ASEM 7

The Seventh Asia-Europe Meeting entitled “Vision and Action: Towards a Win-Win Solution” was held on 24 and 25 October 2008 in Beijing, China. The meeting of leaders took place against a backdrop of the global financial crisis along with other pressing issues such as energy and food shortages.

With the overarching theme of “Vision and Action: Towards a Win-Win Solution”, the Summit was attended by heads of state and government of 16 Asian and 27 European nations, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat. It marked the first gathering of 45 ASEM partners since the second round of enlargement in 2006 that brought in Bulgaria, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Romania, and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Meeting culminated with the adoption of two declarations: the “Statement on the International Financial Situation” which reflected the leaders’ concern over the severe impact of the international economic crisis; and the “Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Development” that aimed to reinforce the international partnership for development co-operation. Please visit the ASEM InfoBoard (www.aseminfoboard.org) to read these documents as well as the Summit Chairman’s Statement.

As a demonstration of its central role in complementing the ASEM process, ASEF implemented five flagship projects in support of the Summit, relevant to key areas of interest to the ASEM process. They brought together a broad swathe of civil society including artists, youth, business, academia, research and media, together with government. ASEF also set up an Information Booth in the common area of the Great Hall of People where the Summit took place. The following pages contain details on these activities.
ASEF, together with All-China Youth Federation (ACYF) and in partnership with the ASEF University Alumni Network (ASEFUAN), brought together 135 students from 38 ASEM countries for Model ASEM 2008.

As a political simulation, Model ASEM 2008 aimed to generate interest and increase knowledge about the ASEM process among young people. It was conceived as a forum for dialogue to facilitate youth to engage in intense discussions on issues that were high on the ASEM agenda, in an atmosphere that emphasised mutual respect and tolerance.

In consonance with the ASEM 7 Summit, the theme of this year’s simulation was “Vision and Action: Towards a Win-Win Solution,” which covered the three pillars of ASEM, namely: political (under the theme of “Responding to New Global Security Challenges”), economic (“Securing Resources and Competences for Sustainable Growth”) and socio-cultural (“Finding Synergies between Tradition and Sustainability”).

Despite coming from different academic and cultural backgrounds, delegates managed to conclude the meeting with a Chairman’s Statement. Besides succinctly summarising the discussions that took place during the conference, this document also proposes some initiatives to the leaders of the ASEM process, including the need for intensified co-operation between ASEM partners to counteract global security threats.

The project provided the participants with the valuable opportunities to try out their skills in diplomacy and intercultural negotiations while taking an in-depth look at the operation of the ASEM process. This forum was also featured prominently by several media organisations in China.

For more information, please visit the website www.modelasem.org/beijing2008 or contact Ms. Christine Chae at christine.chae@asef.org
The Asia-Europe Dialogue on Arts, Culture and Climate Change gathered an international team of 45 artists, scientists, cultural practitioners and climate change thinkers from 17 ASEM countries for five days in Beijing, China.

They exchanged views on our responsibility to the environment and raised pressing concerns about climate change. Led by the artistic advisors Katja Hellköetter (Germany), Sacha Kagan (Germany), Eric Messerschmidt (Denmark), Tan Ping (China) and Jiang Tong (China) working closely with the ASEF team, the Dialogue enabled the participants to explore different approaches to climate change. This helped strengthen links between traditional and new artistic practices, scientific findings and intercultural approaches on the global, regional and local levels through workshops and public forums.

Maggie Buxton (UK/New Zealand) and Angela Liong (Singapore) facilitated the workshops and public forums. During a public forum, scientists and artists shared their findings on how Asians and Europeans perceive climate, how it is reflected in art, what climate change is about and how it affects the four basic levels of human needs according to Maslow’s theory i.e. food, shelter, mobility and clothing. Best practices on tackling climate change creatively were also highlighted. Interactive workshops held at the 798 Factory during the subsequent days of the dialogue intensified discussion topics. Artists, scientists and climate change thinkers from Asia and Europe explore various ideas and measures on how to realise concrete projects to deal with the adversely evolving environment.

There were also several other activities organised in conjunction with this event. Prior to the Dialogue, a group of students from the Experimental Art Department of the Chinese Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) examined the relationship between art and climate change for 3 months and produced their findings through an exhibition titled “Look at the Climate”. CAFA artists-in-residence Oleg Koefoed (Denmark) and Insa Winkler (Germany) also worked with 12 design students to create an eco-art/action philosophy initiative which explored complex matters related to climate change, environment and sustainability from their own perspective.

Similarly, artists Petko Dourmana (Bulgaria) and Andreas Siagian (Indonesia) were shortlisted from ASEF’s open call in July 2008 due to their artistic statements and work to be showcased at the Dialogue. Additionally, a vocabulary booklet on climate change was produced by designers Roman Wilhelm (Germany) and Chen Chen (CAFA) with an editorial team. The booklet aims to address and create cross disciplinary cultural awareness on climate change.

The Asia-Europe Dialogue on Arts, Culture & Climate Change was held in partnership with CAFA, Danish Cultural Institute Beijing (DCI), Cultura 21 network, the Research Centre for Sustainable Development of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the National Climate Change Centre, and supported by the European Commission and the Austrian Cultural Forum in Beijing. This was the first project under ASEF’s newly established programme Connect2Culture, which focuses on the connections between arts and important global issues. For more information on the project or the programme, please visit the project page at www.culture360.org or contact Ms. Katelijn Verstraete at katelijn.verstraete@asef.org.
As the ASEM VII Summit approached, the financial world seemed to be going into melt down and many eyes turned towards Beijing for this important gathering of Asian and European leaders. This coupled with the recent issues in 2008 regarding food and energy security underscored the urgency of dialogue between the two regions. The “Connecting Civil Societies III” conference brought together key experts to provide recommendations and inputs to ASEM leaders just as the financial crisis was pushed to the top of the ASEM agenda.

A side event of the ASEM VII Summit, the two-day conference was the first event organised under ASEF’s new initiative on “Economy and Society”, which will generate focused policy discussions on key socio-economic issues facing the regions. The conference brought together 50 international participants from the government, NGOs, Academe, media and research sectors, including the Asia-Europe Business Forum and the Asia-Europe Peoples’ Forum. Ambassador of France to China Hervé Ladsous, ASEM Senior Official Wang Xue Xian of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of China and Prof. Walden Bello of Focus on the Global South delivered keynote speeches. Klaus Regling, Director-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, also made a presentation on the current financial crisis, its causes and the necessary responses.

The final day included workshop discussions on the financial crisis, food security and energy security as well as discussions among NGOs, the media, the business sector and the government/multilateral sector. Jan Pronk, Former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Sudan, acted as Main Rapporteur. He led the effort to weave the various workshop reports into a comprehensive report, submitted to the ASEM governments in advance of the ASEM Summit.

