The Future of an Asia-Europe Strategic Partnership in Conflict Transformation

CONCEPT NOTE

The Asia Europe Roundtable series (AER) on Conflict Management has covered the whole conflict cycle – from conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peace-keeping and peace-making, to post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation. The series of roundtables with the presentations and debates has come to the conclusion that there is a need to promote a rule-based and inclusive framework to adequately address the tensions and conflicts arising from minority group differences. There is also a consensus that there is value in developing and deepening Asia-Europe partnership to address these challenges to peace and security.

To address the complexity that will be involved in building an inclusive, multi-sector Asia-Europe strategic partnership in conflict transformation, the next Asia-Europe Roundtable will deploy a scenario-building and formulation exercise to develop different conflict scenarios and possible models of cooperation between Asia and Europe.

Participatory approaches to scenario building allows the generation of practical, creative and more sustainable conflict management strategies by evaluating the different trajectories (emergence of conflict, escalation of violence, de-escalation of violence are some examples) that any conflict may follow. Examining multiple scenarios with a diverse set of actors allows the development of conflict management (prevention and reconstruction) strategies which are realistic, credible and bottom-up in their approach.

Exploratory scenarios (intuitive logics method) have been designed to
- Generate insight for stakeholders with regard to complex environments
- Build new or strengthen existing connections and communities based on mutual trust
- Catalyse action by identifying collaborative strategic options

The 8th AER will use the empirical knowledge and contents from the previous AERs as the foundation upon which scenarios will be built during the meeting.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the 8th AER will be to enhance regional conflict transformation/management mechanisms in Asia and Europe and develop various Asia-Europe strategic partnership models. More specifically, this roundtable will also
- Use a multi-stakeholder approach to conflict management that emphasises the long term navigation of uncertainties.
- Generate policy and strategy recommendations that are relevant for regional institutions – ARF, ASEAN, OSCE amongst others – and other organisations in this field.
- Enable targeted regional actors to operationalise the knowledge and action plans generated.

1 Conflicts Transformation refers to actions and processes that seek to alter the various characteristics and manifestations of violent conflict by addressing the root causes of a particular conflict over the long term. It deals with structural, behavioural and attitudinal aspects of conflict. The term incorporates the activities of processes such as conflict prevention and conflict resolution and goes farther than conflict settlement or conflict management. It is a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict (Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies, 2004, 2008).
APPROACH/METHOD:

Using existing AER material as background reports, the scenario building workshop will be led by an external consultant and will involve 15 - 20 participants from Asia and Europe. The proposed scenario building workshop will take place over three days and will work to set up a common dynamic strategy around the following strands of conflict transformation - conflict prevention and peace-building processes.

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

The 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 February 1997 by the participating governments of ASEM and has since implemented over 500 projects, engaging over 15,000 direct participants as well as reaching out to a much wider audience in Asia and Europe. [www.asef.org](http://www.asef.org)

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) was founded in 1925 as a political legacy of Germany’s first democratically elected president, Friedrich Ebert. Since the beginning of the foundation’s work in South, Southeast and East Asia the focus has been the promotion of democracy and the strengthening of the social dimension of economic development. In the past few years, the international dialogue within Asia as well as between Asia and Europe, and the issue of crisis prevention have gained important stakes in the work of the foundation. The foundation cooperates with a number of governmental institutions, trade unions, political parties, social movements, NGOs, media and scientific institutions, as well as international organizations.

The role of the Office for Regional Cooperation in Asia based in Singapore is to support the social dimension of Southeast and East Asian cooperation and integration, the Asia-Europe dialogue and partnership activities in the ASEAN member states where there are no FES offices. The office’s activities include dialogue programmes, international and regional conferences (e.g. on economic and social policy, regional integration and comprehensive security), Asia-Europe exchanges, research, as well as programmes with trade unions. [www.fes-asia.org](http://www.fes-asia.org)

The Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA) is an independent organization dedicated to the research, analysis and discussion of regional and international issues. We aim to make Singapore a more cosmopolitan and global society through research, policy work and public education on international affairs. Founded in 1961 and registered as a membership-based society, we are Singapore’s oldest think tank.

As a founding member of the ASEAN-Institutes for Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) network, we work with our partner think-tanks to organize regional and international workshops and conferences to seek new thoughts and ideas. Accompanied by research and analysis, we share our political, economic and security insights with politicians, policy-makers, business leaders, and opinion-leaders. [www.siiaonline.org](http://www.siiaonline.org)

*ASEM brings together 46 member states (Australia, 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, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam) plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. [www.aseminfoboard.org](http://www.aseminfoboard.org)*
The Europe-Asia Policy Forum (EUforAsia) is designed to target relevant stakeholders in Asia-Europe affairs and policy-making with information on contemporary issues regarding EU-Asia. The briefing series is part of the EU-Asia Policy Forum that aims to enhance EU-Asia cooperation and awareness on issues of mutual interest such as sustainable development, regional integration, governance and other hot topics. Main partners are the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS), the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the Singapore Institute for International Affairs (SIIA), and the European Policy Centre (EPC).

http://www.euforasia.eu

This project is financed by the European Commission.