Asia-Europe Meeting

the ASEM Education Secretariat

ASEM Education Stocktaking Report

May 2019

"From Seoul to Bucharest"

Table of Contents

Preface

The ASEM Education Secretariat Belgium is proud to present its first Stocktaking Report **'From Seoul to Bucharest'** which lays out the outcomes and progress of the ASEM Education process (AEP) between the Sixth ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME6) in Seoul (November 2017) and the Seventh Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME7) in Bucharest (May 2019).

During ASEM ME6, the ASEM Education Secretariat (AES) was handed over from Indonesia to Belgium. The Belgian Secretariat has a unique structure since it is composed of two different Ministries of Education: The Ministry of the French speaking Community and the Ministry of the Flemish Community.

The ASEM Education Process entered its second decade with the ambition to offer a more effective and sustainable platform for dialogue and cooperation in education between Europe and Asia. Partners and stakeholders in the ASEM Education Process look back on ten years of fruitful and relevant initiatives and, at the same time, agree that the process is ready for its next phase. Therefore, the Ministers of Education mandated, at the Sixth Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME6) in Seoul, the Belgian Secretariat to develop a more result-oriented stocktaking process with a redesigned Stocktaking Report.

Under this mandate, the Secretariat invited all ASEM education partners and stakeholders to take part in a temporary task force to discuss the objectives and structure of the renewed Stocktaking Report during a meeting that took place in September 2018. The task force agreed that the report should become an instrument to support the ASEM Education Process in creating synergies and coherence between initiatives and in building further on achieved outputs and results to enhance impact. Furthermore, the report should better support policy processes for collaboration in education between Europe and Asia but also identify synergies and opportunities for exchange between the ASEM Education Process and other multilateral (policy) processes.

About the structure of the report

The report presents different levels of information to serve a wide range of readers with different backgrounds and interests. The introductory and first chapter lays out the role of the Secretariat in the stocktaking process as well as the methodology of the process.

The first part of the second chapter is mainly written for readers who are new to ASEM education and/or less familiar with the ASEM Education Process.

The second part of this chapter frames the Education Process within the broader ASEM process and within other multilateral policy processes or developments in order to identify synergies and opportunities for collaboration and reinforcement. In this chapter the Secretariat provides the reader with some observations and recommendations which are also taken up again in the last chapter.

The third chapter contains the core of the stocktaking process: it takes stock of the activities that took place between ASEM cME6 and ASEM ME7, as agreed upon in the Chair's Conclusions of the Sixth Meeting in Seoul.

In the fourth chapter the Secretariat analyses the synergies between the different initiatives as well as the synergies between the different priority themes of the ASEM Education Process. In the same chapter, the Secretariat looks at achievements and strengths of the different initiatives and projects and highlights their challenges and shortcomings. Based on this analytical chapter but also with input from previous chapters, the Secretariat formulates conclusions in the last chapter of this report and proposes recommendations for the further development of the ASEM Education Process, both at the political level, as well as at the management level.

Reading the report according to your needs and interests

This report should serve as a working instrument to further develop existing and to plan future initiatives and projects. Furthermore, the recommendations at managerial level could be taken as basis for further discussion on how the ASEM Education Process itself can be further developed by creating a future vision, strategic framework and a working plan.

For additional information and documents we have added hyperlinks to pages or documents published on the ASEM Education Website and to other relevant websites.

Thank you!

The AES would like to thank all partners and stakeholders who have contributed to this report by completing the questionnaires and/or by providing feedback. Some special thanks go to the members of the task force for their contributions at the working meeting in September and the valuable feedback afterwards! Last but not least, the Secretariat would like to express a huge thanks to Dr. WUTTIG for his dedication and expertise in drafting this report as well as for his constructive feedback and nice collaboration.

The Secretariat wishes you an interesting reading and hopes that the conclusions and recommendations inspire you to further develop and strengthen Asia-Europe collaboration in education. The Secretariat is open to all kinds of feedback, ideas and recommendations to further support you in this process.

Nadia REYNDERS and David URBAN, the ASEM Education Secretariat Belgium

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AEI	Asia-Europe Institute
AEP	ASEM Education Process
AES	ASEM Education Secretariat
APT	ASEAN Plus Three
APGC	ASEM Pathfinder Group on Connectivity
ARC	ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEF	Asia-Europe Foundation
ASEFClassNet	ASEF Classroom Network Conference
ASEFInnoLabs	ASEF Innovation Laboratories
ASEFSU	ASEF Summer University
ASEFYLS	ASEF Young Leaders Summit
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASEM WPP	ASEM Work Placement Programme
ASEM ME	ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting
AUN	ASEAN University Network
CC	Chair's Conclusions
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
DG	Directorate-General
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register
ESN	Erasmus Student Network
ESU	European Students' Union
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU SHARE	European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region
EUA	European University Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ISOM	Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MOOCs	Massive Open Online Courses
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAMEO RIHED	South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization - Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development
SOM	Senior Officials' Meeting
SWG	Standing Working Group
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIL	UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WG	Working Group

Executive Summary

During the first ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME1) in Berlin in 2008, Ministers recognised the added value of such an informal platform for dialogue and agreed to forge a strategic Asia-Europe partnership in education, which was named the ASEM Education Process.

Eleven years later, ASEM partners and stakeholders attend the Seventh ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME7) in Bucharest, Romania on 15 and 16 May 2019 to discuss political issues relating to the ASEM Education Process under two following themes: (1) Mobility for everyone: balanced and inclusive mobility in the digital era and (2) Towards the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development: How can the ASEM Education Process contribute?

In their previous Meeting in Seoul, Korea (ASEM ME6, November 2017), the ASEM Ministers of Education set the political and practical agenda for the ASEM Education Process until the next Ministerial and beyond, as specified in the Seoul Declaration. They agreed on ideas to develop the ASEM Education Process further and welcomed 33 initiatives and projects proposed by ASEM partners and stakeholders, to be implemented under the following 4 ASEM Education Process thematic priority areas:

1 Quality assurance and recognition;
2 Engaging business and industry in education;
3 Balanced mobility;
4 Lifelong learning including Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)).

The Stocktaking Report – a basis for discussion during ASEM ME7

The Secretariat describes in this report the progress made by 33 initiatives and projects under the four thematic priority areas since the Ministerial Meeting in Seoul. The report also presents their achievements and strengths as well as their shortcomings and challenges.

Based on ASEM documents, outcomes from meetings (ISOM 2018, SOM1 2018), and discussions with senior officials, stakeholders and external experts, the Secretariat has identified **eight main tasks for the future of the ASEM Education Process**. Four of these tasks refer to the **political level**; the four others to the **management level**. In addition to that, the report lists **21 recommendations** to help achieve these tasks.

The Stocktaking Report is meant as a source of inspiration for the debates in the run-up to and during ASEM ME7. The ASEM Education Ministers and Senior Officials are invited to discuss the tasks and recommendations presented by the ASEM Education Secretariat and agree on those which should be prioritized on the ASEM Education agenda.

Initiatives and projects – cornerstones of ASEM Education with recommendations for the future

The analysis by the ASEM Education Secretariat clearly shows that the clear majority (i.e. three quarters) of the 33 ASEM government-led initiatives and projects run by ASEM stakeholders as mentioned in the Chair's Conclusions of Seoul (2017) have been carried out and achieved their objectives completely or partly. This finding demonstrates the great enthusiasm and

commitment of ASEM partners and, in particular, of ASEM stakeholders who coordinate most of these activities (e.g. Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) through its long-term project series).

A closer look at the implementation process, however, reveals that the number of partners and stakeholders who coordinate an initiative or project is rather low and the same ASEM partners and stakeholders tend to coordinate these initiatives. Quite a number of initiatives led by partners are one-off events that contribute to the development of the AEP only in the short-term. Most of the ASEM government-led initiatives do not cooperate systematically or create synergies – even if they work under the same AEP priority on similar topics. A few initiatives were cancelled or are currently on hold, such as the ASEM University-Business Forum and the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub - two important dialogue fora for cross-cutting issues which should be revitalised. The ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub however will be hosted soon by the University College of Cork, Ireland. All partners and stakeholders are invited to contribute to the revitalisation of the LLL Hub by participating in research and conferences on Lifelong Learning to support evidence-based policy.

The thematic focus of AEP initiatives is clearly on priority 3 (Balanced mobility) and priority 4 (Lifelong learning including TVET), although priority 1 (Quality assurance and recognition) and Priority 2 (Engaging business and industry in education) deal with key issues for developing the AEP and meeting global challenges. Some flagship initiatives under priority 3 deserve more attention and increased membership (e.g. ASEM-DUO) or a more balanced participation of Asian and European students (e.g. Summer School of the Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya). Under priority 4, only a small number of TVET initiatives took place in ASEM Education so far. This is surprising as partners and stakeholders voiced their wish - on different occasions - to make TVET more prominent in the AEP. However, there are initiatives complementing all the 4 thematic priority areas.

The Secretariat hopes that the analysis of the initiatives and projects under the 4 priority areas in this report would help to improve the aspects described above in longer term.

Achievements, strengths, shortcomings and challenges of the ASEM Education Process (AEP)

In addition to the numerous activities, which are a real asset to the AEP, documents and meeting results as well as research findings point out many other **strengths** and substantial **achievements** of the AEP. Firstly, the ASEM Education Process offers a permanent political and practical platform to partners and stakeholders for discussing Asian-European educational themes and initiating policy-oriented or result-oriented initiatives and projects in fields of common interest. Other positive aspects of the ASEM Education dialogue and cooperation forum are:

- the informal and non-binding character of the AEP;
- the embeddedness of the AEP in the overarching ASEM process;
- the clear focus of AEP policy dialogue and cooperation on four relevant thematic priorities and
- the establishment of the ASEM Education Secretariat as support structure of the AEP.

Despite the many positive aspects and the undeniable progress achieved during the past decade, there is **room for improvement** in the following areas: policy orientation, effectiveness and visibility; connection with international policies and topics; and management of the AEP.

Sometimes, the positive aspects can turn out to be shortcomings and challenges for the AEP. The informal and non-binding character of the AEP, for example, may conflict with the wish to make the AEP more result-oriented and to develop the political management of the ASEM Education Process, supported by a vision document and a clear action plan.

It is true that the AEP is part of the overarching political ASEM process. However, the connection is weak, and its potential is far from being fully exploited. The same is true for cooperation with other international actors in the field of educational policies such as ASEAN, the EU, the Bologna Process and UNESCO.

During ASEM ME3 (Copenhagen, Denmark, 2011), ASEM Education Ministers agreed to focus on four thematic priorities (see above) which are still relevant for the current policy dialogue and practical initiatives of the AEP. Time does not stand still and changing contexts require adjustments of themes. Recently, the implications of industrial change (Industry 4.0, digitalisation) and the impact of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda on the AEP have been increasingly discussed. It was proposed to consider both themes in the future thematic orientation of the AEP.

The establishment of the rotating ASEM Education Secretariat is seen by AEP partners and stakeholders as a great achievement of the AEP. Such a Secretariat is unique in ASEM and ensures coordination, stability and, to a certain extent, continuity of the AEP. However, the increasing workload as well as the loss of expertise and continuity of staff upon completion of the 4-year AES mandate, raises the urgent question of how to enable the AES to meet future challenges in a long-term perspective.

Tasks and recommendations for the future development of the AEP

Considering the shortcomings and challenges of the AEP presented in this Stocktaking Report, the AES proposes 8 tasks and 21 recommendations (cf. Chapter 5.2 of the Report) to be discussed at AEP policy level for the future development of the AEP with the aim to make the AEP politically stronger and sustainable, more effective and visible, and more beneficial for the people in Asia and Europe. The tasks and corresponding recommendations are presented in the following overview:

1 Tasks and recommendations relating to the political level
2

> **Task 1: Make the AEP more attractive for high-level policy makers and give the AEP a long-term perspective**
>
> **Recommendation (1):** Settle an analytical and strategic approach in preparing and following up milestone meetings in the AEP, such as (I)SOM and ASEM ME. Such approach would include preparatory documents with an analytical focus (e.g. Stocktaking Report) and a strategic purpose

for the AEP (e.g. introducing a Strategy Paper on AEP Vision 2030), clearly identified meeting outcomes, and possibilities to monitor these (e.g. through Stocktaking Reports);

Recommendation (2): introduce more interactive formats for discussions, such as workshops in (I)SOMs and informal retreat sessions in ASEM ME, in order to discuss strategic policy orientations and better grasp their impact on the education sector, beyond the pressure of protocols;

Task 2: Bring the AEP closer to the overarching ASEM process

Recommendation (3): Present and discuss main ASEM ME results during ASEM Summit and include them in ASEM Summit Chair's Statement;

Recommendation (4): Present AEP flagship initiatives during ASEM Summit (e.g. in an AES booth) with effective coordination with the summit host and the ASEM secretariat;

Task 3: Connect AEP priorities with international policies and developments

Recommendation (5): Intensify relations with the Bologna Policy Forum/Global Policy Forum, ASEAN Plus Three, the EU and UNESCO in priority areas of common interest; discuss with European Commission how to harness the potential of EU programmes for ASEM education related to mobility and cooperation;

Recommendation (6): Make digitalisation (Industry 4.0) and UN's Sustainable Development Agenda a transversal theme of the AEP and support corresponding initiatives;

Recommendation (7): Make TVET more prominent in the AEP by (a) promoting initiatives and wider networking opportunities amongst the ASEM partners and stakeholders (e.g. by organising joint seminars for experts from the fields of politics and education and the world of work), (b) preparing a compendium on TVET systems in Asia and Europe and (c) presenting Asian-European TVET cooperation examples of good practice in AEP policy meetings and on the AES website;

Recommendation (8): Revitalise ASEM LLL Hub and university-business collaboration.