The Conference was held in partnership with the Research Centre for Sustainable Development – Chinese Academy for Social Sciences (RCSD-CASS), the Irish Institute for Chinese Studies-University College Cork (IICS-UCC) and the Centre for Comparative Regional Integration Studies-United Nations University (UNU-CRIS). For more information and a copy of the conference report please visit www.asef.org or contact Ms. Sol Iglesias at sol.iglesias@asef.org

**Key Messages:**

1. The ASEM response needs to distinguish, firstly, short-term emergency and crisis management; secondly, medium-term policy formulation in order to improve policies; and, thirdly and ultimately, institutional reform.

2. The key message to ASEM leaders is to continue the analyses of all economic distortions and imbalances, not only of markets but of public policy-making.

3. With regard to enhancement of international institutions:
   
   (a) There is a need for more intensified intra-Asian integration and co-operation, in particular in the fields of energy, climate change, and finance to address the consequences of global challenges.
   
   (b) It was very strongly emphasised for actual need to strengthen multilateral cooperation including some reform of existing world multilateral institutions.
   
   (c) New mechanisms to oversee and regulate the global, cross-boundary financial institutions operating on financial markets must be developed.
   
   (d) The need to create a crisis management mechanism within ASEM was discussed.

4. The greater inclusion of business and civil society in policy design and policy making, to ensure greater transparency and accountability in this era of financial insecurity.

5. Finally, one definitive message to the ASEM Summit from the conference was: For the leaders not to lose sight of the on-going crises and the need for regional and inter-regional responses to these common problems, the leaders must maintain their commitments to enhancing broader human security.
Prior to the ASEM summit, the European Studies in Asia (ESIA) network organised a book launch and panel discussion in partnership with the Centre for European Studies – Renmin University of China in Beijing.

The publication “EU through the Eyes of Asia: Media, Public and Elite Perceptions in China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Thailand” presents the findings of the first two phases of ASEF’s “EU through the Eyes of Asia” project, a major academic collaboration initiated in partnership with the National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE) – University of Canterbury. The collaboration aims to measure media, public and elite perceptions of the European Union (EU) in the Asian countries of the ASEM process. The analysis provides scientifically compelling feedback that can better assist in policy making, suggesting recommendations to the EU, third countries and the media.

The Book Launch and Panel Discussion brought together the key contributors of the publication, Prof. Martin Holland (NCRE), Prof. Dai Bingran (Fudan University) and Dr. Kenneth Chan (Hong Kong Baptist University), to deliver presentations on their findings from the China and Hong Kong studies. The panelists were joined by Prof. Xinning Song (Renmin University), who moderated the panel discussion. The Q&A session that followed the presentations discussed in particular country specific issues related to EU-Asian relations and the changing perceptions of the EU in China.

Attended by over 90 people, mainly from the academe, media and the government sector, the Beijing Book Launch was the final event in a series that saw the publication launched in seven cities across Asia including Bangkok, Hanoi, Hong Kong, Seoul, Singapore and Tokyo.

The next phase of the study will examine the perceptions of the EU in Vietnam, Indonesia and The Philippines, with the publication expected to be available in June 2009 early next year. For more information on the publication or on the ESIA network, please visit http://esia.asef.org or contact Mr. Ronan Lenihan at ronan.lenihan@asef.org

Prof. Martin Holland shares the outcomes of the study

Dr. Kenneth Chan (right) delivers their findings from the studies in Hong Kong
Globalisation has had a profound effect on media. On one hand, the media, bolstered by the rise of communication and information technologies, is regarded as one of the major motors of globalisation. Conversely however, the media is itself also shaped by the forces of globalisation.

The 4th Asia-Europe Editors’ Roundtable was targeted at both of these aspects of “media globalisation.” It addressed the impact on, and the role of, Asian and European media organisations within the context of enhanced global inter-connectedness.

The Roundtable was graced with the presence of Guest Speaker Prof. Li Xiguang, Dean of the School of Journalism at Tsinghua University. He presented his perception on how China and Asia was reported in the Western media.

Articles and broadcasts produced by the participants on the Editors’ Roundtable are available on ASEF’s website. For more information, please contact Ms. Leonie Schneider at leonie.schneider@asef.org

“Mr Hamid Mir (GEO TV), Ms. Sylvie Kauffmann (Le Monde), Mr. Bounlert Louanveduangchanh (Phouthenpasaxon Magazine) and Mr. Pavel Ionescu (Radio Romania, partly hidden) during one of the sessions

“Mr. Roman Imielski, Gazeta Wyborcza, Poland

“The possibility to exchange opinions with so many people from the two continents was excellent. It can open your eyes to many new areas and ways of thinking.”

Ms Hardev Kaur, New Straits Times, Malaysia

“This project helps break down cross board and cultural differences and promotes better cooperation and understanding.”

Mr Hamid Mir, GEO TV

Mr Roman Imielski, Gazeta Wyborcza, Poland

Co-organised with the All-China Journalists’ Association, the Roundtable brought together 27 editors from 23 ASEM countries. During the first discussion session on the topic “Globalised Media: Between Unification and Fragmentation”, the editors highlighted the changing role of journalists as a major impact resulting from the globalisation of media. Having traditionally been regarded as gatekeepers of information, journalists act today as translators and filters of the ever-increasing volumes of information. With the evolution of new media forms such as portals and blogs, it is the duty of traditional media organisations to lead readers in interpreting the information objectively and accurately.

The second session dealt with the question “The Media’s Role in Promoting Environmental Awareness: A Global Role for the Media?”. The participants agreed that it is especially the “green media” (i.e. environmental magazines and broadcasts) which are in a political and influential position. These media forms need to be strengthened as they are the source for the mainstream media.

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Articles and broadcasts produced by the participants on the Editors’ Roundtable are available on ASEF’s website. For more information, please contact Ms. Leonie Schneider at leonie.schneider@asef.org

“In a digital globalised world, nothing can broaden your horizon as much as face-to-face contact like the Editors’ Roundtable provides.”

Dr Mercedes Bunz, Der Tagesspiegel, Germany

Guest Speaker Prof Li Xiguang from Tsinghua University during the Roundtable discussions
Martin Holland and Dr. Natalia Chaban (NCRE). Additionally, Associate Prof. Barnard Turner (The EU Centre of Singapore and National University of Singapore) held a session on public opinion surveys, while Dr. Marc Vuijlsteke (the College of Europe) shared his vast experience with the participants.

The Workshop’s participants came from a very broad academic background, which added great value to the multi-disciplinary nature of the workshop. They had the opportunity to witness presentations from key EU-Asian relations experts from a very broad spectrum, including Dr. Luk Van Langehove (Director, the Centre for Comparative Regional Integration Studies of the United Nations University), Mr. Richard Werly (Brussels Bureau Chief, Le Temps) Mr. David Voidies (Representative from Eurobarometer) and Mr. Geoffrey Barrett (ASEM Counselor, European Commission).

