from the programme not only with heightened awareness of the environmental developments in Asia and Europe, but also with greater respect and understanding towards the cultural diversity represented by the two regions. They also had the rare opportunity to appreciate the rich Bruneian culture and environmental heritage through their field visit to the tropical rainforest and traditional water village communities.
The Thirteenth ASEF University
2 – 14 July 2006
Leiden, the Netherlands

The 13th ASEF University, entitled "Cross-cultural Perspectives on the International Legal Order in the 21st Century" was held in Leiden, the Netherlands. Co-organised with Leiden University and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), it brought together 39 university students from 30 ASEM countries, selected for their academic excellence and leadership potential.

The programme was composed of an extensive academic programme, complemented by a colourful cultural itinerary and extra-curricula activities. The keynote address by Judge Hishashi Owada of the International Court of Justice coincided with his inaugural lecture as Leiden University Professor of Relations between Europe and Japan. Lecturers from Asia and Europe explored four main themes: (1) the rule of law, (2) human rights, (3) settlement of disputes and international adjudication and (4) governance and accountability: challenges for the EU, ASEAN and ASEM. Leiden's Faculty of Law made a substantial contribution to the lectures, along with guest professors and experts from both regions.

The students visited the Peace Palace at The Hague, where they were given a tour of the premises of the Permanent Court of Arbitration and an orientation into the history and work of the Court. In a two-day Moot Court workshop facilitated by the Leiden Faculty of Law, participants developed pleadings on important international disputes, to practice skills in analysis and argumentation.

The Fourteenth ASEF University: Commemorative Edition
31 August – 8 September 2007
Madrid, Spain

ASEF@10: ASEF University, ASEFUAN and Beyond was held in Madrid, Spain, from 31 August to 8 September, 2007. In co-operation with the ASEF University Alumni Network (ASEFUAN) and the Research Unit on International Security and Cooperation (UNISCI) of Universidad Complutense de Madrid, ASEF organised a week-long series of projects in celebration of ASEF’s 10th Anniversary.

Initiatives by ASEF’s alumni are amongst its most significant achievements in fostering mutual understanding between Asia and Europe's emerging leaders. With 13 editions completed, the ASEF University programme has successfully promoted a sustainable grouping of promising young leaders who have since formed ASEFUAN.
The academic conference, Achieving Human Security: Inter-regional Co-operation and Global Impact, was held on 3 September at the office of the Representation of the European Commission in Madrid. The whole-day event involved a panel discussion examining Asia-Europe co-operation in human security. Prof David Garcia Cantalapiedra of UNISCI and 1st ASEF University alumni, Prof Natividad Fernandez Sola, Vice Rector of Universidad de Zaragoza and Mr Geoffrey Barrett, ASEM Advisor at the DG External Relations of the European Commission took part in an engaging panel discussion chaired by ASEFUAN President for 2006-2007, Puspa Delima Amri. Workshop sessions followed.

**Fifteenth ASEF University, Wanju, Korea, June - July 2009**
29 June - 10 July 2009
Wanju, Republic of Korea

The fifteenth edition of the ASEF University (AU15) was co-organised with Woosuk University from 29 June - 10 July 2009 in Wanju, Republic of Korea.

The theme was "Migration and Multicultural Societies: Opportunities and Challenges". A total of 39 outstanding students from 30 ASEM countries participated in two-week programme. They attended 14 lectures delivered by European and Asian experts in the field of migration. Each lecture was followed by a Q&A session and working groups for discussion on topics related to the lecture.

On the last day of the programme, the participants produced recommendations in sub-topics related to migration and multicultural societies to be addressed to relevant bodies in ASEM countries. The active exchange of ideas and experiences among AU15 participants has contributed to the promotion of solid linkages and cross-cultural understanding between the two regions.

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