New Management Team for ASEF

On 1 November 2000, ASEF welcomed a new management team.

Ambassador DelFIN Colomé is ASEF’s new Executive Director. He replaces Professor Tommy Koh who held the office for the last three-and-a-half years. Ambassador Colomé is a career diplomat, as well as a writer and a composer. Prior to his appointment at ASEF, Ambassador Colomé was the Ambassador of Spain to the Philippines.

Mr Kim Sung-Chul, the new Deputy Executive Director, who replaces Mr Pierre Barroux, is a career diplomat from Korea whose previous appointments include four postings in European capitals, and he recently served as Chairman of the Confidentiality Commission of OPCW.

I am very honoured to have been appointed ASEF Executive Director by the 26 ASEM leaders in Seoul at the end of October 2000. To this honor was added a sense of responsibility.

On the one hand, I was called to head one of the most attractive international organisations created by the Asia-Europe Dialogue: the Asia-Europe Foundation. On the other hand, I was succeeding Professor Tommy Koh, an outstanding Asian intellectual and man of action, whom I deeply admire. Therefore, my first message in ASEF News will be two-fold.

First, of gratitude to the confidence that the ASEM leaders have placed in me to successfully carry on the good work of the Foundation. I will do my best; my most important asset being my strong conviction that ASEF has a crucial role to play in the ASEM framework.

Second, of recognition and homage to the impressive task accomplished by Professor Koh and his team. He put ASEF on the map, in Asia and in Europe, through over sixty projects in the first three years of ASEF’s existence that mobilised almost four thousand people in our two regions.

To use an Asian metaphor, I say that Professor Koh has planted in ASEF one thousand flowers. Now, for the new Executive Office, it is time to do some gardening. But what is most important is the flowers are already there.
For two weeks, 67 young volunteers from Asia and Europe gathered in Jinan, Shandong Province, China, to gain hands-on experience in issues of local deforestation, environmental protection and national heritage conservation in the local region.

The environmental focus of the volunteer camp formed part of the "Mother River Protection Action" initiative of the Chinese government. The project aims to provide water and soil conservation for more than 67,000 hectares of land in key ecological areas, and to enhance sustainable development mainly in the valley of the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers.

Cultural heritage conservation formed the second component of the youth camp programme. The programme featured renovation projects of local heritage sites, workshops and various excursions to World Cultural Heritage sites in the local region.

The Asia-Europe Youth Camp was part of ASEF’s Asia-Europe Youth Cooperation programme set up to knit youth and volunteer organisations from Asia and Europe closer together. The Youth Camp was co-organised by ASEF and the All-China Youth Federation (ACYF), and supported by the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCTVS).

The event was made possible with the financial assistance of the European Commission.

For more information, please contact Mr Andreas Sieren at andisieren@asef.org.

The Roundtable, attended by some 50 participants from 15 ASEM countries, was conceived to enable a "track 2" style of dialogue on topical issues among ASEM member countries. This would allow both regions to build on the best practice of the other's region.

The four topics discussed were Regionalism and Institution-Building, The Issue of Enlargement, Economic Growth, Competition and Social Stability and Asia-Europe - Challenges in Cooperation. The panel discussion at the final session was followed by a lively debate on the future of Asia-Europe relations and how challenges and differences may be overcome to create synergies and opportunities for increased cooperation and mutual understanding between the two regions.

The Roundtable was co-organised by ASEF, the Singapore Institute for International Affairs, and Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, with the support of the European Commission.

For more information, please contact Mr Arnaud d'Andurain at andurain@asef.org.
Co-organised by the Swedish National Museum of World Culture and ASEF with the assistance of the National Heritage Board, Singapore, the Conference debated on how museums in Asia and Europe have to relate to new conditions created by IT and globalisation.

The 70 participants from 23 ASEM member states comprised museum directors, ethnologists and archaeologists. Eight representatives from museum bodies in Asia and Europe addressed how museums could face the challenges of the new century. In addition, six workshops were held to explore the issues raised and to discuss ways to improve the sharing and transfer of professional competence and experiences between museums in Asia and Europe.

The event was sponsored by the Swedish Institute and the European Commission.

For more information, please contact Mr Cai Rongsheng at rscai@asef.org.

Featuring over 30 performances inspired from Europe and Asia’s rich cultural heritage, the Biennale of the Dance promised to be a "gateway to knowledge" about the art, culture and rich traditions of the two continents.

The theme for the dance festival was The Silk Roads, accentuating the link forged between Asian and European cultures. The three-week Festival, one of Europe’s most famous Festivals, involved over 800 artists from all over Europe and Asia. The performances took place in all the major halls of Greater Lyon. Over 100,000 people attended the Festival. By extending its support, ASEF focussed on contemporary dance as an excellent vehicle of cultural understanding between Asia and Europe.

For more information, please contact Mr Cai Rongsheng at rscai@asef.org.

This was an international symposium aimed at bringing together academics and intellectuals from the ASEM member countries to better understand the different values pertaining to the role of the individual in the family, society and state.

The event consisted of three main sessions, which explored The Role of the Individual vis-à-vis the Family, The Role of the Individual vis-à-vis the Society and The Role of the Individual vis-à-vis the State. A final panel concluded the symposium with remarks on "Bridging the Gap between the Asian and European perspectives on Individualism: Practical Application".