All these sessions exposed the participants to a great wealth of expertise across many different facets of EU-Asian relations. The final day of the conference involved a trip to the European Parliament and a European Commission News Briefing, by Johannes Laitenberg, Spokesperson for European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso.

As a follow-up to the workshop, each participant will produce an 8000-word paper, the best of which will be published in a special edition of the Asia Europe Journal. The participant with the best paper, as selected by the ESiA selection panel, will also be awarded with a three month fellowship to the NCRE of University of Canterbury.

For more information, please visit http://esia.asef.org or contact Mr. Ronan Lenihan at ronan.lenihan@asef.org

How does one define a “troubled” state? On the other hand, what makes a successful state?

This was the first question raised at the 12th Talks on the Hill, which gathered a small group of Asians and Europeans in Singapore to critically examine the concept and current approaches to troubled states.

There was strong consensus that this term is extremely problematic as it is usually imposed on a state by external parties and therefore highly subjective. The same applies to similar terms like “failed state” and “rogue states”.

Over the two-day meeting, participants agreed on the following criteria to define a troubled state as one which “…lacks the will to address the needs of its population. It experiences internal conflict and the state has difficulty maintaining law and order. The state is unable to safeguard the core human rights as defined by the United Nations and is unable to provide basic human security, such as food, shelter and access to education and health services.”

It was further observed that if such a state is unable to solve its domestic problems, troubles may easily spill over to neighbouring countries. This is where action from regional organisations such as the EU and ASEAN is needed. Participants noted that both regional organisations have a distinctive approach towards troubled states: the “ASEAN Way” of constructive engagement, and the EU’s policy of humanitarian aid and “smart” or targeted sanctions.

At the end of two days, participants suggested the following as alternatives to existing approaches: encouraging dialogue without pre-conditions, ensuring dignity to all parties involved, providing exit strategies, capacity building, and supporting the next generation of leaders through scholarships and other educational programmes.

For more information about the 12th Talks on the Hill, please visit the website www.civdialogue.asef.org

Updates

In partnership with the National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE) and the College of Europe, ASEF brought together 20 Asian and European young academics for the European Studies in Asia (ESiA) 1st Young Academics’ Workshop, titled “How is the EU Perceived in Asia: Media, Public and Elite Perceptions.”

The five-day inaugural workshop trained a group of European studies academics on how they may be able to analyse and utilise the unique dataset that has been generated from “EU through the Eyes of Asia” project in their own research work. The proceedings involved intensive training from ESiA coordinators Prof. Ong Keng Yong discussing issues with fellow participants.
Carried out in six cities, the fifth edition of I’mPULSE mixed sounds and cultures through Asian traditional percussion instruments with contemporary music from Europe.

This year, I’mPULSE, in collaboration with Cracking Bamboo International Percussion Festival, engaged 50 young musicians, composers, students and musicologists from ASEM countries in a dialogue through comprehensive music experimentation and performance, with percussion as the connecting link. The participants took the opportunity to share their passion in creating and recreating music through the thirteen-day workshops, master classes and public performances in Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Phnom Penh and Vientiane. Professor Bernhard Wulff (Germany) was appointed as the project’s Artistic Director, working with and facilitated by renowned musicians and experts from Asia and Europe who formed the artistic backbone of the program.

The music camp was an opportunity to introduce the very first Cracking Bamboo, a new concept aiming for a better exchange and dialogue between Asian and European music. Together with I’mPULSE, Cracking Bamboo offered a platform for encounters between percussionists with “modern” instruments from Europe and their Asian counterparts, who use predating traditional Southeast Asian musical instruments.

The colourful and rich public performances held in the six cities has also benefited around 300 local musicians from those countries and attracted over 6,000 audience members. The project was also covered by 30 national and international newspapers, including Le Courrier du Vietnam and Vietnam News, Die Tageszeitung (Germany), The Phnom Penh Post, The Cambodia Daily and The Vientiane Times (Laos).

I’mPULSE 2008 was a joint initiative of ASEF, Goethe-Institut in Vietnam and the Vietnam National Academy of Music (VNAS). It was supported by L'Espace-Centre Culturel Français de Hanoi, ULTIMA Contemporary Music Festival, Goethe-Institut in Jakarta, the Centre de Langue Française Contemporaine in Laos (CCCL), Meta House Arts Center and the Art+Foundation in Cambodia. For more information, please contact Mr. David Ocón at david.ocon@asef.org.

Being part of the seven book launches ASEF organised in cities around Asia to further promote the publication “The EU through the Eyes of Asia: Media, Public and Elite Perceptions in China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Thailand”, the Tokyo book launch was held in partnership between ASEF and Keio University and the Delegation of the European Commission in Japan.

The event featured Ambassador Hugh Richardson, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Japan delivering a keynote speech on “The EU and the Euro seen from Japan”. This was followed by a presentation from Prof. Toshiro Tanaka (ESiA research team leader for Japan) on “Cast in America’s Shadow: Perceptions of the EU in Japan”. Over 50 guests from the diplomatic community, the academe, business and media sectors were in attendance.

Following the event in Tokyo, the Hong Kong book launch and panel discussion was held in partnership with the European Studies Centre, Hong Kong Baptist University, and the Delegation of the European Commission in Hong Kong. The event was attended by over 60 guests from a wide array of backgrounds. Presentations on the study and its findings were made by Prof. Martin Holland, (NCRE) and Dr. Kenneth Chan (Hong Kong Baptist University) who highlighted the main outcomes.

Mrs. Maria Castillo Fernandez, Head of the Office of the European Commission in Hong Kong and Macao and Mr. Jean-Pierre Thébault, French Consul-General to Hong Kong addressed the audience discussing the relevance of the study for policy-making processes in the European Union.

The publication “EU through the Eyes of Asia: Media, Public and Elite Perceptions in China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Thailand” presents the findings of the first two phases of ASEF’s “EU through the Eyes of Asia project, a major academic collaboration initiated in partnership with the National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE) – University of Canterbury, to measure media, public and elite perceptions of the European Union in the Asian countries of the ASEM process. The analysis provides scientifically compelling feedback that can better assist in policy making, suggesting recommendations to the EU, third countries and the media.

For more information please visit http://esia.asef.org or contact Mr. Ronan Lenihan at ronan.lenihan@asef.org.
Just a few weeks before the ASEM summit in Beijing, this two-day conference brought together over 70 experts, participants and international and local observers from the government, industry, civil society and research sectors. It aimed to share information and experiences on promoting sustainable energy policies and practices in ASEM countries.

Themed “The Energy Sustainability Challenge: Fuelling cooperation between Asia and Europe”, the roundtable was held in three sessions, focusing on how to build a sustainable energy society, the role of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) for sustainable energy, followed by a discussion on prospects for Asia-Europe energy co-operation.

