



## 4<sup>th</sup> Connecting Civil Societies of Asia and Europe Conference:

### Changing Challenges, New Ideas

2-3 October 2010, Brussels (Belgium)  
*An official side-event of the ASEM8 Summit*

The global and regional environment in which the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) operates has changed significantly since its inception in 1996. The initial optimism about the benefits of globalisation and international cooperation has given way to a more sober recognition of the challenges of a globalised world and the limitations of multilateral processes and institutions. The financial, economic and food crises, terrorism, climate change, and global pandemics have emerged as global threats that compound the insecurities and challenges facing an increasingly inter-dependent but fractious international community. In view of these common concerns, the ASEM process bears the responsibility of reinforcing the essential work of dialogue and cooperation in Asia and Europe.

Thirteen years in development, the ASEM forum today is a broad range of dialogue channels and activities that continue to respond to the changing challenges facing Asia and Europe. Going forward, the ASEM process could benefit from clearer, more focused objectives and a more defined agenda. What should ASEM's priorities be for the next few years? What are the most pressing concerns shared by governments and civil societies across Asia and Europe, especially those concerns that could benefit from concerted policy attention and sustained grassroots action from citizens?

The only permanent ASEM institution, ASEF plays a vital role in connecting reflections on the ASEM level with the concerns of civil societies in the two regions. Taking place on the eve of the 8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM 8 Summit), the 4<sup>th</sup> Connecting Civil Societies (CCS4) conference aims to take stock and analyse some of the current trends and issues that define the Asia-Europe dialogue to date, identify the most constructive areas for civil society cooperation, and forecast emerging issues that could have an impact on future ASEM dialogue and directions.

These deliberations will contribute to the ASEM 8 Summit, which will focus on improving world governance structures and sustainable development efforts as part of the long term response to the economic and financial crisis.



The CCS4 conference aims to:

- Facilitate dialogue between ASEM partners and civil society through an unconventional mix of participants from diverse sectors;
- Deliver a focused report to ASEM leaders at the ASEM 8 Summit in Brussels, outlining the main concerns of civil society that could contribute to the ASEM agenda in the next two years and beyond.

## Workshops

### *The 5<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Editors' Roundtable*

#### **Asia and Europe: Engaging for a Post-Crisis World**

In the aftermath of the international financial and economic crisis, and with lessons drawn from UNFCCC COP15 in Copenhagen, there is widespread recognition that there are serious shortcomings in the present global architecture for responding to these new challenges. Given these, as well as the international media attention on the Eurozone crisis, the 5<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Editors' Roundtable is a unique opportunity for eminent editors and commentators to participate in a focused discussion on re-thinking necessary international mechanisms and institutions for credible and effective governance. The Roundtable will also examine recent trends in global governance and find shared ground between Asia and Europe for building consensus on the future international financial architecture.

*Co-organised with Chatham House*

#### *Workshop 1*

#### **Who Should Pay for (Higher) Education?**

"Who should pay for (higher) education?" is a question discussed among higher education and finance experts and students alike. The workshop will present recent research on future funding for universities. Public funding as well as ways of diversifying universities' income streams and cost-sharing approaches in higher education (in various ASEM countries) will be tackled. This workshop will facilitate an exchange between students – as beneficiaries of higher education – and finance and education experts about possible funding models for a sustainable higher education landscape.

*Co-organised with the Asian Institute of Management and the European University Association*

#### *Workshop 2*

#### **Creating Skills and Competences for Living and Working in the ASEM area**

Living and working in the ASEM area increasingly demands skills and competences in the personal, public and professional spheres. These skills and competences should be developed, maintained and updated as part of lifelong learning to respond successfully to changes in the growing inter-regionalisation process. The development of ASEM dialogue and

cooperation in the field of lifelong learning has since 2005 been mainly between policy makers and researchers; therefore this workshop aims to connect civil society partners to this existing dialogue and create an expanded platform for stakeholders from non-formal and voluntary work in adult learning. In particular, the workshop will focus on international voluntary service projects and methods of assessing their impact, and formulate recommendations of new Asia-Europe initiatives in this area. .

*Co-organised with the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) and the ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning (ASEM LLL Hub)*

#### *Workshop 3*

### **Sustainable Creative Cities: The Role of the Arts in Globalised Urban Contexts**

The workshop will address the roles of artists and creative workers in the evolution of globalised cities across Asia and Europe, assessing how an “artistic mode of knowing” can contribute to a transition from creative cities to sustainable creative cities. The aim is to facilitate the emergence of local urban processes of social change in partnerships between artists, cultural practitioners and communities, as opposed to top-down urban planning. The workshop will engage artists and cultural practitioners, as well as architects, urban planners, cultural policymakers and experts of local governance. Outcomes of the workshop will bear relevance for local governance and for ASEM cultural policy.

*Co-organised with Institut für Kulturtheorie, Kulturforschung und Künste (IKKK) and Urban Research Plaza*

#### *Workshop 4*

### **The Role of Youth in Public Health promotion: New ideas, Young ideas**

Transnational outbreaks of infectious diseases like SARS and H1N1, and the continuing spread of HIV/AIDS, all serve to illustrate the diversity of global health threats and their impact on economic and social stability. The exchange of health knowledge between Asia and Europe has been described as extremely asymmetrical: “the West” gave the concepts, institutions and practices, while Asia received. In this process of knowledge-sharing and collaboration the role of youth has often been neglected. Following on the 16<sup>th</sup> ASEF University on “*Vulnerable Groups and Access to Quality Healthcare Services*”, this workshop will focus on the role of youth organisations, networks and movements in the field of Public Health, and the possible initiatives of governments to support such youth initiatives. Special attention will be put on reviewing lessons learned from ongoing projects and on seeking ways to improve capacity building and information sharing.

*Co-organised with the ASEF University Alumni Network (ASEFUAN) and Prospex*

*Workshop 5*

**Building Regional Community: Translating the European Experience to East Asia**

While the European region managed to transform itself from a continent destroyed by World War II and divided during the Cold War to arguably the world's most effective and active regional community, East Asia – particularly Northeast Asia – remains largely fragmented and divided along Cold War lines, and is a dangerous flashpoint for potential regional and global conflict. What can East Asia learn from groupings like the EU and ASEAN, to build regional community in both the formal and informal sectors?

*Co-organised with Peace Boat, the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research and the European Centre for Conflict Prevention*

*Workshop 6*

**The Right to Information**

Governments across the world are adopting Right to Information laws and regulations that require public bodies to make available information of public interest to their citizens. This reflects the recognition of the Right to Information as a fundamental human right, essential for meaningful democracy and the realisation of other human and socio-economic rights. This workshop will examine the trends and best practices in effectuating this right, in particular those relating to environmental protection, development and anti-corruption.

*Co-organised with Article 19 and the Foundation for Media Alternatives*

*Workshop 7*

**The EU and Asia: Inter-Regionalism and Regional Integration**

As the world becomes increasingly regionalised, new avenues for inter-regional relations between Europe and Asia have opened up. Regional integration however, can take many forms. This workshop will examine the role of civil society in regional and inter-regional integration processes with a special focus on think-tanks as actors and education as a subject of inter-regionalism.

*Co-organised with the United Nations University Centre for Regional Integration and Tsinghua University*

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