The symposium was attended by members from the academia, as well as from social institutions or organisations that dealt with the issues relating to the conference. It was organised by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institut in Vienna and ASEF, and sponsored by Ludwig Boltzmann Institut, ASEF, the European Commission and the city of Vienna.

For more information, please contact Mr Arnaud d’Andurain at andurain@asef.org.
This festival formed a unique part of the annual Helsinki Film Festival – Love & Anarchy.

At this Festival, a total of 100 films were screened. The film categories included: Asia – Europe Forum, New Japanese Cinema and Films from South Korea. The film selections showcased the quality of independent filmmaking in Asia and Europe.

This year’s Asian film selections included Japanese animations and several action films, such as Fantasy and Midnight Madness. In the Asia Meets Europe Forum film selection, the audience had a chance to vote for their favourite film. The winners of the contest were Resources Humaines, a French debut film directed by Laurent Cantet and a China-Italy co-production Seventeen Years, directed by Zhang Yuan. Second place was shared by Singaporean film Eating Air, directed by Kelvin Tong and Jasmine Ng, and Danish film I Kina Spiser de Hunde, directed by Lasse Spang Olsen. Third place went to a China-Germany co-production Suzhou, directed by You Le.

The Helsinki Film Festival and the Asia Meets Europe Film Festival sold a total of 33,000 tickets. This makes the film event by far the most popular in Finland.

For more information, please contact Mr Cai Rongsheng at rscn@asef.org.

Together with the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, ASEF organised a Colloquium where HE J.Ørstrom Møller, Ambassador of Denmark to Singapore, spoke on his new book “The End of Internationalism or World Governance?”

In his book, Ambassador Møller examines some of the major trends in the world system as we approach the new millennium: the stresses of globalization, the future role of the role of the nation-state, the free-market system versus state-managed capitalism, and democratic pluralism versus Asian/Islamic/African/and other values. The larger question raised by Ambassador Møller is: Are we poised on the brink of a new truly internationalist millennium, or is this a sort of neo-Wilsonian phase destined for an abrupt end?

The two commentators were Professor Neo Boon Siong, Dean of Nanyang Business School, and Ms Yeo Lay Hwee, a Research Fellow at SIIA.

For more information, please contact Mr Arnaud d’Andurain at andurain@asef.org.
The AEYC Working Group was set up at the Asia-Europe Youth Forum in Brussels, Belgium, 18 - 21 May 2000. Its members comprise representatives from the European Youth Forum (YFJ), the Asian Youth Council (AYC), the Asian Students Association (ASA), the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS), the North-South Centre, Youth for Development and Co-operation (YDC) and ASEF.

The meeting:
- Designed a future strategy for sustainable youth exchanges between Asia and Europe;
- Explored ways of maintaining and enlarging an informal network of youth and volunteer leaders;
- Discussed seven Asia-Europe youth project proposals in detail and their implementation.

ASEF acted as a clearing-house and mediator of the different suggestions offered by the partners. It coordinates the Working Group and maintains the AEYC Website to improve the flow and exchange of information. The Group will tentatively meet again in Spring 2001 in Europe.

The event was made possible with the financial assistance of the European Commission.

For more information, please contact Mr Andreas Sieren at andisieren@asef.org.

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The Fourth ASEF Summer School was co-organised by ASEF and NUS, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. It followed on the success of the Third ASEF Summer School at Lund University from 6 - 19 August 2000. For more information on the Summer School programmes, view http://www.asef.org/whatwedo/people_exchange/ or email Ms Catherine Pabalan at cathy@asef.org.
ASEM Leaders back ASEF’s Efforts to Enhance Asia-Europe Relations

Paragraph 17 of the Chairman’s Statement of the Third Asia-Europe Meeting  Seoul, 20 – 21 October 2000 “Leaders recognized the important role played by ASEF in promoting people-to-people contact, intellectual linkages and cultural exchanges between Asia and Europe since its establishment in February 1997, and reaffirmed their full support for ASEF’s role as a key vehicle in increasing mutual understanding between the two regions. Leaders also took this opportunity to thank the outgoing management team of ASEF for their achievements and to welcome the new management team.”

On 20 - 21 October 2000, 21 heads of state convened in Seoul for the biennial ASEM Leaders Meeting.

At the Summit, the Leaders lauded ASEF’s efforts to strengthen Asia-Europe relations by promoting people-to-people contact, intellectual linkages and cultural exchanges between peoples of the two continents. The heads of state reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the work of the Foundation as it achieves new milestones in enhancing Asia-Europe relations.

ASEF, which was borne from the first ASEM Summit in Bangkok in 1996, had made extensive preparations to celebrate ASEM III with a bang.

To commemorate this significant event, ASEF orchestrated an eclectic programme ranging from cultural festivals, exhibitions to forums. On the evening before the official summit, ASEM III delegates and governors of ASEF were treated to an outstanding concert by the ASEM III Festival Orchestra.

Over 4,000 people, including the delegations of 25 Asian and European countries plus the European Commission and media representatives attended the Summit.