The following key messages resulted from the roundtable:

1. Asia and Europe should try to join forces in greening energy sectors, which will help improving energy efficiency across the society;

2. Promotion of policy, technology and social innovation is a way for both Asia and Europe to achieve a green energy mix and a sustainable society; and

3. Asia and Europe stand at a critical crossroads for decision-making to overcome financial, technology, institutional and policy gaps. These outcomes were submitted to the ASEM governments before the 7th ASEM Summit in Beijing and have been acknowledged by ASEM Leaders in the Chair’s Statement of the Seventh Asia-Europe Meeting. In the Statement on Sustainable Development, the leaders also emphasised their commitment to take further actions to strengthen cooperation in the area of energy efficiency and energy security.

The ENVforum roundtable was followed by a steering committee meeting, during which future activities of the ENVforum were discussed.

For more information about the ENVForum and its activities, please visit www.env.asef.org or contact Ms. Susanne Wallenoeffer or Ms. Dewi Tio at env@asef.org.

“The world is facing twin energy challenges: To supply secure affordable energy, while at the same time managing the environmental consequences. Environmental sustainability requires a global revolution in the production and use of energy, and must involve a joint effort from both Asia and Europe.”

Mr. Nobuo Tanaka, Executive Director, International Energy Agency
“The AER series is to a high degree effective... at building networks between Asian and European stakeholders, establishing a forum for the discussion of region- and institution-building processes and generating an enabling dialogue on conflict management.”

This was one of the main outcomes of the evaluation report on the AER series conducted by Dr. Sebastian Bersick, Research Associate at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. The findings were presented during the one and a half day meeting held in Singapore.

10 high-level experts met in order to evaluate the Asia Europe Roundtable (AER) series in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and future direction. The report identified key issues that will likely determine the ASEM process for the next 10 years and in which ASEF, the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation and the Singapore Institute for International Affairs as co-organisers might usefully operate within the framework of the Asia-Europe Roundtable series. Furthermore the evaluation provided suggestions (including rationale and strategy) regarding the nature and aims of possible new thematic areas such as managing minority conflicts, particularly those that appear “frozen” but where... Based on these outcomes the invited experts discussed the theme and format of the 6th Asia-Europe Roundtable, which will be held in Northern Ireland and Ireland in June 2009.

ASEF, in partnership with the Volunteers for Peace Vietnam (VPV), brought together 27 participants and four trainers from 22 ASEM countries at the Asia-Europe Training for Young Volunteers under the theme of “Learning the Unimaginable - Volunteering as a Tool for Mutual Understanding.”

The training was structured into an experiential phase and a practical phase. The first phase focused on simulating the encounter with a completely new culture, creating though opportunities for participants to go through new experiences. The second phase, meant to provide participants the space to put into practice their own knowledge in volunteering and intercultural learning, gave the opportunity for participants to use the results they achieved in the first part of the training in a constructive manner.

Throughout the training, participants had the chance to interact with each other from an institutional point of view. They presented their respective organisations to each other and also built the foundation of future projects and partnerships. This resulted in the creation of several projects as follow-up activities of the training.

For more information on this project, please contact Mr. Bogdan Imre at bogdan.imre@asef.org
A gathering of 30 Asian and European experts and researchers from 15 ASEM countries, the Conference provided a venue to examine the implications that global warming and climate change have for human security, as well as the different perspectives from Asia and Europe about this issue.

A consensus shared among the participants was the urgent need to respond to climate change combining adaptation measures (adapting to its impacts and coping with its effects) and mitigation ones (reducing the emissions and, therefore, reducing the rate and magnitude of the change). Attempts must also be made towards the implementation of co-operation at international, regional and local levels into a more institutionalized framework.

The Conference was co-organised with the Research Unit on International Security and Co-operation (UNISCI) of the Complutense University Madrid, with the support of the Spanish Ministry of Defence, Red Electrica, Casa-Asia and the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation.

For more information, please visit http://aeh.asef.org or contact Ms. Helen Chua Balderama at helen.chuabalderama@asef.org

1st ASEM Rectors’ Conference
27-29 October 2008
Berlin, Germany

The inaugural ASEM Rectors’ Conference brought together 98 leaders of higher education institutions in Asia and Europe to discuss higher education policy issues, such as governance and management of universities, quality assurance in higher education, and trends on education and research co-operation between the two regions.

The conference, with the theme “Between Tradition and Reform: Universities in Asia and Europe at the Crossroads”, concluded with the participants agreeing upon a set of concrete recommendations to Ministers of Education of ASEM countries. The recommendations laid out four important points relative to ASEM higher education co-operation efforts, namely: (1) enhanced framework for ASEM higher education policy dialogue and co-operation; (2) mobility within ASEM countries for researchers and students; (3) research collaboration; and (4) incentive and support for ASEM higher education co-operation. The policy document will be endorsed to the Ministers of Education when the 2nd ASEM Conference for Ministers Responsible for Education is convened in Hanoi in May 2009.

The Conference was also an opportunity for the ASEM Education Hub (AEH) to highlight ASEF’s higher education cooperation efforts through the Exhibition that was set-up at the sideline of the sessions. The exhibit also presented projects from all four ASEF departments that geared towards providing dialogue between Asia and Europe on important issues with stakeholders from ASEM governments and civil society.

The conference was hosted by the Free University of Berlin, and was co-organised with the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK), the ASEAN University Network (AUN), and the European University Association (EUA) with the strong support of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. A publication of the proceedings of the Conference will be released by the first quarter of 2009.

For more information, please visit http://aeh.asef.org or contact Ms. Helen Chua Balderama at helen.chuabalderama@asef.org
For action against corruption to be successful, the involvement of the community and non-governmental actors is crucial. Debates in parliaments over legal protection for whistleblowers are growing across Asia and Europe. Persecution of whistleblowers has become a serious issue, particularly in countries undergoing political transition in Asia and Europe.

The Asia-Europe Museum Network (ASEMUS) seeks to promote the exchange of professional museum expertise, to provide access for museum professionals and public to a wealth of information, and to develop collaborative exhibitions and foster co-operation between museums in Asia and Europe. To date it brings together about 60 institutions and affiliated partners from over 25 ASEM countries.

Now on its eighth year, ASEMUS General Conference 2008 gathered 77 participants from Asia and Europe at Tambunting Hall of National Museum of Philippines for a four-day event devoted explore the possibilities and challenges on the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in museum activities. The conference mainly focused on the democratisation of knowledge and information.

ASEMUS elected-Chair Stephane Martin underscored that the Network’s Virtual Collection of Masterpieces (VCM), which serves as a virtual repository of collections from member museums, should be kept as the most visible project. In line with the theme “Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Museums in Asia and Europe: Possibilities and Challenges”, he also underscored the importance of enlarging its current membership, and expressed the intent of organising a real exhibit by all ASEMUS members in the future.