Task 4: Strengthen involvement of stakeholders

Recommendation (9): define official AEP stakeholders entitled to attend (I)SOMs and ASEM ME with the right to speak to increase commitment from the education sector towards the AEP, and to make the AEP more visible to them;

Recommendation (10): discuss the main ARC recommendations during ASEM ME, and address them in relation with the relevant AEP policy recommendations in key policy documents such as the Chairs' Conclusions and the Declarations;

2 Tasks and recommendations related to management level (AES and host of Senior Officials and Ministerial Level Meetings)

Task 5: Continue to make the informal AEP more efficient and effective

Recommendation (11): Introduce an action plan with clear objectives, identifiable responsibilities and targets to implement the AEP Vision 2030 (see Task No 1);

Recommendation (12): Continue to improve the format of (I)SOM meetings already tested in Jakarta and Krems (2018) and introduce new elements into ASEM ME (e.g. retreat sessions);

Executive Summary

Recommendation (13): Ensure effective cooperation and thematic continuity of meetings between different hosts of ISOM, SOM1 and 2, ASEM ME and the AES;

Task 6: Monitor the AEP and its initiatives and analyse their progress and results from a policy perspective

Recommendation (14): Establish regular contacts between coordinators of ASEM government-led initiatives and projects by other stakeholders and prepare/collect summaries of individual meetings;
Recommendation (15): Support initiatives by harnessing synergies;
Recommendation (16): Prepare a comprehensive Stocktaking Report including an analytic view on the progress of initiatives and an assessment and development of the AEP Vision 2030 action plan and achievement of its objectives and targets;

Task 7: Make the AEP more visible

Recommendation (17): Present AEP examples of good practice on the AES website and in social media;
Recommendation (18): Promote AEP at ASEM Summits, Education Fairs, Global Policy Forum and other relevant events;
Recommendation (19): Award an ASEM prize to top-class AEP demonstration initiatives or projects during ASEM ME and disseminate information via all sorts of media;

Task 8: Increase working capacity, continuity and stability of the AES

Recommendation (20): Establish a Standing Working Group (SWG) to support the AES in its strategic work, by the next ASEMME8 in 2021;
Recommendation (21): Explore the possibility of giving the ASEM Education Secretariat a permanent structure that meets comprehensive challenges in a long-term perspective in order to avoid loss of expertise and to ensure sustainability and continuity.

The AES believes that the implementation of these recommendations would greatly contribute to develop the ASEM Education Process, strengthen the educational relations between Asia and Europe and better meet global challenges. For this reason, the AES proposes to the AEP policy level to discuss and adopt these recommendations.

1. Introduction to the Stocktaking Report

1.1. The role of the ASEM Education Secretariat in the Stocktaking Process

During the third ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME3) in Copenhagen, Denmark (2011), Ministers, for the first time, called on the ASEM Education Secretariat (AES) to prepare a Stocktaking Report for the biennial Ministerial Meetings to get a systematic overview and analysis of the ASEM educational activities on a regular basis. In Seoul (2017), almost ten years after the launch of the ASEM Education Process (AEP), Ministers recognised "the crucial role that the ASEM education cooperation has played over the past 10 years" and agreed on a common vision for the next decade of the ASEM Education Process (Seoul Declaration). In this context, Ministers also mandated the ASEM Education Secretariat to "reorganise the stocktaking of the ASEM Education Process for each priority area towards process reporting". Up to the Ministerial Meeting in Seoul, the Stocktaking Report has been -more or less - a status or progress report on initiatives and programmes agreed by the Ministers and listed in the Chair's Conclusions of the Ministerial Meetings.

In the light of the new mandate, AES Belgium - together with a temporary Task Force - discussed the main features and objectives of a revised Stocktaking Report. The Task Force included representatives from Austria, Belgium, Germany, India, Malaysia, Vietnam, the European Commission, ASEF, the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR), the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and SEAMEO RIHED.

1.2. Methodology of stocktaking

The AES and the Task Force concluded that the revised Stocktaking Report should:

- have a user-friendly digital format (with hyperlinks and visuals/infographics);
- give well-structured and target group–related information on where the AEP stands by indicating the status of initiatives in the four thematic priorities since Seoul;
- analyse in a more strategic way progress made in implementing the strategic aims of the AEP;
- include (policy) recommendations for partners and stakeholders; and
- define follow-up activities and suggest next steps with clear responsibilities to implement these activities.

In order to place the Stocktaking Report in a wider political context and to make it more policy-relevant, the AES also included information on current international policies related, in a broader sense, to ASEM and the ASEM Education Process.

The present Stocktaking Report "From Seoul to Bucharest" has been drafted by the ASEM Education Secretariat with support from Dr Siegbert WUTTIG (former Director of the first AES in Germany) in an inclusive and reiterative process. The structure of the Report has been developed by the AES in cooperation with a Task Force (see above). Senior Officials of ASEM

members and stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide feedback to the draft Report in two commenting rounds.

Table 1 shows the various stages of preparing the Stocktaking Report:

No	Tasks/Activities	Completed by	Responsible
1	Drafting of a template and the structure of the report	September 2018	AES, Task Force
2	Developing and sending a questionnaire to partners and stakeholders in order to collect input on ASEM Education initiatives	October 2018	AES
3	Preparing first draft of the report and collect feedback from the Task Force	January 2019	AES, Task Force
4	Sending first draft to ASEM partners and stakeholders to get additional input and comments on the report	February 2019	AES, ASEM partners and stakeholders
5	Preparing second draft of the report based on the input from partners and stakeholders	March 2019	AES
6	Sending second draft of the report to ASEM partners and stakeholders to receive final feedback and input	April 2019	AES, ASEM partners and stakeholders
7	Finalising the Stocktaking Report by including feedback and input from partners and stakeholders	May 2019	AES
8	Presenting and disseminating Stocktaking Report during SOM2 and ASEM ME7 in Bucharest	May 2019	AES

The **content of the Stocktaking Report** including its conclusions and recommendations is based on:

- analysis of policy documents and research findings related to ASEM and the ASEM Education Process;
- review of reports/summaries of ASEM Education meetings;
- evaluation of feedback from ASEM members and stakeholders to questionnaire on ASEM Education initiatives.

In order to **improve the readability** of analyses and results in the Stocktaking Report, the AES has used clear tables, graphic charts and matrixes wherever meaningful.

Additional information or related literature to different themes and aspects of the Stocktaking Report is provided by relevant web links which can be found in each chapter of the report.

2. The ASEM Education Process: history, milestones and global context

2.1. ASEM and the ASEM Education Process (AEP) – Short history and milestones

The **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)** was established in Bangkok (Thailand) during 1996 as an informal intergovernmental forum for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe in the political, economic, and social, cultural and educational area.

ASEM has **53 partners**[1] in 2018: 51 partner countries (21 from Asia and 30 from Europe) and two institutional partners (the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat).

Infographic 'ASEM Education partner countries' - ©ASEM Education Secretariat

The Leaders (Heads of State or Government) of ASEM partners meet biennially for **ASEM Summits**, held alternately in Asia and Europe, to discuss issues of common interest. The last Summit (ASEM12) took place in Brussels, Belgium on 18 and 19 October 2018 under the theme

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[1] The terms "**partners**" and "members" are being used very often as synonyms in the ASEM context. In this report, we use the term "partners" when referring to official ASEM/AEP partner countries and partner organisations (the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat).

"Global Partners for Global Challenges". The next Summit (ASEM13) is scheduled for 2020 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

> **Additional information:**
>
> **About ASEM – general overview**
> https://www.aseminfoboard.org/about/overview
> https://www.asem-education.org/about
> **ASEM fact sheet**
> https://cdn.aseminfoboard.org/documents/ASEM-Fact-Sheet.pdf

In addition to the Summits, **Ministerial and Senior Officials' Meetings** in different political areas take place. In Berlin (Germany) in 2008, ASEM Ministers of Education met for the first time and since then have been meeting regularly (every second year) to develop the **ASEM Education Process (AEP)** and to create an ASEM Education Area. The ASEM Education Process is organized at two levels: the political level includes ministerial commitment with representation at ministerial meetings. At the stakeholders' level, dialogue continues between stakeholders[2], policy makers and experts within different cooperation platforms, events and projects.

The **ASEM Education Ministers' Meetings (ASEM ME)** held to date took place in Berlin, Germany (ASEM ME1, 2008), Hanoi, Viet Nam (ASEM ME2, 2009), Copenhagen, Denmark (ASEM ME3, 2011), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (ASEM ME4, 2013), Riga, Latvia (ASEM ME5, 2015) and Seoul; Republic of Korea (ASEM ME6, 2017). In Bucharest, Romania, ASEM Ministers of Education will meet for the seventh time (ASEM ME7, 2019).

During the past six Ministerial Meetings, the following themes have been discussed and tangible results have been achieved, as shown in the infographic on the next page.

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[2] The term "stakeholders" refers to all institutions, organisations, interest groups, etc. who are involved in ASEM/AEP or have an interest in its success but are not official members (or partners) of ASEM. The most active stakeholder in the AEP is the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the only permanent institution of ASEM. ASEF supports AEP's priorities with numerous projects such as ASEF Rector's Conference and Students' Forum (ARC), ASEF Summer University, ASEF Young Leaders Summit, Model ASEM, ASEF Classroom Network Conference,…

ASEM EDUCATION MINISTERS' MEETINGS (2008-2019)

2008 - BERLIN

"Education and training for tomorrow: Common perspectives in Asia and Europe"

- launch the ASEM dialogue on education
- set up a strategic Asia-Europe education partnership
- initiate first joint initiatives

2009 - HANOI

"Sharing experience and best practices on Higher Education"

- establish an ASEM Education Secretariat
- recognize the ASEM Rectors' Conference as dialogue partner
- agree on various working groups and seminars in the fields of higher education (incl. a University-Business Forum) and lifelong learning

2011 - COPENHAGEN

"Shaping an ASEM Education Area"

- AES provided a progress report on the implementation of activities (precursor of the stocktaking report as of 2013);
- adopt four thematic priorities of the AEP
- introduce the concept of an ASEM Education Area
- agree on 29 initiatives related to the four priorities

2013 – KUALA LUMPUR

"Strategizing ASEM Education Collaboration"

- put policy into practice, strengthen efforts to further develop the ASEM Education Area
- welcome stakeholder involvement (e.g. students)
- introduce an Intermediate SOM (ISOM) to discuss ASEM activities from a policy perspective
- agree on 26 initiatives related to the four priorities

2015 – RIGA

"ASEM Education collaboration for results"

- introduce an informal working breakfast on the future of the AEP
- build the ASEM education cooperation on a two-pillar system (dialogue- and result-oriented cooperation)
- discuss the impact of global developments and prospects for ASEM education cooperation from a political point of view
- encourage tangible and more result-oriented activities
- adopt a catalogue of 32 future initiatives related to the four priorities

2017 – SEOUL

"Collaboration for the next decade: From common perspectives to effective fulfilment"

- focus on producing outcomes, induce tangible cooperation
- improve effectiveness of (I)SOMs as proposed by the ASEM Education Task Force
- strengthen the role of Senior Officials and the ASEM Education Secretariat
- adopt the first Education Ministers' declaration (Seoul Declaration) on the future of the AEP
- promote mobility and skills development in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0
- envision closer cooperation with the overarching ASEM political process
- adopt a catalogue of 33 future initiatives related to the four priorities.

