

Asia-Europe Meeting – ASEM 8, Brussels, 4-5.10.2010

The Asia-Europe Meeting is a forum for dialogue between European and Asian partners about major political, economic, financial and socio-cultural issues. The eighth biennial summit at Head of State and Government level (ASEM 8) will be held on 4 and 5 October 2010 at the Royal Palace in Brussels. Other specialist meetings supplementing the ASEM 8 process will be held at the same time as ASEM 8, namely the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership, the Asia-Europe People's Forum and the Asia-Europe Business Forum. Further information about ASEM 8, parallel events and preparatory activities is available at www.asem8.be.

What is the Asia-Europe Meeting?

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) started in 1996 and in 2010 it will provide a forum for dialogue between the 27 countries of the European Union and 16 Asian countries (10 ASEAN countries + six NESAC countries¹). These 43 countries will be joined by Australia, Russia and New Zealand, all of which will formally become members of ASEM during ASEM 8, plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. The talks between these 48 partners are the only forum outside the United Nations where European delegates meet a group of Asian delegates in this way.

ASEM includes discussions and exchanges about the major political, economic/financial and socio-cultural issues which form the three pillars of ASEM. ASEM provides an opportunity for cooperation, encourages trade contacts and investment between companies, and stimulates people-to-people meetings between citizens.

ASEM activities

The entire ASEM process chiefly revolves around the biennial summit at Head of State and of Government level. These meetings traditionally conclude with a 'Chair's Statement', one or more additional official statements and a number of follow-up initiatives (seminars, conferences, workshops, etc.). Since the first ASEM Summit in Bangkok (Thailand) in 1996, Asia and Europe have kept their biennial appointment with remarkable regularity, which demonstrates the high degree of commonality between the two partners.

In addition to these and other high-level political meetings (such as ministerial conferences), many follow-up activities are organised in more specific and technical fields. These numerous conferences create mutual awareness and understanding and often provide the stimulus

for more concrete cooperation. The meetings under the ASEM framework also provide suitable opportunities for developing bilateral contacts between the representatives of Europe and Asia.

ASEM 8 – Brussels 2010

The ASEM Summit in the Royal Palace in Brussels on 4 and 5 October 2010 (www.asem8.be) is the eighth meeting at Head of State and Government level where Asia and Europe can shape their common positions. Together, they represent approximately 58% of the world's population, 50% of global GDP and over 60% of international trade. Given these circumstances, the ASEM Summit in Brussels will provide a source of inspiration for the wider international community. Indeed, the first meeting of the G20 to be held in a country that is not a member of the G8 will take place one month after ASEM 8 in Seoul (South Korea). It will clearly define important aspects of the policy of the larger countries to get to grips with the financial and economic crisis. A few weeks later, the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Climate Change will start in Cancún (Mexico). This will continue the efforts begun at the Climate Summit in Copenhagen (Denmark) in late 2009.

In Brussels, Heads of State and Government of the ASEM partners will discuss these and other international challenges, but the relationship between the two Regions will be an important topic in itself. The leaders will focus on strengthening political dialogue, expanding trade and investment relations, and increasing the level of contact between people and cultures. They will seek to further develop ASEM as their common strategic asset. The agenda of ASEM 8 is prepared jointly in a completely transparent way and through an extensive process of consultations involving all the ASEM partners without exception. This process will continue until the day of the Summit itself, ensuring that ASEM 8 is truly a summit for each and every European and Asian partner.

Parallel events and preparatory activities

ASEM 8 is also a summit for other groups who make up the ASEM process. The Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership, the Asia-Europe People's Forum and the Asia-Europe Business Forum will be held in parallel with the meeting of Heads of State and Government. The Asia-Europe Foundation, the only permanent institution within the ASEM framework, will also organise an event with the title 'Connecting Civil Societies' on the fringe of the ASEM 8 Summit.

The Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership meeting (ASEP 6) will take place from 26 to 28 September 2010 in the Belgian Parliament (Brussels). This meeting between Asian and European parliamentary delegates (including the European Parliament) is being organised jointly by the Belgian Chamber of Representatives and Senate.

¹ The 10 ASEAN countries are: Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. The six NESAC countries are: People's Republic of China, Japan, South Korea, India, Pakistan and Mongolia.

The Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF 8) from 1 to 5 October 2010 will focus its activities around the ASEM 8 Summit in Brussels. In addition to the traditional dialogue between Asian and European civil society partners, a Trade Union Day will also be held and a series of outreach events and meetings with officials will be organised.

The Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF 12), which will be held on 4 October 2010 alongside the ASEM 8 Summit, will deal with financial services. Each ASEM country nominates three Chief Executive Officers of financial institutions to attend this forum.

Intensive preparations will take place in the run-up to the ASEM 8 Summit. Based on the principle of 'issue-based leadership', one of the most dynamic features of ASEM, the Asian and European partners will organise 12 events with direct relevance to the summit agenda. Independent research centres and institutions will also organise discussions about relevant topics. Of course Belgium, as host country, will play an important driving role.

Expansion

Finally, it should be noted that the upcoming ASEM 8 Summit in Brussels will welcome three new members, a sign of ASEM's unbridled success. Russia, Australia and New Zealand will attend the meeting on 4 and 5 October for the first time.

Calendar of events

Contact: ASEM Desk (FPS Foreign Affairs)

Additional information: www.asem8.be

ASEM Senior Official for Belgium: Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrughe

12-13 July 2010

Public Conference on EU-Asia Relations
(Charlemagne (EU premises), Brussels)

13-15 July 2010

ASEM Senior Officials' Meeting (Egmont Palace, Brussels)

16-17 September 2010

Brussels Briefings 'EU for Asia': ASEM 8 Curtain Raiser
(Residence Palace, Brussels)

26-28 September 2010

Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership
(Belgian Parliament, Brussels)

1-5 October 2010

Asia-Europe People's Forum (Brussels)

2-3 October 2010

Conference 'Connecting Civil Societies' (Square Brussels Meeting Centre, Brussels)

3 October 2010

Editor's Round Table (Square Brussels Meeting Centre, Brussels)

3 October 2010

ASEM Senior Officials' Meeting (Egmont Palace, Brussels)

4 October 2010

Asia-Europe Business Forum (Egmont Palace, Brussels)

4-5 October 2010

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