This General Conference was co-organised by the National Museum of Philippines. For more information please visit the website at www.asemus.museum or contact Mr. Jean Anes at jean.anes@asef.org

Aside from organising a workshop alongside the IACC conference, ASEF also sponsored ten participants from Asia and Europe, mainly from Central Eastern European countries and the newer Asian ASEM member countries, to participate at the conference (IACC). Together with leading practitioners and experts on sustainability, governance, and transparency from 120 countries, they engaged in frank debates over four days to find effective solutions for tackling corruption and limit its pervasive impact on peoples’ lives, particularly on the most vulnerable to ensure a sustainable future.

For more information, please contact Ms. Natalia Figge at natalia@asef.org
The Lecture Tour by Dr. Sriprapha Petcharamesree (Office of Human Rights Studies and Social Development of Mahidol University, Thailand) shared true life stories from different countries both in Asia and Europe, critically reflecting on the concepts of borders and frontiers both from legal and political perspectives.

The speaker discussed the concept of borders being defined as geographical boundaries of legal jurisdictions or political entities. From the human rights perspective however, political and economic borders are arbitrary. Borders can easily be created from within oneself and one’s own society. Hence, discrimination against women, ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, etc, has nothing to do with nationality or being foreigners. At the end of each Lecture, Dr. Petcharamesree encouraged participation of the audience to discuss similarities and differences of approaches and perspectives on the topic borders and frontiers between the two regions.

This lecture tour was organised with the following partners in the respective country: Institute for International Economic Relations Greece; Diplomatic Institute to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria; Romania Institute for European-Asian Studies; The International Association for Human Rights for Cyprus; School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) London; and The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

On the sideline of the Tour, Dr. Petcharamesree was also invited to moderate the workshop on “Protecting the Whistleblowers – Asian and European Perspectives” held in conjunction with the 13th International Anti Corruption Conference in Athens, Greece.

For more information, please contact Ms. Natalia Figge at natalia@asef.org
ASEF, in partnership with the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) co-organised the Asia-Europe Young Volunteers Exchange on “Volunteering today for tomorrow: How to foster sustainable choices among volunteers and local communities?”

With the local support of Greenway Thailand, SJ Vietnam, Dejavato, IIWC Indonesia and Greenway Cambodia, the project brought together 22 participants from 17 ASEM countries. The aim of the exchange was to foster better mutual understanding, co-operation and exchange between voluntary service organisations in Asia and Europe. Particular importance was given to the aspect of networking between organisations, in order to allow knowledge-transfer between the two regions and to achieve common quality standards with regards to the way the issue of sustainable development was introduced.

The three-step project combined at a first stage, a reflection process and an exchange of good practices. A field experience through project visits during two weeks in the North of Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Indonesia, as the second stage, was followed by a comprehensive final evaluation.

Participants highlighted the importance and consequences of climate change at a global level and that of tackling its influences at the community level. The main issues discussed focused on the value of education, the importance of sustainable choices for the future and the intercultural aspects that play a role at a local and global level.

For more information, please contact Mr. Bogdan Imre at bogdan.imre@asef.org

The third edition of LINGUA COMICA, entitled “Asia-Europe Dialogue through Comics” gathered 14 emerging comic artists. It sought to enhance interest in comic artists to develop projects with an Asia-Europe dimension and will promote the creation of new relevant collaborative works.

For the first phase of the project, participants were paired into teams representing Asia and Europe to complete a two-month online collaboration with comics as the working medium. Phase 2 followed with an intensive exchange in Kyoto, Japan where team members met and participated in various workshops, master classes and panel discussions during an eight-day residency.

The final stage of the project was marked by an exhibition of the new collaborative works at the Kyoto International Manga Museum between 15 November 2008 and 12 January 2009. Over 15,000 people attended the exhibition.

Two main activities in 2009 will be built upon this project: international presentations of the LINGUA COMICA 3 exhibition as part of the fringe programme of international comic festivals in Asia and Europe, and a publication showcasing the artworks from the Asia-Europe collaborations. The first presentation will be in March 2009, at the 1st NextComic Festival Linz in Austria.

The project was co-organised by ASEF and the Kyoto International Manga Museum. For more information, please visit the LINGUA COMICA project blog at http://linguacomica2008.wordpress.com or contact Mr. David Ocon at david.ocon@asef.org
Designed to promote better understanding between the local, urban and metropolitan representatives in Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and social exchanges, the inaugural Asia-Europe Young Urban Leaders Dialogue gathered 44 participants from 29 ASEM countries.

A triple objective was pursued during the Dialogue: to strengthen cultural links and mutual understanding by providing participants a platform for informal dialogues on key issues in Asia-Europe relations; to create human networks among young leaders in the two regions; and to encourage participants to foster a common vision of Asia-Europe cooperation for the development of future ASEM initiatives.

The Dialogue culminated with the adoption of the Madrid Declaration that encompasses the conclusions of the Dialogue along with the interest of the participants that were present to create an informal network of young urban leaders that would work together in order to address urban issues in the Asia-Europe context.

This project was co-organised with Madrid Global (International Strategy and Action Office of Madrid’s City Council). For more information, please contact Mr. Bogdan Imre at bogdan.imre@asef.org.

The AEH Thematic Network on Peace and Conflict Studies, led by Dr. Timo Kivimäki from the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies in Denmark (NIAS), organised its Annual Conference on the theme of Locals, “Outsiders” and Conflict. The conference was organised in partnership with the Indonesian Peace Institute (IPI)-Interpeace Aceh Programme (IIAP), a joint peacebuilding programme.

Prior to the conference, the Thematic Network on Peace and Conflict Studies Advisory Board Meeting was held. During this meeting, 10 members of the AEH Thematic Network on Peace and Conflict Studies convened to present the different projects and activities, as well as developments of the Network during the year. The meeting ended with exchanges of ideas on potential new initiatives for 2009.

The Annual Conference on 19 November gathered about 60 participants from Asian and European universities and research centres mainly. It focused on migration conflicts and aimed to exchange experiences and expertise in a view to bolstering harmonious relations between Local Communities and Migrants in Asia. The keynote speech, Resolution of conflicts between “Locals” and “Outsiders” was given by Professor Djohermansyah, Director for Political Affairs, Vice President Jusuf Kalla’s Office.

For more information, please visit www.tnpcs.niasnetworks.net, or contact Ms. Edwige Rozier at edwige.rozier@asef.org.
The fourth edition of ASEM Lifelong Learning Conference was a step towards establishing a sustainable dialogue platform between Asia and Europe on lifelong learning issues, in view of enhancing research and education cooperation among ASEM countries. One-hundred-and-fifty researchers, managers and policymakers from ASEM countries discussed and presented new research results in lifelong learning and education reforms on: (1) institutional financing; (2) organisational innovations; (3) legislative support and (4) conceptual frameworks for lifelong learning. The Conference was organised through the joint co-operation of the School of Education at Peking University, the Danish School of Education at Aarhus University, and the ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning.

Subsequent to the conference, the annual meeting of the ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning and the Research Networks was held in Beijing on the 26-27 November 2008. The meeting gathered vice-rectors, deans and heads of departments of the Hub member universities, Advisory Board members, the Hub’s research coordinators and ASEF representative, aiming to create a dialogue between policy makers and researchers on lifelong learning.