Infographic 'Themes, key achievements and main conclusions of ASEM Education Ministers' Meetings (2008-2019)' - ©ASEM Education Secretariat
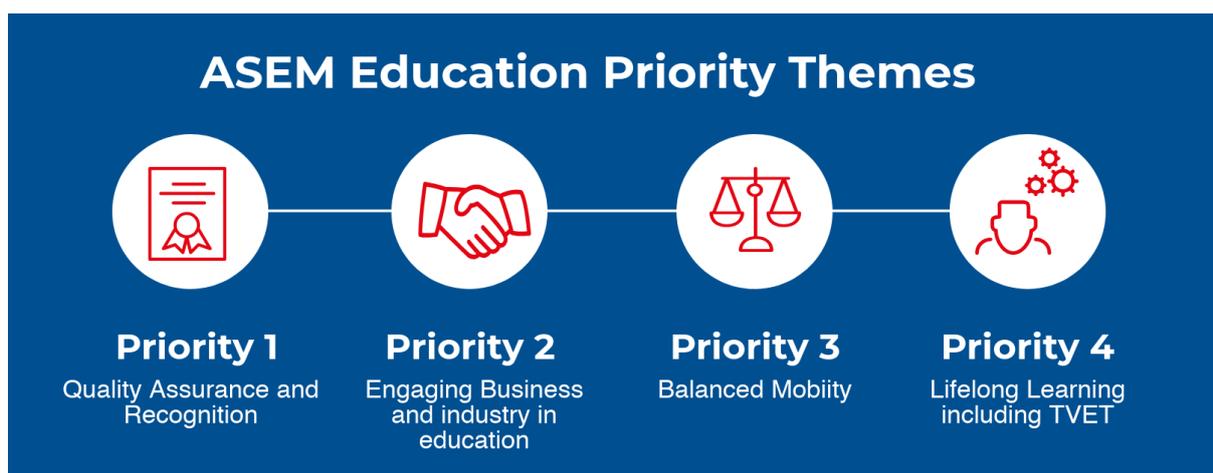
The ASEM Education Process: history, milestones and global context

2.2. Four thematic priorities of the ASEM Education Process

Since the First ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME1) in Berlin (2008), topics related to higher education have been the centre of interest and discussions in the ASEM Education Process. During ASEM ME3 in Copenhagen (2011), Ministers agreed on four thematic priorities for the ASEM Education Process, with a focus on Higher Education.

ASEM Education Priority Themes

Priority 1
Quality Assurance and Recognition

Priority 2
Engaging Business and industry in education

Priority 3
Balanced Mobiity

Priority 4
Lifelong Learning including TVET

Infographic 'ASEM Education Priority Themes' - ©ASEM Education Secretariat

Only Priority 4 goes beyond Higher Education by including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). However, very few **TVET initiatives** have been carried out during the first decade of the AEP. TVET has become more visible in the AEP and in the perception of ASEM partners and stakeholders since 2018, when Latvia hosted a TVET conference in Riga (24 and 25 April 2018), and ISOM (Jakarta, 2018) as well as SOM1 (Krems, 2018) discussed various TVET aspects (also related to Higher Education). The participants of all three meetings agreed that TVET and lifelong learning are important for skills development and employability in Asia and Europe, and that it should be more prominent on AEP's agenda.

> **Observation by the AES**: To date, the visibility of TVET in the AEP has been rather limited to acknowledge its importance for employability and economic growth in Asia and Europe.
>
> **Recommendation from the AES**: Make TVET more prominent in the AEP by (1) promoting wider networking opportunities amongst the ASEM partners (e.g. by organising joint seminars for experts from the fields of politics and education and the world of work), (2) preparing a compendium on TVET systems in Asia and Europe to improve transparency and facilitate cooperation, and (3) presenting Asian-European TVET cooperation examples of good practice in AEP policy meetings and on the AES website.

The four thematic focus areas have been maintained until today. The Chair's Conclusions of each Ministerial Meeting include initiatives and projects related to the four priorities and proposed by ASEM partners and stakeholders. According to ASEM ME5 (Riga, 2015), initiatives can be either **dialogue-oriented** (first pillar of AEP cooperation) or **result-oriented** (second pillar of AEP cooperation).

The ASEM ME6 Chair's Conclusions (2017) contain **33 actionable initiatives** and projects - more than ever before - and most of them result-oriented. This Stocktaking Report will track how many of the initiatives and programmes have been successfully implemented (cf. Chapter 3) and will analyse what progress has been made in the four priority areas (cf. Chapter 4).

The fact that the four thematic areas are still the same as those in the early years of the AEP and that topics related to these areas are also high on the agenda of other policy forums (e.g. ASEAN Plus Three, EU, Bologna Process) demonstrates that the Ministers were right to give priority to these themes. However, the question arises as on **whether the four AEP priorities should be adapted to new requirements and/or given a new focus.**

ASEM partners and stakeholders, for example, expressed their wish (during ISOM in Jakarta, 2018 and SOM1 in Krems, 2018) to link the four priorities and related initiatives of ASEM Education to the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4) and to contribute to UN's **Global Sustainable Development Agenda**. In conjunction with the ASEM ME7 in Bucharest, the 7th ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC7) also focuses on the link to the UN Sustainable Development Agenda during their "Higher Education Taking Action towards Sustainable Development Goals: Perspectives from Asia and Europe" session. The Romanian host of ASEM ME7 emphasises the importance of this Agenda for the AEP by choosing the title "Connecting education: inclusion, mobility and excellence in support of the Sustainable Development Goals" for the Ministerial Meeting in Bucharest on 15 and 16 May 2019.

Linking the thematic priorities and initiatives of the AEP to UN Sustainable Development Goals SDG's doesn't question the meaningfulness of the four priorities in the future, but rather **bring the AEP closer to this global policy reference framework (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)** signed by all UN member states (including all ASEM partner countries). By doing this, ASEM partners would contribute to implement the commitments agreed on by signing the UN 2030 Agenda. For further reference and a recommendation on linking the AEP to the 2030 Agenda see Chapter 2.5"AEP within regional and international cooperation and policies".

Since ASEM ME6 and the Seoul Declaration (2017), **Industry 4.0** and **digitalisation** with new opportunities and challenges for education, skills development and employability in Asia and Europe have become another important reference framework for the ASEM Education Process and its priority areas. DAAD's conference under the title "ASEM Education in a Digital World: Bridging the Continents Connecting the People?" in Cologne, Germany on 20 and 21 November 2018 focused on the priorities of the ASEM Education Process in the digital era and made clear that **digitalisation does not replace but supports and supplements the four AEP priorities.**

> **Observation by the AES:** The Fourth Industrial Revolution and digitalisation will be major challenges for the societies in the world. They will have great impact on skills development, employment and people-to-people connectivity around the globe.
>
> **Recommendation from the AES**: Sustainable Development and digitalisation should be introduced in the AEP as transversal themes that complement the four AEP priority themes. All initiatives (and not only the new ones) could be invited to take the transversal themes into account.
>
> **Recommendation from the AES:** ASEM partners and stakeholders should be encouraged to initiate new digital initiatives and projects (e.g. development of MOOCs in joint degree programmes, creating a digital platform for exchange of best practices, creating opportunities for virtual mobility) in the context of the four AEP priority areas. When setting up such an initiative, reference should be made to the Sustainable Development Goals (e.g. quality education, inclusion).

Additional information:

Four thematic priorities of AEP (ASEM ME3, Copenhagen, 2011)
https://www.asem-education.org/documents/senior-official-meetings-and-ministerial-meetings/asemme3-copenhagen-2011
AEP and Sustainable Development Goals (ISOM Jakarta, 2018 and SOM1 Krems, 2018)
https://www.asem-education.org/documents/senior-official-meetings-and-ministerial-meetings/isom-jakarta-2018
https://www.asem-education.org/documents/senior-official-meetings-and-ministerial-meetings/som1-2018-krems-austria
ASEF Rectors' Conference: Higher education and Sustainable Development Goals
http://asef.org/projects/themes/education/4512-7th-asef-rectors-conference-and-students-forum-arc7
DAAD Conference ''ASEM Education in a digital world: bridging the continents - connecting the people?'
https://eu.daad.de/service/veranstaltungen/2018/de/65901-asem-education-in-a-digital-world-bridging-the-continents-connecting-the-people/

2.3. The ASEM Education Secretariat (AES)

During ASEM ME2 (2009), Ministers agreed to establish a rotating ASEM Education Secretariat (AES) with the mandate to assist the preparation of Senior Officials' Meetings (SOMs) and Ministerial Meetings, **coordinate** ASEM educational activities and **facilitate** the implementation of output-oriented initiatives.

The AES **rotates every four years** between an Asian and a European member. Currently (2017-2021), Belgium (Flemish Community and French Community) is host of the AES. Before, Germany (2009-2013) and Indonesia (2013-2017) hosted the Secretariat. Such a Secretariat is an exception in ASEM and is unique to the education sector of ASEM's third pillar.

In order to get a systematic overview and analysis of the ASEM educational activities on a regular basis, ASEM ME3 (2011) called on the Secretariat to **prepare a Stocktaking Report** for the biennial Ministerial Meetings. During ASEM ME6 (2017), Ministers strengthened the role of the AES and mandated the AES to "reorganise the stocking […] towards process reporting" (Cf. also Chapter 1.1 "The role of the ASEM Education Secretariat in the Stocktaking Process").

The current AES believes that the most important objective of the ASEM Education Process is to enhance collaboration and dialogue in education between Asia and Europe. The Secretariat has therefore focused its ambition for its four-year mandate under **two main strategies** with the aim to facilitate collaboration and dialogue. The AES will:

(a) develop effective ways to optimise the ASEM Education Process by **facilitating the continuation and coherence** of existing and new initiatives within the Process;

(b) identify and implement the most **efficient communication and dissemination** strategies and tools (this includes announcing and promoting events and activities, reporting and stocktaking, highlighting best practices, collecting testimonials, developing a stand-alone website, producing e-newsletters and using social media).

Observation by the AES: The AES is one of the key features of the ASEM Education Process and guarantees stability and continuity of the Process. However, the number and complexity of tasks for the AES are constantly increasing while the number of AES staff remains quite limited. The staff changes after the four-year mandate of each AES also lead to a waste of experience and a loss of continuity.

Recommendation from the AES: ASEM partners should discuss the possibility of giving the ASEM Education Secretariat a permanent structure that meets comprehensive challenges in a long-term perspective in order to avoid loss of expertise and to ensure sustainability and continuity.

Recommendation from the AES: In order to support the AES in its strategic work in the short-term, a Standing Working Group (SWG) could be set up. The SWG could be composed of four Senior Officials from Asia and Europe respectively and two stakeholder representatives. Together with the AES, the SWG should discuss and analyse themes related to ASEM Education, prepare policy recommendations and propose an action plan to make the AEP more effective and sustainable.

> **Additional information:**
>
> **Establishment of ASEM Education Secretariat in ASEM ME2 Chair's Conclusions (Hanoi 2009)**
> https://www.asem-education.org/documents/senior-official-meetings-and-ministerial-meetings/asemme1-berlin-2008-1/30-asemme2-chairs-conclusions/file
> **Revised mandate of ASEM Education Secretariat in ASEM ME6 Chair's Conclusions (Seoul 2017)**
> https://www.asem-education.org/documents/senior-official-meetings-and-ministerial-meetings/ASEM ME6-seoul-2017/28-asemme6-chairs-conclusions-1/file
> **Mission of AES Belgium**
> https://www.lemmens.de/dateien/medien/ebooks/wissenschaft-hochschule-forschung/2018_asem_looking_back_and_looking_ahead.pdf

2.4. How does the AEP work?

The ASEM Education Process creates an Asian-European dialogue and cooperation platform that encourages policy dialogue (Pillar 1 of the AEP: dialogue-oriented activities) and develops concrete outputs and results (Pillar 2 of the AEP: result-oriented activities).

The AEP operates at two levels**: the political and the stakeholder level.** At the political level, the ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (**ASEM ME**) is held once every two years. It is chaired by a host country and prepared by the Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting (**ISOM**) and two Senior Officials' Meetings (**SOMs**) with the help of the ASEM Education Secretariat (AES). During the Ministerial Meetings, Ministers set the political and practical AEP agenda by agreeing on the policy orientation of the AEP and initiating the implementation of initiatives, programmes and projects.

