



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**

**Brussels, 5 October 2010
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**Remarks by
President Herman VAN ROMPUY
at the 8th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) press conference**

Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon.

First of all I would like also to express my gratitude to Prime Minister Yves Leterme for Belgium hosting the Asia Europe Meeting in a magnificent environment. I think I can say even without a hint of bias and partiality that Belgian hospitality was at its best.

I had the honour to chair two days of open and strong dialogue on a wide range of global issues and developments in Asia and in Europe.

This forum is primarily about establishing channels of communication between our two continents, about making a movement in both directions.

After two days work, we can all feel encouraged by the common commitment between Europe and Asia to work together. We have reaffirmed the strategic dialogue between our two continents on the basis of equal partnership, mutual respect and benefit.

A good and strong discussion, in itself, is no small achievement. Let us just recall that the 46 countries of our Summit represent 58% of world population and 60% of world trade. But we have done more than just a discussion. We adopted the Brussels Declaration on More Effective Global Economic Governance. And the Chair's Statement entitled "Greater wellbeing and more dignity for all citizens" is also a collectively agreed result of our discussion.

As these documents are now available for all of you, I would not go through all the details, but highlight a few points that I deem particularly important.

Three new countries – the Russian Federation, Australia and New Zealand – have joined ASEM, proving its attractiveness. I have appreciated the contribution of their Leaders who attended the meeting.

P R E S S

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During our debate on global economic governance we have reaffirmed the need for a renewed collective effort to consolidate the economic recovery, still considered fragile. Everybody recognised that a great deal of work needs still to be done to reform our economies both internally and externally. Internally, we have to strengthen our investment in both human capital and new technologies, develop our social protection and adapt it to the needs of an aging population. On the global scale, externally, we need to focus our efforts on the reform of International Monetary Fund and financial regulation. After two years of profound crisis the main road has been found, but a lot of critical points still need to be tackled.

With the adoption of the declaration, we have displayed our resolve and unity in pursuing the reform of financial markets and supervision, aimed at strengthening our financial institutions. This remains our number one priority.

In addition, we have sent clear signals on the modernisation of the international financial institutions. This process needs to take into account the realities of today's world economy - the shifts have taken place, and the strong growth in dynamic emerging markets and in developing economies. In parallel, it needs to address wider governance issues as well. We have thus prepared an important issue for the upcoming G20 Summit in Seoul - having 12 of its members here present among us.

In preparing for Seoul and the further work plan under the incoming French G20 presidency, we agreed on the need to remain ambitious and to work with a sense of urgency to achieve the necessary reforms. The G20 under the Chairmanship of our colleague the President of South Korea should find its cruising speed, as it remains an important process in the post crisis era as well. Its outreach toward regional organisations was considered particularly useful.

Regarding Sustainable Development, we expressed our common political will to reaffirm the Beijing declaration of 2008 as the basis of our work. Asia and Europe are developing a specific and peculiar model for sustainable development, based on the three pillars of economic development, social cohesion and environmental sustainability. These three pillars are mutually supportive and not in conflict with each other. On the contrary, they are highly interrelated.

We have reconfirmed our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, and the particular need to address the problems of the least developed countries. We recognized that, despite ongoing efforts, progress towards timely implementation is hampered, partly because of the economic and financial crisis. We must stress the continued importance of narrowing the development gap between developed and developing countries, and take urgent remedial action. The question of innovative financing remains to be considered in achieving this goal. Our objectives would also be helped by reducing trade and investment barriers that hamper the spread of innovative technologies.

We have sent a strong message on the international negotiations on Biodiversity in Nagoya, Japan, and the important issue of climate change and the upcoming meeting in Cancun in Mexico. We agreed on the importance of fast start financing, and mobilizing new and additional financial resources to address the needs of developing countries.

Our Summit has also expressed a renewed commitment and momentum to work toward the successful conclusion of the Doha Round negotiations, and encouraged the re-launching of the ASEM Economic and Trade Ministers' Meetings.

We reiterated our strong determination to tackle a number of global issues of great concern to our populations. Let me mention one in particular, because it is both concrete and symbolic – the fight against piracy.

And we had an open discussion on complex political and security issues. Security became a global issue, just think of food security, nuclear proliferation, humanitarian aid, or the combat against terrorism. We addressed issues such as Iran, Afghanistan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as the peace process in the Middle East. On Myanmar all the Leaders agreed on the need to discuss the issue of Aung San Suu.

This direct dialogue founded on mutual respect has certainly helped to improve the understanding of the different positions held by partners. To this regard I would like to stress the importance of the dialogue, among cultures and civilizations to combat extremism. I believe we still have to strengthen our collective ASEM agenda in this regard. Constructive dialogue, in general, is also the key word for addressing the regional problems and controversies mentioned in the Chair's statement.

Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

ASEM 8 was an excellent opportunity to further exchanges among European and Asian civil society representatives and leaders. ASEM 8 has not only lived in this magnificent Royal Palace but also in other parts of Brussels, where members of parliaments, business leaders and representatives of the civil society have been discussing. Their contribution enriched our work.

Finally, we all gratefully accept the offer from Laos to host the next ASEM Summit in Vientiane, in October 2012, and I wish every success to Laos to that aim.

Thank you.