For more information, please visit [http://aeh.asef.org](http://aeh.asef.org) or contact Ms. Helen Chua Balderama at helen.chuabalderama@asef.org

Asia Europe Democratisation and Justice Series

6th Regional Anti-Corruption Conference for Asia and the Pacific

26-28 November 2008

Singapore

This conference brought together 100 experts from the 28 members of the ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific and observer countries from the region, OECD member countries, leading enterprises and businesses associations from Asia-Pacific, civil society, and multi-lateral and donor organisations.

Discussions focused on the growing recognition within the Asia-Pacific region of the adverse impact of corruption on equitable and sustainable economic growth. Governments have responded by passing anti-corruption legislations, strengthening codes of conduct for civil servants, establishing anti-corruption commissions and anti-corruption courts. Governments look to international standards including the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention (1997) and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2003) to provide a framework for reducing corruption in a comprehensive fashion.

ASEF supported this important ADB/OECD initiative to formulate strategies to help fight corruption in the business, government and civil society sectors across the region. ASEF facilitated the participation of expert civil society participants from throughout the region, while Mr. Peter Ryan, Director for ASEF Intellectual Exchange Department, chaired the session entitled “Working together to combat corruption: international and regional initiatives”.

For more information, please contact Ms. Natalia Figge at natalia@asef.org

Peter Ryan, Director for Intellectual Exchange (middle) chairing the session on regional anti-corruption initiatives
During the two-day meeting, participants were divided into five Working Groups (WG): Education; Socio-cultural concerns; Global multi-lateral governance; Development, risk and environment; and, Law and legal institutions.

They debated the research agenda and came up with a number of policy proposals.

Besides, the members of the Network agreed to:

1. Reinforce the Asian regional studies component among Asian partners, in addition to the European Studies component among Asian partners, and correspondingly, to reinforce the European Studies component among the European partners;

2. Recruit new Asian and European partners, and strengthen expertise on ASEAN and South Asian aspects of regionalism. It was also agreed to transfer the Secretariat to the European Union Centre, created jointly by the European Commission, the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University, under the coordination of Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee.

In 2009 an international workshop is planned to be organised in Korea and a major academic conference in Singapore.

Ethno-linguistic diversity is a fact in most societies across Asia and Europe. Even in countries with the rare tradition of relative ethnic homogeneity, the last 20 years of rapid globalisation and immigration flows have further diversified the ethnic landscape.

For policymakers, the existence of distinct communities with different languages, cultures or even basic ways of life poses ad one of the most difficult and ongoing policy dilemmas of the modern nation state: the need to shape peaceful inter-community relations and the sustenance of social cohesion.

The 13th Talks on the Hill was organised against the backdrop of resurgent ethnic tensions in Belgium and Malaysia, two ASEM countries with comparable experiences of historical co-existence of ethnic and linguistic communities. The two-day retreat brought together experts in the field of ethnic politics from the Asia-Europe community, facilitating an informative exchange on the interaction of ethnicity and politics in Malaysia and Belgium, and deriving lessons from the diverse experiences of the Czech Republic, Singapore, Ireland, China, the UK Myanmar, Greece, India and France that participants brought to the discussion.

The meeting called on all stakeholders in society to see ethnic and cultural diversity as positive and enriching. Politicians, non-governmental organisations, academics and the media have largely focused on the divisive elements in society, so that public opinion on inter-ethnic relations is consequently framed along the negative lines of difference, conflict and competing demands. There should be a concerted effort to focus on issues of common and cohesive significance.

For key observations and recommendations from the meeting, a full briefing is available at www.civdialogue.asf.org.
Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVForum)
ENVForum Track II Series
A side event of the UN Climate Change Conference 2008 (COP 14)
4 December 2008
Poznan, Poland

Climate change is putting growing pressure to adapt on the agriculture sector to ensure global food security. In order to maintain current levels of agricultural productivity and food supply and at the same time mitigate the effects of climate change, an integrated approach towards adaptation and mitigation measures should be considered.

This was the message from the Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVForum) event titled "Towards integrated mitigation and adaptation measures in agriculture". This project focused on the impact of adaptation and mitigation measures on agricultural production and identified potential synergies of an integrated approach of mitigation and adaptation. Experts from Asia and Europe exchanged a number of measures that can have a mutual beneficial impact, helping both regions to adapt to climate change and at the same time cut emissions from the agricultural sector, which amounts to almost 15% globally.

The presentations were followed by a panel that addressed a number of questions about the challenges and possibilities to implement such an integrated approach. From the policy side, more efforts to successfully implement both adaptation and mitigation measures are required. Further, greater financial incentives and technical support, especially in the developing countries in Asia, will be necessary if adaptation and mitigation measures are to achieve sustainable results and ensure productivity levels.

Another key message was that more efforts to raise awareness among the local population are needed. Moreover, greater stakeholder integration into adaptation and mitigation measures is crucial to increase their knowledge about the effects of climate change, and thus successfully implement strategies.

To adjust to climate change and limit the green house gas emissions from agriculture, a combined effort of both Asia and Europe is needed. In the global negotiations, a first step would be to agree on a common position and ensure agriculture is included in a post-Kyoto agreement.

The presentations and background materials can be downloaded from www.env.asef.org
The seventh installment of Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET) Conference took place from 12 to 16 December 2008 in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. It was held in collaboration with the Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO and with the support from the Ministry of Education, Sabah State Education Department, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment of Sabah, as well as the Sabah Science Secondary School, Sabah College and the Sanzac National Secondary School.

This year’s conference, entitled “Achievements, Visibility and Sustainability of the Asia-Europe Classroom Network”, brought together 80 participants and observers from 24 ASEM countries. The four-days gathering allowed them to join a network of dynamic Asian and European teachers and educators who share similar interests in promoting intercultural learning and maximising the use of information and communications technology in education. By the end of the conference, more than 30 AEC Projects were conceptualised for implementation in 2008/2009.

On the sideline of the conference, the AEC Awards were conferred to the three AEC Project Groups that have developed the most outstanding online learning platforms or applications in 2007/2008. The winners were:
- Mastering Media Goes Digital
- Toys of Our Youths [T.O.Y.S]
- Young Diplomats – International Ambassadors

The Excellence Awards Certificates were also conferred to the following for their achievement in advancing the principal objectives of the AEC-NET initiative:
- Brick&Mortar@VirtualHomestay
- Literary Corner
- Tailor’s Inc

For more information, please visit the AEC-NET website at http://aec.asef.org or contact Ms. Angie Toh at angietoh@asef.org

The 3rd AEH Advisory Committee Meeting gathered about 20 key actors from Asian and European higher education sectors to review the ASEM Education Hub activities in 2008 and outline its strategy and workplan for 2009. The two-day meeting was organised in partnership with the University Sains Malaysia.