Most of these initiatives, programmes and projects are coordinated and implemented at stakeholder level. Between the political and the stakeholder level, there is a **lively interaction**. Policy makers take part in initiatives, conferences, working and expert groups organised by stakeholders while stakeholders contribute their views and expertise to the policy debates and are invited to attend policy meetings (e.g. I/SOMs, ASEM ME).
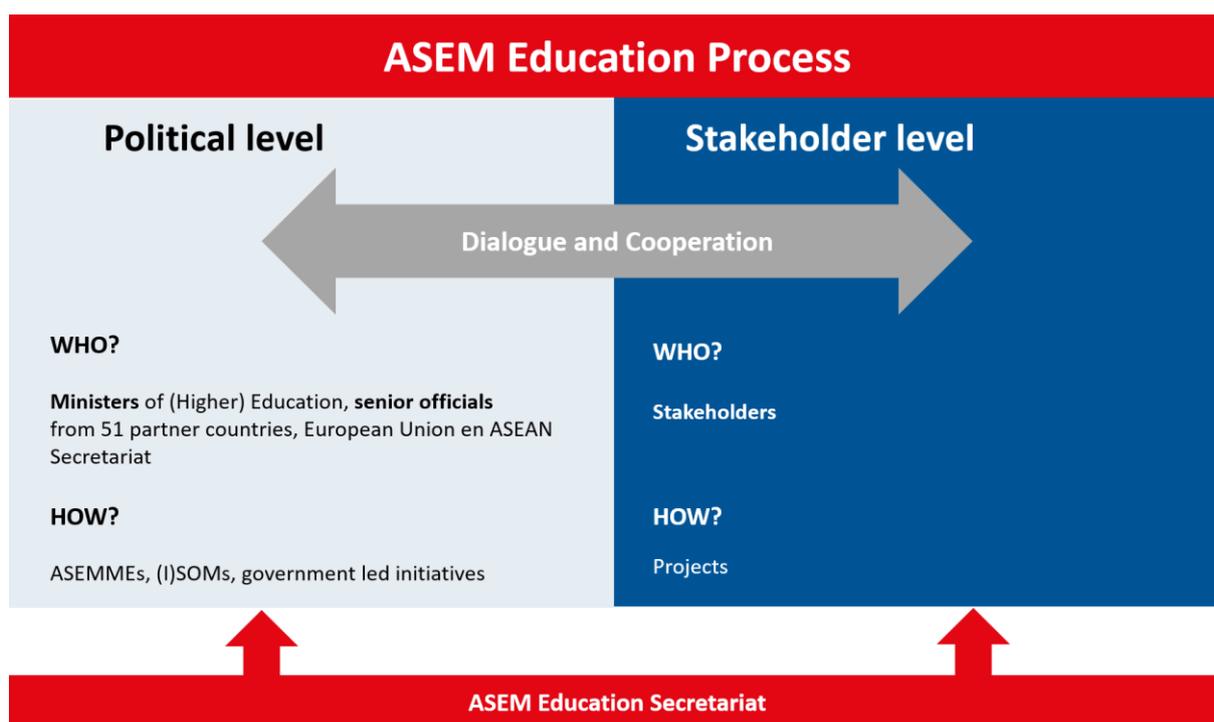
Infographic on interaction between political and stakeholder level – © ASEM Education Secretariat

ASEM and the AEP are informal political forums in which policy makers and stakeholders work together based on mutual trust and respect. Policy conclusions and recommendations can be made only by ASEM partners represented by their **Ministers of Education or Heads of Delegation** during the **Ministerial Meetings (ASEM ME)**. The non-binding results of these Meetings are laid down, as a rule, in the respective **Chair's Conclusions**. Sometimes, Ministers also use non-binding **declarations** as an instrument to demonstrate their common political view. In the AEP, Ministers used this type of document only once to date (Seoul Declaration of 2017) to explain their vision of the AEP for the next decade.

The Ministerial Meetings are prepared by the **host** of the meeting and the **Senior Officials** (high-level representatives) of the ASEM Education Ministries supported by the **ASEM Education Secretariat** during two preparatory **Senior Officials' Meetings** (SOM1 and SOM2) and one **Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting** (ISOM) preceding the two SOMs. For the preparation of ASEM ME7 in Bucharest, the ISOM took place in Jakarta, Indonesia from 3 to 5 June 2018. SOM1 was hosted by Austria in Krems on 16 and 17 October 2018. SOM2 will take place on 14 May 2019 - one day before ASEM ME7 in Bucharest, Romania. (I)SOMs have a clear objective: they should help prepare the next Ministerial Meeting from a policy perspective. During SOM2, Senior Officials discuss and agree on the pre-final version of the Chair's Conclusions, which are adopted by the Education Ministers during the Ministerial Meeting immediately following SOM2. Therefore, SOM2 will always be organised by the host of the Ministerial Meeting.
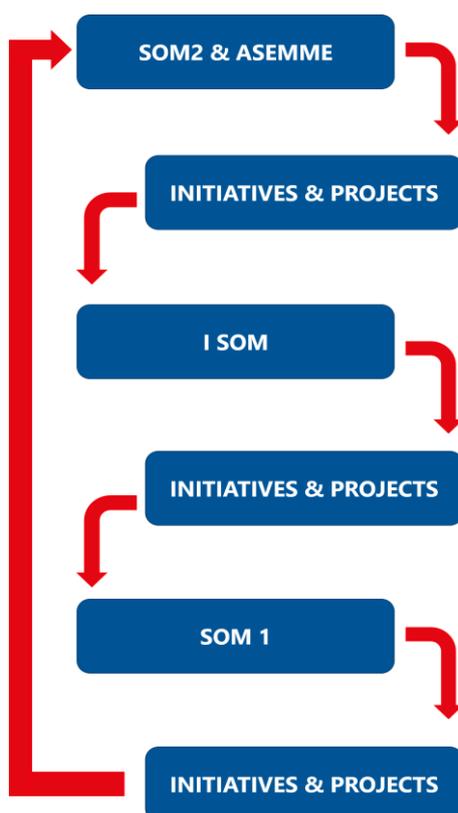
Infographic on ASEM Education political work cycle © ASEM Education Secretariat

The **hosts** of (I)SOMs and the Ministerial Meeting are responsible for organising the meetings and setting the agenda together with the **AES** and **Senior Officials**. Inputs from **stakeholders** are well received and considered when drafting the documents for the meetings. In preparation of ASEM ME7 in Bucharest, for the first time, (I)SOM as well as SOM1 and SOM2 are being organised by different hosts (ISOM: Indonesia; SOM1: Austria; SOM2: Romania: SOM2).

> **Observation by the AES**: Whenever ISOM, SOM1 and SOM2 will be hosted by different ASEM partners focusing on different thematic priorities, it will be challenging to achieve a common perception of themes and priorities for the subsequent Ministerial Meeting.
>
> **Recommendation from the AES**: Whenever there is more than one host of ISOM, SOM1 and SOM2, the hosts responsible for these meetings should develop – together with the AES – a draft of a common concept for the next Ministerial Meeting. It is proposed that the host of the Ministerial Meeting (and at the same time of SOM2) takes the lead in the consultation process. The final version of the draft will be sent to ASEM partners and stakeholders for comments and additions.

Looking at the achievements and conclusions of ASEM Ministerial Meetings during the last ten years, it is evident that the AEP has provided several concrete and positive results that are still relevant today and of long-term importance (e.g. numerous initiatives related to four thematic priority areas, establishment of a rotating ASEM Education Secretariat). Despite these achievements, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders expressed the **wish to make the AEP more efficient and to produce more tangible results**. This echoes similar discussions

within the overarching ASEM process. The ASEM Ministerial Meetings on Education responded to these discussions by introducing some new elements into the AEP. During ASEM ME4 in Kuala Lumpur (2013), Ministers initiated the **Intermediate Senior Officials' Meetings (ISOMs**) to discuss the implementation of the ASEM activities from a policy perspective and to give additional political momentum to the ASEM Education Process.

Regarding **working methods** and **effectiveness** of the meetings, Ministers, during ASEM ME6 in Seoul (2017), followed the recommendations of the ASEM Education Task Force, and mandated the ASEM Education Secretariat improve the effectiveness of ISOMs and SOMs. This was primarily achieved by changing the format of these meetings and **introducing a workshop format** for the first meeting day with co-chairs from Asia and Europe. The new format has been successfully tested during the ISOM in Indonesia (Jakarta, May 2018) and SOM1 in Austria (Krems, October 2018) and was well received by all participants. However, there is still room for further improvement regarding the coordination of the meetings' objectives and expected outcomes between the hosts, the AES and the (co-)chairpersons.

> **Observation by the AES**: The new format for (I)SOMs is promising and should be optimised by the hosts in cooperation with the AES in the preparation of future meetings. For Ministerial Meetings, however, there is not yet such a proposal on the table to make these meetings more efficient and policy-relevant.
>
> **Recommendation from the AES**: The formal sessions of Ministers should be accompanied by informal retreat sessions allowing an open exchange of opinions on areas of strategic interest. The Working Breakfast during ASEM ME5 in Riga (2015) could be a source of inspiration for this kind of meeting.

2.5. AEP within regional and international cooperation and policies

AEP within the overarching ASEM process

Education falls under the third (cultural, social and educational) pillar of the **overarching political ASEM process**. In the Chair's Statement of the **ASEM Summit** (ASEM12) held on 14 and 15 October 2018 in Brussels, ASEM Leaders (Heads of State or Government) "stressed that recent international developments have boosted the relevance of ASEM as a building block for effective multilateralism and the rules-based international order anchored in international law and with the United Nations at its core"[3].

During the **Twelfth ASEM Summit** (ASEM12, 2018) in Brussels, Leaders emphasised the link between **ASEM connectivity** - a key concept of ASEM since some years- **and sustainable development** for achieving the 2030 Agenda and recognised the importance of access to quality education as a basic human right and a tool for responsible citizenship, economic prosperity and resilience of society. They also acknowledged the value of **involving business and industry in official education**, and of enhancing the use of digital tools in teaching and learning. Leaders recalled the role of **Lifelong Learning, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** and human resources development to ensure employability by

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[3] Source: ASEM 12 Chair's Statement

providing individuals with the skills needed to thrive in a globalised and digitalised world. They recognised mobility schemes, including the Erasmus+ programme, the Marie Skłodowska Curie scholarships and the **ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programme** and reiterated that the ASEM Education Process aims at inclusion and equality by building comprehensive education systems, accessible to all.

The ASEM Leaders also "welcomed ongoing efforts to **boost ASEM connectivity** including in the context of the **ASEM Pathfinder Group on Connectivity (APGC)**, which has fulfilled its mandate. They decided that further work on connectivity should be pursued notably based on the APGC final report, in the framework of the future Senior Officials' Meetings." On the eve of the ASEM12 Summit, the **APGC** finalised their "Plan for Areas of Focus and Related Actions on Connectivity" including seven areas of focus. Starting from these areas of focus and based on voluntary participation, ASEM partners could enhance and deepen their cooperation in areas of their interests and needs. The outcomes of any work in these areas should be presented to the full set of ASEM partners for discussion as well as for endorsement of relevant policy recommendations.

Focus area 5 of the APGC plan deals with people-to-people connectivity and **refers to internationalisation and mobility in education, including student exchanges**. ASEM partners are invited to discuss cooperation on education, including vocational education, as a significant driver of innovative growth. Cooperation in quality assurance and recognition, credit transfer, engaging business and industry in education, and promoting balanced mobility of international students and researchers can also be addressed.

The ASEM12 Summit in Brussels also gave the opportunity to the **European Union** to present a joint communication that sets out the EU's vision for a new and comprehensive strategy to better connect Europe and Asia. The connectivity strategy is entitled **"Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU strategy"**. People-to-people connectivity plays an important part in it. The strategy underlines the importance of connectivity and mobility amongst students, academics and researchers for mutual understanding and economic growth. Therefore, the communication concludes that the EU should further strengthen student and academic exchanges with Asian countries through the **Erasmus+ programme**, the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions**, mutual recognition of diplomas, and regional exchange of researchers and innovators. Finally, the current experience and programmes of EU Agencies such as the **European Training Foundation (ETF) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)** could further strengthen and contribute to the Europe-Asia dialogue in the field of qualification frameworks to stimulate transparency of and connectivity between education systems.

> **Additional information:**
>
> **ASEM12 Summit Chair's Statement**
> https://cdn.aseminfoboard.org/documents/ASEM12-Chairs-Statement.pdf
> **ASEM Pathfinder Group on Connectivity Plan for Areas of Focus and Related Actions on Connectivity**
> https://cdn.aseminfoboard.org/documents/APGC-Plan-for-Area-of-Focus-and-Related-Actions-on-Connectivity.pdf
> **ASEM Connectivity promotion video**
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fZKNZuZuGE
> **ASEM Connectivity Portal**
> https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/asem-sustainable-connectivity/
> **EU's connectivity strategy**
> https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/50708/connecting-europe-and-asia-building-blocks-eu-strategy_en
> **EU-Asia academic cooperation through Erasmus+**
> https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets_en#worldwide

AEP in relation to the Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs)

Background on the Education 2030 Agenda

The Sustainable Development Goals are the **blueprint** to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice. The Goals interconnect and, in order to leave no one behind, it is important that each goal and target is achieved by 2030.[4]

Education is central to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Within the comprehensive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, education is articulated as a stand-alone goal in SDG4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. SDG4 continues the 'Education for All' focus on quality basic education for all but broadens the agenda further to include the concern for equitable access to post-basic education (including tertiary education) and training for youth and adults through equitable access to appropriate learning opportunities. What is also new to SDG4 is the focus on the relevance of learning outcomes both for the world of work, as well as for citizenship in a global and interconnected world.[5]

There are however other goals in which there is a prominent role for education such as in SDG8 ('Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all'), with a specific focus on disadvantaged people who are far from the labour market and far from opportunities for lifelong learning.

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[4] Source: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/
[5] Source: UNESCO (2016). Unpacking SDG 4 - Education 2030 Guide. Available from:
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246300

The concern about skills and qualifications serves also **the broader 2030 agenda** (for example Water Management, Responsible Consumption & Production, Climate Change Mitigation, etc.).

Education 2030 also provides a set of indicative **strategies** to support member states. Some of them are directly referring to qualifications and recognition of skills, qualifications and learning pathways.

UNESCO's Global Education Meeting

The importance of SDG4 has also been underlined by **the Global Education 2030 Meeting** convened by UNESCO in Brussels from 3 to 5 December 2018. Education Ministers, other heads of delegations as well as representatives of multilateral organisations, civil society, the teaching profession, youth and the private sector called for strengthened collective action on SDG4 as "we are not on track to achieve SDG4s targets by 2030". Among other things, the Meeting committed "to supporting lifelong learning opportunities for all" and highlighted the important role of higher education and TVET and "the importance of regional and national mechanisms for the recognition of higher education and vocational qualifications".

Education 2030 and ASEM Education

It can be concluded from the analysis above that many of these strategies are **closely linked** to the objectives and issues of the ASEM Education Process such as quality assurance, cross-border recognition of skills and qualifications, flexible learning pathways and lifelong learning through Asia-Europe collaboration.

Consequently, the AEP made increasingly reference to the Sustainable Development Agenda since 2018. During the Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting in **Jakarta, Indonesia**, from 3 to 5 June 2018, there was a wide agreement amongst the participants to link the initiatives of ASEM Education to the SDG4 and to contribute to the Global Sustainable Development Agenda. This view was confirmed, shortly before the ASEM12 Summit, by the ASEM Education **Senior Officials' Meeting** (SOM1 preparing the ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting in Bucharest during 2019). Participants highlighted the link to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) under the theme "Pathways to recognition - A contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) from a Lifelong Learning Perspective". During this meeting held on 16 and 17 October 2018 in **Krems, Austria**, the Austrian host underlined that the ASEM Education Process has a clear role in the achievement of SDG 4 which aims at insuring inclusive and quality education for all and promotes lifelong learning as a vital element for a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable world.

Additional information:

United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf
Unpacking Sustainable Development Goal 4: Education 2030 Guide
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246300
First Senior Officials' Meeting for ASEM ME7, Krems, Austria, 16-17 October 2018
https://www.asem-education.org/past-events/general/som1-austria

AEP and the Bologna Process

Two decades after the Sorbonne Declaration, European Ministers responsible for Higher Education met in Paris on 24 and 25 May 2018 for the Bologna Ministerial Conference. In their Communiqué, Ministers emphasised the success of the intra-European **Bologna Process**, which has also aroused great interest in Asia as source of inspiration for regional higher education cooperation. Furthermore, they underlined that they "have built something unique: a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in which goals and policies are agreed upon at European level, and then implemented in national education systems and higher education institutions." They also made "strong and ambitious commitments for its further development." Among other things, Ministers agreed "**to enter into a global policy dialogue** to improve regular cooperation with other regions and international organisations. This dialogue should focus on promoting mutual learning and joint initiatives on issues of common interest, such as social inclusion and the wider role of higher education." In connection with the Bologna Ministerial Conference, the **Bologna Policy Forum** took place in Paris on 25 May 2018 and included Ministers and stakeholders from Europe and other parts of the world. In the final Statement of the Bologna Policy Forum, Ministers committed "to supporting the ongoing, successful interregional dialogue on issues of common concern amongst policy makers, stakeholder organisations, students, staff and higher education institutions." They also underlined the wish to focus the global policy dialogue on social inclusion and the wider civic role of higher education. They proposed the **establishment of a Global Working Group** in the Bologna Work Programme to take this political agenda forward and invited countries to hold high-level workshops on a yearly basis to continue the interregional dialogue on both priority topics.

Additional information:

Bologna Policy Forum (in general)
http://www.ehea.info/pid34364/bologna-policy-forum.html
Bologna Policy Forum 2018 (Statement)
http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/36/8/BPFStatement_with_Annex_958368.pdf

AEP and ASEAN Plus Three

At the **ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit**, held on 15 November 2018 in Singapore, Heads of State or Government "acknowledged the importance of the APT in maintaining and enhancing peace, security, stability and development in East Asia" and to achieve deeper regional integration in East Asia. In this context, they underlined the importance of connectivity and people-to-people exchanges, student mobility, recognition and quality assurance. Leaders also noted with satisfaction that the **Fourth APT Education Ministers' Meeting** (Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, 1 November 2018) supported the development of an "**ASEAN Plus Three Plan of Action on Education 2018–2025,** which will serve as an essential guide for the continued cooperation on education between ASEAN Member States and the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea." Student mobility, recognition and quality assurance of higher education are important areas of focus for APT Education Ministers, as well as for the ASEM Education Ministers. In the APT context, these themes are also part of the **ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan 2018-2022** serving "as a principal guide to enhance APT cooperation over the next five years towards achieving the long-term goal of establishing an East Asia community."

Additional information:

ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit 2018 (Chairman's Statement)
https://asean.org/storage/2018/11/ASEAN-Plus-Three-Summit-Chairman-Statement-Final.pdf
Fourth APT Education Ministers' Meeting 2018 (Joint Statement)
https://asean.org/storage/2018/11/Adopted-Joint-Statement-of-4th-APT-EMM1.pdf
ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Cooperation Work Plan 2018-2022
https://asean.org/storage/2017/08/APT-Corp-WorkPlan-2018-2022-Final.pdf

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Observation by the AES: Education and in particular Higher Education is an important area of focus in the political discussions of ASEM and ASEAN (Plus Three) Leaders and Education Ministers, the EU and the (Higher) Education Ministers in the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process/Bologna Policy Forum). They all consider (student) mobility, recognition and quality assurance of higher education as key elements for strengthening regional and trans-regional cooperation and exchange. They also link their policies to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on SDG4. Although the different political players and policy forums have thematically much in common and are discussing similar policy objectives, they do not interact and cooperate in a systematic way. Even within ASEM, there is room for improvement regarding interaction between the ASEM Education Process and the overarching political ASEM process.

Recommendation from the AES: In order to accelerate progress in developing the strategic partnership in (higher) education between Asia and Europe, the relevant actors in the different political arenas in both regions should intensify their collaboration and pool their efforts. Systematic exchange of information and closer cooperation should be encouraged and stimulated:
  - between the overarching political ASEM process and the ASEM Education Process;

↘ between ASEM and ASEAN (Plus Three) Leaders and Education Ministers; and

↘ between ASEM Education Ministers from Asia and Europe within the Bologna Policy Forum.

Recommendation from the AES: All ASEM member countries individually committed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals under the UN framework. In the context of the ASEM Education Process, the ASEM Education Ministers could make their commitment to the 2030 Agenda explicit in the Chair's Conclusions of Bucharest. Additionally, they can mandate a specific Working Group to explore how the four AEP priority areas and related initiatives can contribute to implementing SDG4 and make progress in achieving an inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. The Conclusions by the Chair and Stocktaking Reports for Ministerial Meetings (ASEM ME) should indicate the reference to the 2030 Agenda for each initiative and programme listed in the Report and Chair's Conclusions.

Recommendation from the AES: Being an ASEM partner and having set out a new strategy to better connect Asia and Europe, the EU could strengthen exchange and cooperation in higher education between both regions via their existing education and research programmes. Third-country cooperation with a focus on Asia should become an area of special interest in the next generation of Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe. Mobility within joint Master degree programmes, joint doctorates, strategic partnerships and the funding of Centres of European and Asian Studies would be promising fields of Asia-Europe cooperation. ASEM Education could serve as a platform to identify and develop Erasmus+ partnerships and proposals.

3. Progress of ASEM Education Process since ASEM ME6

3.1. Progress made by initiatives and projects[6] listed in the Chair's Conclusions of ASEM ME6

During ASEM ME6 in Seoul (November 2017), ASEM Ministers responsible for education mandated the ASEM Education Secretariat to focus on progress reporting for each priority area when preparing the Stocktaking Report for ASEM ME7. Taking account of this mandate, the AES has compiled a table that recalls the 33 initiatives and projects listed in the Chair's Conclusions of ASEM ME6 and describes the progress made since November 2017.

Table 2 on the next page shows an overview of the initiatives and projects with their coordinator and members. the AES has marked both groups in different colours (partners in red, stakeholders in blue). The complete table with is as shown in **Annex 1** provides also an overview of the content, aims, activities, status and plans of each initiative and project.

The information presented in Table 2 and Annex 1 is based on responses given by the coordinators of the initiatives or projects to a questionnaire prepared by the AES or on comments made via email or telephone. Some coordinators also gave information on possible links of their initiative to the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and its sub-goals. These links – if available – have been considered in Annex 1 under the indicator "Content/Aims". Further information on SDG 4 and its sub-goals is available here.

Table 2: Overview of initiatives and project listed in the Chair's Conclusions of ASEM ME6 (Seoul, 2017)

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[6] The different activities within ASEM Education are distinguished in **government led initiatives** and **stakeholders run projects**. If we refer in this report to 'activities', please not that both initiatives and projects are included.

PRIORITY 1: Quality Assurance and Recognition			
No	**Initiative or project**	**Coordinator**	**Members**
1	Working Group for Implementing the ASEM Recognition Bridging Declaration (also known as the Beijing Declaration) (Refer to CC A.14) [Pillar 2]	China	Austria, Belgium (French Community), Brunei Darussalam, China, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Romania, United Kingdom
2	Expert Group on Interregional Credit Transfer Mechanisms and Learning Outcome System (Refer to CC A.16) [Pillar 2]	Belgium (French Community and Flemish	Australia, Belgium (French Community and Flemish Community), Brunei Darussalam, China, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Thailand, United Kingdom, the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED)
3	EU-SHARE Project (2015-2019): Higher education in ASEAN Region (Refer to CC A.17) [Pillar 2]	European Commission	European Commission, ASEAN Secretariat, British Council, DAAD, Nuffic, Campus France, ENQA, EUA
PRIORITY 2: Engaging Business and Industry in education			
4	Peer Learning Activity on Employability and on the contribution of higher education to innovation (Refer to CC A.24) [Pillar 1]	Belgium (Flemish Community)	-
5	Spin-off events of the 6th ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC6) and 7th ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC7) (Refer to CC B.20) [Pillar 1]	ASEF	ASEF as main organiser, supported by stakeholders and local civil society partners and hosting ASEM partner country
6	5th ASEM University Business Forum (Refer to CC B.22)[Pillar 1] *(Initiative on hold)*	None	-

No	Initiative or project	Coordinator	Members
7	ASEM Work Placement Pilot Programme (2nd phase: 2018-2020) (Refer to CC B.21) [Pillar 2]	Belgium (Flemish Community),	Brunei Darussalam, Belgium (Flemish Community), Germany, Indonesia, Thailand
8	Project 'Students' teambuilding as an instrument of engaging business in education" (Refer to CC B.25) [Pillar 2] *(Project cancelled)*	Russian Federation	-
PRIORITY 3: Balanced Mobility			
9	3rd ASEF Young Leaders Summit (ASEFYLS3) in conjunction with the 12th ASEM Summit (ASEM12 (Refer to CC C.32) [Pillar 1]	ASEF	ASEF as main organiser, supported by local civil society partners and hosting ASEM partner country
10	8th Model ASEM in conjunction with the 13th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting (ASEM FMM13) (Refer to CC C.32) [Pillar 1]	ASEF	ASEF as main organiser, supported by local civil society partners and hosting ASEM partner country
11	Model ASEM Spin-offs (Refer to CC C.32) [Pillar 1]	ASEF	ASEF, Local civil society partners, ASEM partner countries, supported by ASEF
12/13	14th ASEF Classroom Network Conference on "Gender Equality: Reprogramming Technology Education" (Refer to CC C.32) [Pillar 1]	ASEF	ASEF as main organiser, supported by civil society partners and hosting ASEM partner country

No	Initiative or project	Coordinator	Members
14	ASEM Joint Curriculum Development Project in Tourism and Hospitality Education (Refer to CC C.30) [Pillar 2] *(Project ended)*	Germany & Indonesia	Germany (University of Applied Science Stralsund), Indonesia (University of Udayana Bali)
15	ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programme (Refer to CC C.29) [Pillar 2]	ASEM-DUO Secretariat	ASEM-DUO Secretariat, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Belgium (Flemish Community and French Community), Sweden
16	21st ASEF Summer University (ASEFSU21) on "Youth with Disabilities: Shaping Inclusive ASE Societies"	ASEF	ASEF as main organiser, supported by civil society partners and hosting ASEM partner country
17	22nd ASEF Summer University (ASEFSU22) on "Green Economies: Creating Employment Opportunities for the Youth through Sustainable Tourism" (Refer to CC C.32) [Pillar 2]	ASEF	ASEF as main organiser, supported by civil society partners and hosting ASEM partner country
18	4th Asia-Europe Institute (AEI)-ASEM Summer School (AEI-ASS) (Refer to CC C.27) [Pillar 2]	AEI, University of Malaya, Malaysia	Participating country
19	European Higher Education Fairs 2018 (EHEF 2018) (Refer to CC C.28) [Pillar 2]	European Commission; EU delegation in host country	