At the time of the meeting, the ASEM Education Hub, ASEF’s revitalised initiative aiming at fostering higher education cooperation among ASEM countries, had completed its second year of activity. Following the recommendations and objectives identified at the 2nd Advisory Committee Meeting, the AEH developed further its existing activities and new initiatives enhancing the visibility and recognition of the Hub with the strengthening of its Thematic Networks and through the AEH Portal. In addition, the AEH was involved in two major events: the 1st ASEM Education Ministers’ Meeting and the 1st ASEM Rectors’ Conference, both in Berlin.

In light of these new developments, the Committee agreed that a genuine dynamic around the ASEM Education Ministers’ Meeting and the ASEM Rectors’ Conference processes needs to be created. The Committee discussed recommendations and the strategy towards those two upcoming events. The AEH structure and existing activities were also assessed and reviewed in the view to further improving them and maximising their contribution to ASEF’s objectives.

For more information, please visit http://aeh.asef.org or contact Ms. Edwige Rozier at edwige.rozier@asef.org
The Future of European Studies in Asia

Editors: Prof. Martin Holland, Dr. Silviu Jora and Peter Ryan

This volume brings together eminent European Union scholars from both Europe and Asia in a timely initiative to reflect on the record of European Studies in Asia, evaluate the current state of affairs, as well as to look for best practices to guide future developments. The publication is a partnership between ASEF, the EU Institute in Japan - Kansai and the National Centre for Research on Europe, with the support of the European Commission and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

While intentionally introspective in focus, setting out for the first time a comprehensive analysis is enhanced by comparative reflections from the EU experience and through ASEF’s institutional experiences. This Volume is a collection of papers presented at two workshops on EU/European Studies curriculum developments, one supported by ASEF’s European Studies in Asia (ESIA) network and hosted by Ateneo de Manila University in December 2007, the other by the EU Institute in Japan, hosted by Kobe University in January 2008.

Managing Independent Cultural Centers

Editor: Sandy Fitzgerald

The Independent Cultural Centers Leadership Training Handbook is the fruit of the Independent Creative Art Spaces Leadership Training programme jointly organized in December 2007 by ASEF, Artfactories and Trans Europe Halles. It highlights tools for better management and links theory with practice through specific case studies and experiences discussed during the training programme for 21 arts cultural managers from Asia and Europe.

For more information, please contact Ms. Katelijn Verstraete at katelijn.verstraete@asef.org

Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET)

AEC-NET e-Newsletter

Editor: Ramon Molina

The latest issue of AEC-NET’s quarterly newsletter features the finalists that vied for the AEC Awards during the 7th Asia-Europe Classroom Network Conference in Kota Kinabalu on 12-16 December 2008. The e-newsletter also features the new AEC project proposals for 2008/2009.

For more information or to subscribe to the e-newsletter, please visit http://aec.asef.org or contact Ms. Angie Toh at info@asec.asef.org
Interested in contributing an article to the AEJ?

If you would like to submit a paper, please send your submission in Microsoft Word document format to asiaeuropejournal@asef.org.

Papers should be written in English and preceded by a short abstract. Submissions should not exceed 7,000 words. Only previously unpublished manuscripts are accepted for consideration. Upon publication, an honorarium of 300 Euros will be granted.

For further information, please contact Dr. Albrecht Rothacher (Editor-in-Chief) or Ms. Leonie Schneider (Editorial Assistant) at asiaeuropejournal@asef.org.

You will also find detailed background information on the journal at http://aej.asef.org

ASEM Research and Education Hub for Lifelong Learning

Call for Papers and Posters

The ASEM Research and Education Hub for Lifelong Learning (ASEM LLL Hub) is supporting the Conference themed “Teachers and Trainers in Lifelong Learning: Professional Development in Asia and Europe”, spearheaded by its Network 3: Professionalisation of Lifelong Learning with special emphasis on Teacher Training.

The Conference is scheduled to take place on 29-30 June 2009 in Bergisch Gladbach, Germany and will be organised in co-operation with the German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning. The discussions will focus on teachers and trainers working in the field of lifelong learning – specifically their professional development. The workshops will cover topics such: (1) future competences of persons working in LLL; (2) pathways towards professionalization in LLL; (3) effects of teacher training in LLL; (4) between responsibility and accountability: teachers and trainers in LLL; (5) validation of adult educators’ competences.

Practitioners and Researchers are invited to submit proposals for poster presentation on the situation of teachers and trainers working in LLL (with special emphasis on adult learners) in different countries in Asia and Europe. Please send an abstract of your contribution (no more than one page) to Regina Egetenmeyer (egetenmeyer@die-bonn.de) by 15 April 2009.

For more information on the logistics of the conference, please contact Claudia Kurschildgen at kurschildgen@die-bonn.de

ASEF corporate website: Launch of Audio-Visual section

We are pleased to announce the launch of the Audio-Visual Showcase on the ASEF Corporate Website. Featuring videos from selected ASEF projects and events, this page gives visitors a different angle from which to experience them. Visitors will find this collection under the ‘Resources’ section of our website: www.asef.org
Visits to ASEF

- Mr. James Moran, Director for External Relations, European Commission Delegation in Singapore

Governor’s News

- Ambassador Boguslaw Majewski of Poland has stepped down
- Undersecretary Tuot Panha of Cambodia succeeded Undersecretary Oum Somanine

Staff News

Incoming Staff:

- Ambassador Dominique Girard, France (Executive Director)
- Ms. Susanne Wallenoeffer, Germany (Project Executive, Intellectual Exchange)
- Ms. Ana Botelho de Azevedo, Portugal (Project Officer, People-to-People Exchange)
- Ms. Flareen Dacanay, the Philippines (Intern, Intellectual Exchange)

Outgoing Staff:

- Ambassador Wonil Cho, Korea (Executive Director)
- Ms. Katerina Ragoussi, Greece (Project Manager, People-to-People Exchange)
- Ms. Leda Bontosoglou, Greece (Project Executive, Public Affairs)
- Ms. Nunnaare Panickhul, Thailand (Intern, Cultural Exchange)

Appointments:

- Ms. Katelijn Verstraete, Belgium, has been appointed as Assistant Director of Cultural Exchange
- Ms. Angeline Toh, Singapore, has been appointed as Executive Assistant to the Director of People-to-People Exchange
- Mr. David Ocon, Spain, has been appointed as Project Manager of Cultural Exchange
- Mr. Bogdan Imre, Romania, has been appointed as Project Executive of People-to-People Exchange
- Ms. Edwige Rozier, France, has been appointed as Project Executive of People-to-People Exchange
- Ms. Irene Yap, Singapore, has been appointed as Accounts Officer of Finance and Administration
- Ms. Tara Shyam, India, has been appointed as Project Officer of Public Affairs

ASEF once again participated in Discover Europe, an annual career fair and cultural event organised by the European Commission Delegation in Singapore. This year’s event was held on 9 October 2008 and was hosted by the National University of Singapore.