PRIORITY 4: Lifelong Learning (LLL) including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)			
No	**Initiative or project**	**Coordinator**	**Members**
20	Initiative to promote a dialogue on sharing best practices and future perspectives in TVET (Refer to CC C.34) [Pillar 1]	Latvia (End in 2017)	Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Belgium (Flemish Community), France, Germany, Indonesia, Latvia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, the Russian Federation
21	ASEM Forum on Lifelong Learning (Refer to CC C.35) [Pillar 1]	ASEM LLL Hub in Aarhus, Denmark (activities discontinued)	
22	Workshop on "Lifelong Learning and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Teacher Professionalisation & Training (Refer to CC Annex 1, D.3) [Pillar 1]	ASEF	ASEF as main organiser, supported by civil society partners
23	Conference on Lifelong Learning and SDGs (Note: shift of focus from seminar and training) (Refer to CC, Annex 1, D.4) [Pillar 1]	ASEF	ASEF, host country: Vietnam
24	Research on Lifelong Learning and SDGs: School Leadership (Note: change from seminar format to research, and shift of thematic focus) (Refer to CC, Annex 1, D.5) [Pillar 1]	ASEF	Local Civil society partner, supported by ASEF
25	Actions to i. cultivate decent work and entrepreneur-ship through lifelong learning; ii. embed education in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; iii. enhance inter-sectoral linkages between academia, government and the private sector to implement lifelong learning. (Refer to CC C.40) [Pillar 1]	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Chinese National Commission to UNESCO, Shanghai Open University and East China Normal University

No	Initiative or project	Coordinator	Members
26	ASEM Network of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) (Refer to CC C.39) [Pillar 2]	Republic of Korea (NILE)	Brunei Darussalam (University Brunei Darussalam, China, Indonesia, (Xuetangx), Malaysia, (Malaysia MOOC), Republic of Korea, (NILE), Thailand, (TCU), the Philippines, (University of Philippines Open University), Belgium (Flemish Community), France, (FUN-MOOC Network), Japan (JMOOC), Germany (DAAD), Myanmar (Department of Higher Education), EU (European Commission)
27	Update version of Global Inventory National Qualification Frameworks (Refer to CC C.38) [Pillar 2]	UNESCO, ETF, Cedefop, UIL	_
28	Developing World Reference levels of learning outcomes (Refer to CC C.38) [Pillar 2]	UNESCO	_
29	Research Project: Lifelong Learning and SDGs - Part 2: Teacher Professionalisation and Leadership (Refer to CC C.37) [Pillar 2]	ASEF	
30	ASEF Capacity Trainings (Refer to CC C.38) [Pillar 2]	ASEF	
31	Contributing with video tutorials and knowledge materials on Lifelong Learning for the ASEM MOOCs initiative (Refer to CC D.40) [Pillar 2]	Partners of the ASEM Network of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL),

A closer look at Table 3 leads to the following findings:

(1) There is a clear focus (i.e. three quarters) of AEP activities on Priority 3 and Priority 4. Twelve of the 33 activities are related to Priority 3 (Balanced mobility) and twelve to Priority 4 (Lifelong Learning including TVET with only one specific initiative). Five activities concentrate on Priority 2 (Engaging business and industry in education) and four on Priority 1 (Quality assurance and recognition).

Activities per priority theme

- **Priority 1** Quality Assurance and Recognition — 12%
- **Priority 2** Engaging Business and Industry — 15%
- **Priority 3** Balanced Mobility — 37%
- **Priority 4** Lifelong Learning including TVET — 36%
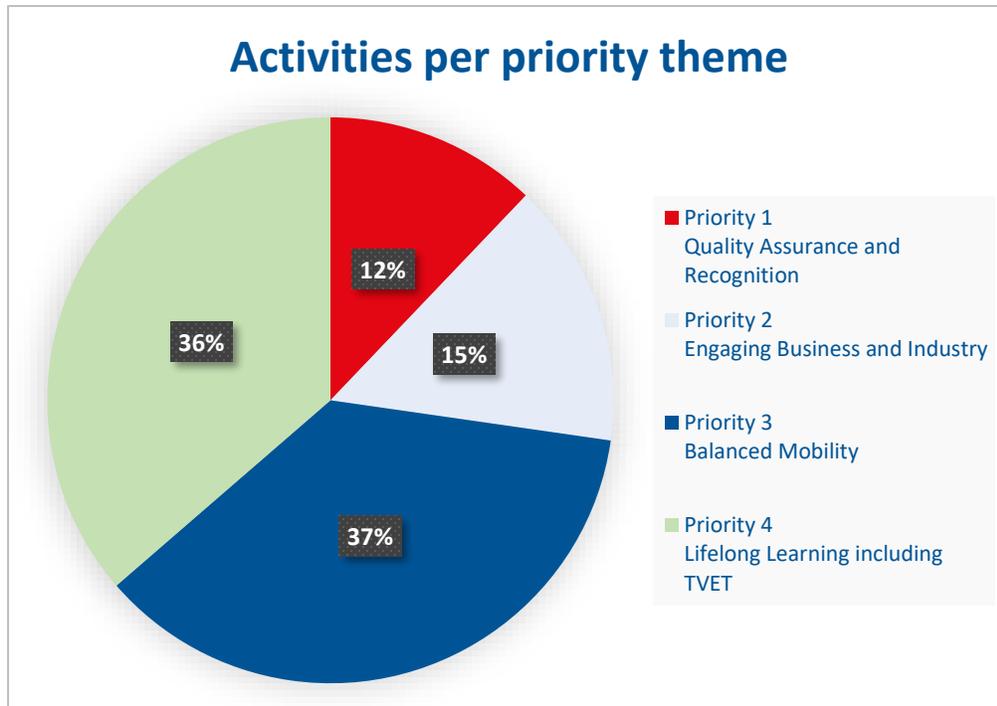
(2) Most activities (28) showed progress since ASEM ME6 in Seoul (2017) and have been (partly) completed (85%). Only three activities (9%) were postponed or cancelled. No information was available from 2 initiatives (6%).

(3) Stakeholders play an important role in coordinating and carrying out AEP activities and projects. The majority (21) of the initiatives and projects listed in the Chair's Conclusions of Seoul are coordinated by stakeholders (65%), in particular the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). Asian and European ASEM partners are equally cautious when it comes to coordinating initiatives, but actively support the initiatives as participants.

Coordinators of activities

- ASEM Partners Coordinate 11 initiatives
- ASEM Stakeholders coordinate 21 initiatives
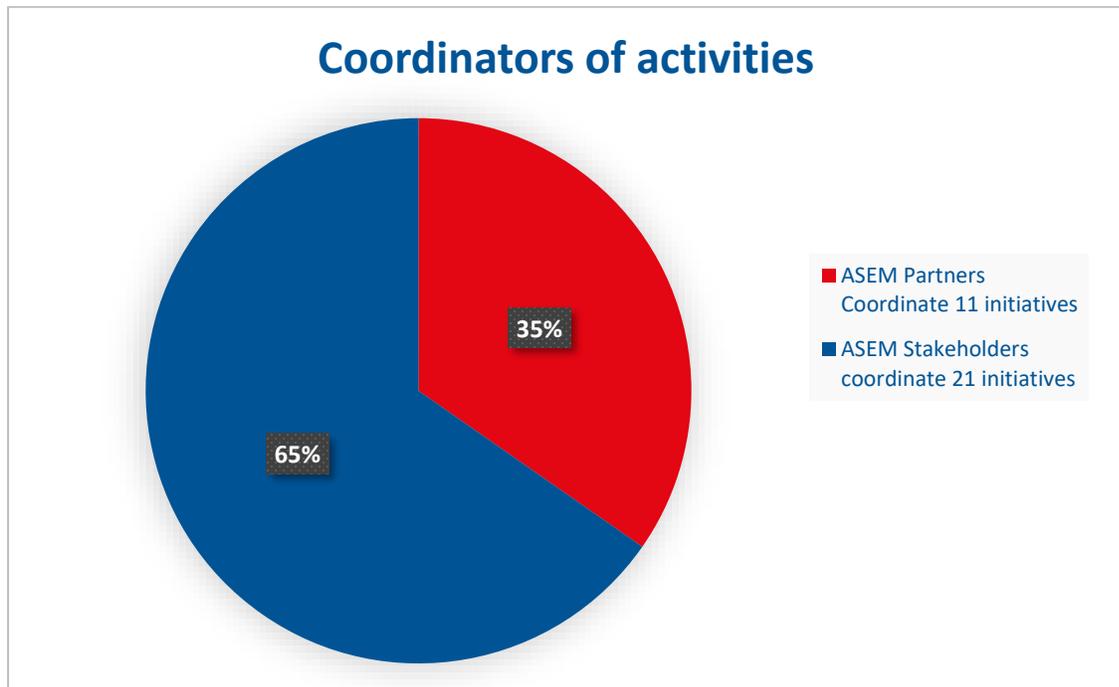
(4) The number of ASEM partners and stakeholders initiating AEP initiatives and projects is quite limited and the coordinators of the activities are often the same. Only ten (or 19%) of the 53 ASEM partners are (co-)coordinators of the AEP initiatives. Fortunately, however, more ASEM partners are involved as participants in these initiatives. In total, 28 AEP partners (53%) take part in AEP activities as coordinators or participant members, including 16 (57%) from Asia.

(5) About the implementation and future development of the AEP initiatives and projects listed in Table 3, various **shortcomings and challenges** can be identified. In the following, some major shortcomings/challenges will be presented:

   (a) The **number of ASEM partners coordinating AEP initiatives is still limited**. More ASEM Education Ministries, therefore, should examine the possibility of initiating and coordinating an initiative under one of the four AEP priorities.

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[7] Only 32 initiatives are listed in the graph as there is no coordinator for the University-Business Forum

(b) **Some important activities are on hold** and need a new coordinator (e.g. ASEM University-Business Forum) or need to be revitalised (e.g. ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub which is being recently being transferred from the Aarhus University Denmark to the University College Cork, Ireland).

(c) Other initiatives **struggle to attract more participating ASEM partners** (e.g. ASEM DUO, ASEM Work Placement Programme) or to motivate **more European students** to take part in their initiative (e.g. Asia-Europe Institute Summer School).

(d) Many ASEM government-led initiatives are **one-off events** (e.g. seminars, conferences) and cannot contribute to the AEP in a sustainable way. Moreover, the way these events contribute to the AEP could be improved. To date, the only way they feed the AEP is through the ASEM Education Secretariat collecting the minutes and make them accessible on their website.

(e) There are more than 30 AEP activities in place, but in most of the cases there is **no interaction or cooperation among activities** of the same priority or between initiatives of different priorities, if they are not organised by the same ASEM partner or stakeholder (cf. also 4.1 and 4.2).

3.2.   Contribution of initiatives and projects to AEP priorities

The number of activities (initiatives and projects) carried out under the four AEP priorities is remarkable and encouraging. However, the quantity of activities itself is no guarantee for contributing to the objectives of the four priorities. Therefore, further analysis will be made in the following to learn more about the contribution of the various ASEM government-led initiatives and other stakeholders' projects to achieve the objectives of the four priorities.

Table 3: Contribution of initiatives and projects to objectives of AEP priorities

Priority 1	Objectives[8]	Initiatives	Contribution to objectives and recommendations
Quality assurance and recognition	Build trust amongst higher education systems to promote attractiveness, transparency, comparability and permeability of each system; improve mobility	No 1 – 4	Four initiatives contribute to achieve the objectives of Priority 1. However, they seem to **operate independently** of each other and are focused on different forums (ASEAN, ASEM). It is recommended to regularly exchange information, explore together ways of cooperating and coordinating the thematic work.
Priority 2	**Objectives**	**Initiatives**	**Contribution to objectives and recommendations**
Engaging Business and industry in education	Intensify dialogue and collaboration (including student mobility for placements) between education, business and industry sectors within and between Asia and Europe to improve knowledge and innovation interchange, increase employability of graduates, economic growth, and societal development	No 5 – 9	While dialogue and cooperation between education and the world of work is of utmost importance in relation to skills development and employability especially in light of Industry 4.0 and increasing digitalisation, **only few activities** take place under Priority 2 and contribute to its objectives. The **ASEM Work Placement Programme** (WPP) is a **promising initiative** in this respect. However, more ASEM partners and students should participate in this programme. ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC) (understandably) does not put its main emphasis on Priority 2 in each meeting and the **ASEM University-Business Forum, unfortunately, is on hold**. This Forum should be continued in any case and could be a **think tank** for discussing possible ways to strengthen (higher) education institutions – business cooperation and could also be helpful to further develop ASEM WPP. An exchange of information between the ASEM University-Business Forum and ASEM's Asia-Europe Business Forum is recommended. At the same time, ASEF's upcoming project series **ASEF Innovation Laboratories (ASEFInnoLabs)** will address one area increasingly important within the university-science-industry context and, therefore, is a promising element in the current vacuum of activities: The ASEFInnoLabs will explore the transformative role of data science and artificial intelligence in tertiary education. Core

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[8] The information on objectives is taken from the Stocktaking Report for ASEMME6 (Seoul) and has been completed by the AES.

questions tackled are how student entrepreneurship can support innovation in these tech fields, what role the universities shall play in national innovation ecosystems in these fields, and how these technologies transform teaching and learning at universities.