ASEF set up an information booth at the event’s Cultural Pavilion in order to promote ASEF and its various activities. As the audience comprised of mostly university students, ASEF especially highlighted its Database on Education Exchange Programmes website portal (deep.asef.org). Students gave positive feedbacks on the portal as they searched information higher education opportunities in Asian and European institutions through the on-site computer terminal.

Cultural Exchange News

Mr. Jean Anes (Director), Ms. Katelijn Verstraete (Assistant Director) and Ms. Jerneja Rebernak (Project Officer) participated in the 1st China-Europe Cultural Dialogue that was held on 15-16 October 2008 in Beijing, China. The dialogue was organised by the Chinese Academy of Arts and the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC).

In a separate event, Ms. Katelijn Verstraete took part in a meeting of selected experts on mobility schemes for cultural professionals in Europe at the ERIICarts Institute, Düsseldorf, Germany, on 12 September 2008. The meeting lead to recommendations to the EU Commission on future paths to take in the development of their mobility programme.
ASEF actively works with the mass media to raise public awareness on issues related to cross-continental relation. Selections of news clippings as the result of such effort are presented above. For the complete list of news clippings, please visit www.asef.org.
On 1 November 2008, Amb. Wonil Cho handed over the reins of ASEF’s Executive Directorship over to Amb. Dominique Girard. Amb. Cho was at the helm of ASEF since November 2004, and made significant contributions towards ASEF’s evolution as a respected organisation. We wish Amb. Cho all the best in his future endeavours.

We would also like to welcome our new Executive Director, Ambassador Girard into the ASEF family. A graduate of Political Studies from the Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris and in Oriental Languages (Chinese and Vietnamese) from the Ecole Nationale des Langues Orientales (1967 and 1969 respectively), Amb. Girard is a career diplomat holding the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary (hors classe). He started his diplomatic career in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Secretaire des Affaires Etrangeres (Orient) in 1970 and since then has been alternating between diverse postings in the Ministry and in French diplomatic missions in Vietnam, Laos, Singapore, USA and China. He also served as Ambassador to Indonesia (1992-1995), Australia (1995-2000) and India (2002-2007).

Prior to his present appointment, Amb. Girard was Diplomatic Adviser to the French Government, as well as Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Council of France. Amb. Girard has also been awarded several French Honorary distinctions; among them, the National Order of Merit (Officer) in 2002; and the Legion of Honour (Officer) in 2007.

Dear ASEF Alumni and Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce myself as ASEF’s new Executive Director.

Coming from a long career in the French Diplomatic Service with postings in several Asian countries it is both personally and professionally fulfilling to now head this unique organisation whose mission is to bridge Asia and Europe and to develop mutual knowledge and understanding among its people.

ASEF is an unprecedented experiment in the field of international relations. Although in existence for only eleven years, its work has been exceptionally creative and fruitful: in hundreds of projects across both regions, ASEF has tackled contemporary topics on Asia-Europe relations. As a result, a wealth of networks has been initiated and nurtured, connecting Asians and Europeans from all walks of life. This includes experts, academics, students, business people, young political leaders, journalists, artists, activists and officials. ASEF has a robust foundation on which we will now build upon for the future.

Four exciting years lie ahead of me. With the support of my colleagues, themselves representing 16 ASEM countries, my aim is to take the next steps in our journey to continually expand ASEF’s reach and credibility.

What does this mean? First, we will aim to leverage our past achievements to stimulate and fuel awareness on ASEF, ASEM and Asia-Europe relations in general. Second, while constantly paying attention to the various issues pertinent for Asia-Europe relations, one of our priorities will be to focus our energies on activities in high-impact areas.

For example, the world is currently facing a number of major challenges, including the global economic crisis and the dangers of climate change. Both threaten to have a tremendous impact on societies and individuals. At ASEF, we are aware of the imperative to remain at the forefront of these global discussions. It is our duty and strength to facilitate communication at various levels between people, to promote tolerance and co-operation in assisting in overall efforts toward emerging from these crisis.

ASEF will continue to complement ASEM’s priorities to the best of its abilities and will strive to provide ASEF with even more innovative responses to the pressing issues of the day and an increasing number of instruments to reinforce understanding among civil societies in Asia and Europe. Ultimately, ASEF is a bridge not only across regions, but between civil society and policy makers.

To raise awareness and to evolve innovative solutions towards an Asia-Europe Dialogue however, ASEF needs you: your interest, ideas and passion in facing our common challenges together and in overcoming historical, political, cultural and economic differences. I warmly invite you to our programmes and hope to welcome you - not only as participants or partner institutions, but also as ambassadors for a stronger Asia-Europe dialogue.

On behalf of ASEF, I look forward to our working closely together.

Amb. Dominique Girard

This letter is also available at ASEF website www.asef.org
Early 2009
SALAYA, THAILAND
Asia-Europe Workshop Series 2008/2009
“Perspectives on Children’s active engagement with migration in the Southeast Asian region”
Partner: Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University at Salaya and Durham University

7-8 January 2009
PONDICHERY, INDIA
Asia-Europe Forum on Field Studies

3-4 February 2009
SINGAPORE
Asia-Europe Environment Forum
Scenario-Building Training

5 February 2009
SINGAPORE
Asia-Europe Environment Forum
Steering Committee Meeting

Asia-Europe Lecture Tour
By Marta Bonifert

11-17 February 2009
TOKYO, JAPAN
Asia-Europe Partnerships in the Field of Trainings
Partners: Never-ending International WorkCamps Exchange (NICE Japan)

18-20 February 2009
STRASBOURG, FRANCE
9th ASEM Informal Seminar on Human Rights

2-4 March 2009
BANGKOK, THAILAND
Asia-Europe Workshop Series 2008/2009
“The Oil Palm Controversy in Transnational Perspective”
Partners: Southeast Asian Studies, Bonn University and Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, Singapore

6-8 March 2009
LINZ, AUSTRIA
LINGUA COMICA 3: Asia-Europe Dialogue through Comics
Follow-up presentation and exhibition of works in conjunction with NextComic Festival Linz 2009

11 March 2009
HONG KONG
ESiA Advisory Group Meeting

11 March 2009
HONG KONG
ESiA Book Launch

19-20 March 2009
CORK, IRELAND
From China to the Pacific Rim – Post Beijing 2008
Partner: Irish Institute of Chinese Studies (UCC University College Cork) Routledge

April 2009
DAVAO, PHILIPPINES
14th Talks on the Hill
Broad theme: Religion and Interfaith Dialogue (in preparation for 5th ASEM Interfaith Dialogue in Korea)

April 2009 (TBC)
(VENUE TBC)
Asia-Europe TV Documentary
Co-Production Workshop 1
Partners: Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (Malaysia) and the European Broadcasting Union (France)

For the latest information, please visit the official information platform of ASEM process: www.aseminfoboard.org