Priority 3	Objectives	Initiatives	Contribution to objectives and recommendations
Balanced mobility	Identify and remove obstacles to student and staff mobility between Europe and Asia and address imbalanced mobility between both regions	No 10 – 21	Lower attractiveness of education systems, lack of information on study opportunities and scholarships, insufficient recognition of study achievements and visa problems are important **obstacles to student mobility**. The 12 AEP initiatives under Priority 3 **contribute to remove these obstacles in different ways**. Most of them (nine) bring students (and staff) together through **seminars, summer schools**, etc. (e.g. ASEF, AEI); this approach is successful and should be continued. **ASEM-DUO** is a very successful contributor to balanced mobility by providing scholarships and basing exchange on pairing. However, to date only six countries participate in this programme. It is recommended that **more countries should actively contribute** to further develop ASEM-DUO. Unfortunately, the **Joint Curriculum initiative is on hold**. In principle, such structural programmes are ideal to achieve balanced mobility. **Higher Education Fairs** in Asia help improve information on study opportunities and availability of scholarships for Asians in Europe. However, to strengthen mobility from Europe to Asia, the provision of information **for Europeans to study and teach in Asia needs to be improved.**
Priority 4	**Objectives**	**Initiatives**	**Contribution to objectives and recommendations**
Lifelong Learning including TVET	Develop policies and create learning opportunities for all citizens to access continuing professional development and enhance their skills throughout their lives to cope with the demands and effects of globalisation, demographic changes, and rapid technological developments	No 22-33	Lifelong learning is high on both a political (e.g. UN's 2030 SDG Agenda) and practical level given the challenges posed by a rapidly increasing globalisation and digitalisation of our world. Education, training and continuous acquisition of skills and competencies are key in this context. Higher education and TVET play an important part in it. This is reflected in the number of AEP initiatives under Priority 4. However, only one TVET initiative has been carried out. This is surprising considering the importance of TVET. Half of the 12 initiatives are **seminars, workshops, etc. focused on specific themes of LLL.** Even if the outcomes of these events are worth pursuing, it is in many cases **not clear how these activities are interlinked**, whether any **follow-up** will be given or what kind of follow-up is envisaged. Initiatives such as the ASEM LLL Hub and the Global Inventory of National and Regional Qualification Frameworks provide a stable basis for developing LLL in the AEP. Unfortunately, the **ASEM LLL Hub, who was involved in numerous AEP activities, is on hold**. However, there is a strong interest from the University College Cork, Ireland, to take over the Lifelong Learning Hub and discussions are ongoing.

The **Global Inventory on Qualification Frameworks** is an excellent tool to compare education systems and levels in a lifelong perspective, and to support balanced mobility. Meanwhile, this publication is also contributing to the first priority theme 'Quality Assurance and Recognition'. However, the inventory is not known well enough amongst the ASEM partners and stakeholders and might need some more promotion and exploration in the future, so to meaningfully support advancement in the cooperation between Europe and Asia. In this context it would be good to build upon the experience of EU programmes and EU agencies working with third countries in this area to leverage on benefits of qualification frameworks.

The forward-looking **MOOCs initiative** could result in a demonstration project and be a source of inspiration for future activities in this field.

4. Analysis of the ASEM Education Process

In this Chapter, the AES will explore synergies between the activities listed in Chapter 3 and identify - with reference to research findings and regional and international policies - achievements and strengths as well as shortcomings and challenges of the AEP. The findings of this analysis will result in a couple of tasks and recommendations for the future development of ASEM Education presented by the AES in Chapter 5 for further discussion.

4.1. Synergies between AEP Priorities

When looking at activities **of different AEP priorities**, it is evident that there is almost **no systematic interaction or cooperation –** with the exception of ASEF led projects which all belong to a long-term education portfolio. For all the others, as a rule, initiatives and projects of different priorities are not interrelated and have been developed and carried out completely independently of each other. From a more general perspective, however, initiatives of one priority can have an impact on other priorities, as shown in the following by means of selected examples.

All initiatives under **Priority 1** (Quality assurance and recognition), for example, can deliver results (e.g. in the field of credit transfer and recognition) that have a positive effect on **Priority 3** (Balanced mobility) and will **facilitate access to interregional mobility** in the medium-term. In the future, initiatives such as ASEM-DUO or short-term mobility in the context of Summer Universities or other one-off events could benefit from **recognition tools** developed or presented under Priority 1. The recognition tools can also contribute to a better recognition of study achievements by the home universities of mobile students. **Priority 1** (Quality and Recognition) and **Priority 3** (Balanced Mobility) are even so closely interrelated that it could be considered **to merge both priorities** in the future.

Synergies can also be achieved between **Priority 1** (Quality assurance and recognition) and **Priority 2** (Engaging business and industry in education). Recognition of prior learning and **recognition of work placements abroad** (initiative "ASEM Work Placement Programme" under Priority 2) are themes to be addressed in both priority areas.

Priority 1 and Priority 4 can develop synergies, for example, when it comes to **defining learning outcomes** (e.g. P1: SHARE initiative and P4: UNESCO initiative) and assuring the quality of MOOCs (e.g. P1: SHARE initiative and P4: ASEM network of MOOCs).

In the Chair's Conclusions of Seoul (2017), the ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC) is listed under Priority 2 (see also Table 3 above). However, this is only because ARC5 (2016) dealt with employability. In principle, ARC's topics focussing on higher education are manifold

and change with every meeting. Against this backdrop, ARC has synergies with all four AEP priorities.

There are also strong synergies between **Priority 2** (Engaging business and industry in education) and **Priority 4** (Lifelong Learning including TVET). Employability, skills development, training and retraining, lifelong learning and flexible learning paths in a rapidly changing world of work are major themes to be discussed under both priorities with a focus on regional and interregional aspects. The ASEM University-Business Forum (initiative under Priority 2) and the ASEM LLL Hub (initiative under Priority 4) would be suitable partners to exchange information and discuss topics of mutual interest in this field. Unfortunately, the ASEM University-Business Forum is currently on hold.

The ASEM Work Placement Programme (initiative of **Priority 2**) could contribute to better balance mobility between Asia and Europe (**Priority 3:** no specific initiative), in particular, if the AEP will be successful in motivating companies in Asian partner countries to offer more placements to European students.

When it comes to work experiences abroad, recognition and quality assurance of the work placements are key. Thus, **Priority 2** (ASEM WPP) has synergies with **Priority 1** (ASEAN Plus Three Working Group on mobility; SHARE initiative).

Besides the synergies of **Priority 3** (initiatives including mobility) explained above, this priority has an additional synergy with **Priority 4** (no specific initiative).

Table 4 shows an overview of these synergies between the initiatives and projects of the different priorities.

Table 4: Examples of synergies between Priorities 1 - 4

Thematic synergies between Priorities 1 – 4				
	Priority 1: Quality assurance & recognition	**Priority 2: Engaging business and industry in education**	**Priority 3: Balanced mobility**	**Priority 4: Lifelong learning incl. TVET**
Priority 1: Quality assurance & recognition		Credit transfer and recognition of work placements abroad; recognition of prior learning	Credit transfer and recognition of study achievements abroad; promoting mobility	Qualification frameworks, learning outcomes; quality assurance of MOOCs
Priority 2: Engaging business and industry in education	Credit transfer and recognition of work placements abroad; recognition of prior learning		Work placements to better balance mobility	Employability, skills development, lifelong education, training and retraining; flexible learning paths
Priority 3: Balanced mobility	Credit transfer and recognition of study achievements abroad	Work placements to better balance mobility		Mobility experience and achievements gained abroad as part of lifelong learning portfolio are documented for employers' references
Priority 4: Lifelong learning incl. TVET	Qualification frameworks, learning outcomes; quality assurance of MOOCs	Employability, skills development, lifelong education, training and retraining; flexible learning paths	Mobility experience and achievements gained abroad as part of lifelong learning portfolio are documented for employers' references	

4.2. Synergies between AEP initiatives and projects

When analysing synergies between the AEP activities (government-led ASEM initiatives and projects by stakeholders), the AES looked at the activities from two different angles: **(a) synergies between** activities **within each AEP priority** and **(b) synergies between activities of different AEP priorities**. The analysis confirms that in reality most of the AEP activities do not collaborate or align their actions within the same priority area or with of other priority areas, unless they are embedded in long-term series/programmes or run by the same ASEM partner/stakeholder. However, there are many potential synergies which could be exploited in the future.

Table 5 on the next page shows an overview of synergies between the activities within each AEP priority theme.

Table 5: Potential synergies between activities within each AEP priority

PRIORITY 1: Quality assurance and recognition				
No	**Initiatives and projects**	**Potential Synergies**	**Recommended Tasks**	**Initiators**
2 and 3	Working Group on implementing the ASEM Recognition Bridging Declaration and Expert Group on Interregional Credit Transfer Mechanisms and Learning Outcome System. Both initiatives aim to improve recognition between Asia and Europe, mainly through better information and greater transparency.	Yes (similar topic; **interregional approach);** some members participate in both groups, but no systematic interaction of both groups put in place.	*Implement mechanism for regular exchange of information; *work towards a common understanding of terms and notions (e.g. online communities of practice on ASEM Education website)	Coordinators of initiatives
1,2,3 and 4	See above	Yes (similar topics; regional and/or interregional approach), but no systematic interaction put in place.	*Implement mechanism for cooperation (participation in meetings) and regular exchange of information; *work towards a common understanding of terms and concepts; *agree on who is doing what (division of responsibilities)	AES in cooperation with coordinators of initiatives
PRIORITY 2: Engaging business and industry in education				
6 and 8	ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC); ASEM Work Placement Programme (2nd phase: 2018-2020); ARC and ASEM WPP deal with practical experience of students during their studies;	Yes (similar interests), but no interaction so far.	*Present ASEM WPP during ARC and motivate rectors and their universities to participate *ARC could support WPP in finding universities who are willing to participate in the programme	WPP coordinator together with ASEF

Analysis of the ASEM Education Process

No	Initiatives and projects	Potential Synergies	Recommended Tasks	Initiator
6, 7 and 8	See above and 5th ASEM University-Business Forum; all three initiatives want to improve university-business cooperation (with different thematic focus).	Yes (similar topic and objective), but no systematic and continuous interaction; the Forum would be ideal to guarantee continued discussion of the topic. However, there is no ASEM partner to host the Forum.	*Identify opportunities to link the University-Business Forum to ARC and/or link it to WPP whenever appropriate	SOM, ASEM ME; Coordinator of Forum
PRIORITY 3: Balanced mobility				
10 – 21	See Table 3; different activities dealing with interregional staff mobility (ASEF's Summer University, AEI's Summer School, ASEM Duo) have no interaction or alignment.	Yes (topic, target groups), but no systematic interaction put in place despite the fact that some initiatives face the same challenges (e.g. too few European participants, visa related issues…)	*Implement mechanism for regular exchange of information between ASEF, AEI, ASEM-DUO and EU	AES
PRIORITY 4: Lifelong Learning (LLL) including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)				
22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31 and 33	See Table 3; all initiatives consist of one-off activities	Yes (topic), but non-recurring activities; results and conclusions should be made available	*Present the results and conclusions of these initiatives on AES website; *provide overview of topics and conclusions of all conferences and encourage partners to build further on each conference; *create coherence, formulate challenges and needs and develop content of new conferences based on these needs	AES in cooperation with coordinators of initiatives
28 and 33	ASEM Network of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs); UIL contributing with video tutorials and knowledge materials on Lifelong Learning for the ASEM MOOCs initiative	Yes (same topic: lifelong learning, development of MOOCs), but no interaction	Implement mechanism for regular exchange of information between UIL and Korean coordinator of ASEM MOOCs Network	AES

Analysis of the ASEM Education Process

No	Initiatives and projects	Potential Synergies	Recommended Tasks	Initiator
29 and 30	Update version of Global Inventory National Qualification Frameworks; Developing World Reference levels of learning outcomes	Yes (same topic: NQF, learning outcomes); interaction exists (UNESCO involved in both initiatives)	Not necessary	None
22, 24-33 and 23	See Table 3; ASEM Forum on Lifelong Learning	Yes (the LLL Forum is an initiative that relates to all kinds of LLL topics.	Revitalise the ASEM LLL HUB by the new host UCC Ireland	SOM, ASEM ME together with AES, UCC Ireland (host ASEM LLL HUB)

4.3. Achievements, strengths, shortcomings and challenges of the ASEM Education Process

Looking back to the first decade of the ASEM Education Process and considering the results of the ASEM Education Ministers' Meetings, ASEM (I)SOMs and ASEM Education Task Force meetings as well as current research findings, it is obvious that the AEP has many achievements and strengths, but also some shortcomings and challenges. In the following Table, the AES has compiled major achievements/strengths and shortcomings/challenges of the ASEM Education Process. In many cases, the achievements/strengths of the AEP are at the same time shortcomings/challenges of the Process.

Table 6: Achievements/strengths and shortcomings/challenges of the AEP

No	Achievements/Strengths	Shortcomings/Challenges	Links to AEP documents, research findings and/or international policy developments
1	**Informal policy dialogue and cooperation forum with non-binding conclusions and declarations**	*Policy conclusions sometimes too vague; *too few tangible results; *information sharing instead of deepening policy dialogue and cooperation; *combining informality, effectiveness and efficiency of AEP dialogue (e.g. format of meetings); *no medium-term vision including a strategic action plan with measurable objectives.	* Cf. for ASEM: Islam, Shada (2015). *ASEM: Renewal and revival for the third decade.* In: *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand* (ed.). ASEM Symposium on the future direction of ASEM. 30 March. Bangkok. *Cf. for AEP: Wuttig, Siegbert & Angress, Alexandra (2018). Achievements and shortcomings of the ASEM Education Process –views and reflections. In: Angress, Alexandra & Wuttig, Siegbert. *Looking back and looking ahead – The ASEM Education Process: History and Vision.* Bonn, pp. 131-167. *The Seoul Declaration (2017) provides first visionary ideas concerning the future of the AEP, however, without a strategic action plan and measurable objectives; during ISOM (Jakarta, 2018) and SOM1 (Krems, 2018), some participants proposed to establish a Standing Working Group to support the AES in drafting a clear vision of AEP's future including an action plan with indicators. The proposal was waiting for Ministers endorsement in ASEM ME7.

No	Achievements/Strengths	Shortcomings/Challenges	Links to AEP documents, research findings and/or international policy developments
2	**AEP is embedded in an overarching political process (ASEM) and can cooperate on equal footing with other international political actors**	*Link of AEP to ASEM rather weak; *Scope of cooperation with international actors such as ASEAN, EU, Bologna Policy Forum, UNESCO is very narrow and has to be extended; *Although ASEM and AEP represent 51 countries, 60% of the world's population and 65% of the world's GDP, the visibility of both is rather low and has to be strengthened.	*Chair's Statement of ASEM Summit 12 (2017) makes reference to the AEP under point 27 and reaffirmed the Conclusions of ASEM ME6 (Seoul, 2017). *In their Seoul Declaration (2017, point 12), ASEM Education Ministers "envision a closer collaboration between the ASEM Education Process and the ASEM Political Process". *ASEM Education Task Force recommended the AES to make some remarks on the AEP in the context of regional and international cooperation and policies when drafting this Stocktaking Report. *Cf. for ASEM: Hwee, Yeo Lay (2013). *Towards a Dynamic Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)?* Working Papers 14. EU Centre Singapore, p.1 and Chair's Statement of ASEM12 (2018). Brussels, p.1. *Cf. for AEP: ASEM ME6 (2017). Conclusions by the Chair. Points 4, 9 and 13. Seoul.
3	**High participation rates in ASEM ME**	*Decreasing number of high-level policy representatives (e.g. Ministers of Education).	*Same challenge in other international meetings, e.g. in ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meetings cf. Fifth ASEM Summit (ASEM5) (2004). Chairman's Statement. Annex 2. Hanoi, p. 1 ("Best efforts should be made to realize full participation by Foreign Ministers"). *For AEP cf.: Wuttig, Siegbert & Angress, Alexandra (2018). Drivers of the ASEM Education Agenda: Ministerial Conferences, Senior Officials' Meetings and the ASEM Education Secretariat. In: Angress, Alexandra & Wuttig, Siegbert, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

Analysis of the ASEM Education Process

No	Achievements/Strengths	Shortcomings/Challenges	Links to AEP documents, research findings and/or international policy developments
4	**Focus of AEP on four relevant thematic priorities**	*Interaction with other international policy forums in the four thematic areas;	*Similar priorities in the Bologna Process (quality assurance, recognition, mobility), ASEAN Plus Three (quality assurance, credit transfer, mobility) and EU (connectivity, mobility, quality assurance, recognition).
		*Adapt the AEP priorities to important international (policy) developments (e.g. Industry 4.0, SDGs);	*UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and increasing digitalisation as transversal themes in many international policy documents (e.g. Chairman's Statement of the 21st ASEAN Plus Three Summit, Singapore, 2018, and Chair's Statement of ASEM12, Brussels, 2018); during ISOM (Jakarta, 2018) and SOM1 (Krems, 2018), there was a wide agreement amongst the participants to link the initiatives of ASEM Education to the SDG4 and to contribute to the Global Sustainable Development Agenda.
		*TVET (under Priority 4) plays an important role for employability and economic development in Asia and Europe, but only few AEP initiatives take place in this area.	*The TVET seminar (April 2018) in Riga, Latvia was the only AEP event in this area since ASEM ME6. ISOM Jakarta (2018) and SOM1 Krems (2018) discussed aspects of TVET in the AEP (cf. Chapter 2.2 of this Report).
5	**Numerous multilateral initiatives**	*Many initiatives are not interlinked and/or are one-off events; *no systematic follow-up and policy-related analysis of initiatives; *only few and often the same ASEM partners and stakeholders are coordinators of initiatives; *widen existing bilateral to multilateral AEP cooperation initiatives to increase participation of ASEM partners and stakeholders.	*Cf. Tables 4 and 5 *The Chair's Conclusions of Seoul (2017) mandated the AES to "reorganise the stocktaking of the ASEM Education Process for each priority area towards process reporting".

Analysis of the ASEM Education Process

No	Achievements/Strengths	Shortcomings/Challenges	Links to AEP documents, research findings and/or international policy developments
6	**Stakeholders play an important role in initiating/implementing AEP initiatives**	Stakeholders (e.g. ARC) still play a minor role in AEP policy forums (e.g. ASEM ME).	*In the Chair's Conclusions of Seoul (2017), ASEM Education Ministers encouraged Senior Officials to explore how the ARC policy recommendations could be integrated into the deliberations and work of the AEP.
7	**Administrative support structure (rotating ASEM Education Secretariat)**	Complete change of staff every four years results in loss of continuity and expertise.	Sujatanond, Chantavit (2018). *Reflections on the future of the ASEM Education Process*, In: Angress, Alexandra & Wuttig, Siegbert, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

Analysis of the ASEM Education Process

5. Conclusions and outlook

5.1. Main conclusions of the report

Looking back to the development of the AEP since ASEM ME6 (Seoul, 2017) and considering the findings of Chapters 3 and 4, the following main conclusions can be drawn:

(1) The Chair's Conclusions of ASEM ME6 (November 2017) have set the political and practical agenda for the ASEM Education Process until ASEM ME7 (May 2019). In the Seoul Declaration (2017), ASEM Education Ministers presented first ideas for the future of the AEP beyond 2019. During ISOM (Jakarta, Indonesia, 2018) and SOM1 (Krems, Austria, 2018) and in various other AEP events, Senior Officials, stakeholders, external experts and the ASEM Education Secretariat exchanged experiences and information on topics under the four AEP priorities and, among other things, discussed issues related to the further development of the AEP. The discussions of ASEM partners and stakeholders were based on the **belief that the AEP is an important dialogue and cooperation forum that can address and successfully meet (inter-)regional and global challenges** and deserves continued support. This positive attitude is encouraging for all who wish to widen and deepen Asian-European education cooperation in the coming years under the ASEM umbrella – although there are areas that need improvement (see point 3 below).

(2) Even if the period between ASEM ME6 (November 2017) and ASEM ME7 (May 2019) was rather short, a **significant number of AEP activities carried out** by ASEM partners and/or stakeholders have made substantial progress, at least partly achieved their objectives and contributed to implement the AEP priorities and to develop the AEP. These are promising findings demonstrating the great enthusiasm and commitment of ASEM partners and stakeholders. Unfortunately, however, some initiatives and projects that could play an important role in implementing AEP priorities and developing the AEP were cancelled or are **on hold** (e.g. ASEM University-Business Forum, Priority2). In addition, many initiatives are **one-off events** and cannot continuously contribute to develop the AEP and most initiatives, even under the same thematic priority, do not cooperate and exchange information. Most of the initiatives have been initiated and carried out by a **small number of ASEM partners or stakeholders**. At the same time, only few ASEM partners or stakeholders coordinated an activity.

(3) Despite the efforts made and the undeniable progress achieved, there is **room for improvemen**t in the following areas of AEP: policy orientation, effectiveness and visibility; connection with international policies and topics; and management of the AEP.

    (a) <u>Policy orientation</u>: The informal ASEM Education Process has made good progress during the last decade. However, the AEP needs a **clear perspective** and **long-term political vision** of its future development to make the forum globally even more relevant and influential. By adopting the Seoul Declaration (2017), ASEM Education

Ministers made already an important first step to outline the future orientation of AEP policy. Their ideas could now be further developed to a proposal of **AEP Vision 2030** including an action plan with clear objectives and measurable targets.

(b) **Effectiveness and visibility:** The efforts to make the AEP more effective show first successful results in some areas (e.g. new format of I/SOMs). On the other hand, there are areas which need to be worked on (e.g. outcome orientation of AEP policy dialogue, follow-up and monitoring of initiatives; harnessing synergies between initiatives). Although ASEM member countries cover 60% of the world's population and represent 65% of the world's GDP, the **lack of visibility of ASEM and the AEP** remains a continuing challenge. Some new **awareness raising activities** should be envisaged to make both forums more visible to the education sector and to the public.

(c) **Connection with international policies and topics:** ASEM Education deals with highly topical issues in education also discussed by other international forums and actors in the field of educational policies (e.g. ASEAN Plus Three, EU, UNESCO, Bologna Policy Forum). AEP's **cooperation and exchange** of information with these political players are still weak and should be **improved**. The same is true for the cooperation with the overarching ASEM process in fields with reference to education (e.g. climate change, employment). In a global context, the implementation of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the implications of **industrial change (Industry 4.0, digitalisation)** will be important topics in the coming years and **should be reflected in AEP's policy agenda** and in the initiatives carried out at ASEM partner and stakeholder level.

(d) **Management of the AEP:** Education is the only sector of ASEM that has a Secretariat. The ASEM Education Secretariats has proved to very helpful for the AEP during the last decade. It guarantees continuity and stability for the time of its mandate (four years) and supports the ASEM Education Process in many respects (e.g. information on AEP initiatives, support for hosts of meetings, preparation of Stocktaking Report). However, given the **small number of staff** (as a rule, two) facing an **increasing complexity and administrative burden of the AEP** and the limited (four-year) mandate and, linked to that, the **loss of continuity and expertise**, there should be a discussion on how the Secretariat could be supported in the future.

5.2.   Future direction of the ASEM Education Process: tasks and recommendations

Taking into account the shortcomings and challenges of the ASEM Education Process described in Chapter 4.3 as well as the observations and results of Chapters 1, 2 and 3 and the Conclusions of Chapter 5.1, the ASEM Education Secretariat proposes the following tasks and corresponding recommendations for the future development of the AEP with the aim to make the AEP politically stronger and sustainable, more effective and visible, and more beneficial for the people in Asia and Europe. The main messages in this context will be summarised below Table 7. ASEM partners and stakeholders are invited to discuss the proposed tasks and recommendations and agree on those to be put highest on the AEP agenda and to be included in the Chair's Conclusions of ASEM ME7.

Table 7: Tasks and recommendations for the future direction of the AEP

No	Tasks relating to the political level	Recommendations	Actors/Fora	Proposed timeline	Possible outcomes
1	**Make the AEP more attractive for high-level policy makers and give the AEP a long-term perspective**	(1) Prepare, discuss and adopt policy-relevant documents for (I)SOMs and ASEM ME (e.g. analytic, policy-related Stocktaking Report; strategy paper on AEP Vision 2030); and	*AES, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders.	*For Vision 2030 paper: SOM1 of ASEM ME8 (first draft); SOM2 and ASEM ME8 in 2021 (final draft; discussion and adoption).	*Comprehensive policy vision of the AEP including an action plan with clear indication of objectives, measurable targets, main actors, milestones and timelines (cf. No 4, Recommendation 10)
		(2) include workshops in (I)SOMs and informal retreat sessions in ASEM ME to allow for strategic policy discussions beyond the pressure of protocols.	*AES and host of meetings.	*constantly.	*lively policy-relevant discussions leading to increased political importance and effectiveness of the AEP.

Conclusions and outlook

No	Tasks relating to the political level	Recommendations	Actors/Fora	Proposed timeline	Possible outcomes
2	**Bring the AEP closer to overarching ASEM process**	(3) Present and discuss main ASEM ME results during ASEM Summit and include them in ASEM Summit Chair's Statement; and (4) present AEP demonstration initiatives during ASEM Summit (e.g. in AES booth).	*Host of ASEM Summit, Summit participants; supported by ASEF as a participant/observer in all ASEM related fora.	*At every ASEM Summit.	*Specific mandate given by ASEM Summit to the AEP to work on defined issues supporting the ASEM process.
		(5) attendance of AES representative at the ASEM Summit.	*AES in cooperation with host of Summit and ASEF.	*at every ASEM Summit.	*greater visibility of AEP's contribution to overarching ASEM process.
3	**Connect AEP priorities with international policies and technological developments**	(6) Intensify relations with Bologna Policy Forum, ASEAN Plus Three, EU and UNESCO in areas such as quality assurance, people-to-people connectivity and mobility, recognition and regional higher education reform; discuss with European Commission how to harness the potential of EU programmes for ASEM mobility and cooperation;	***Bologna Policy Forum:** ASEM ME, SOM, AES in cooperation with Bologna Follow-up Group and Bologna Secretariat.	*Political decision from the AEP: SOM2, ASEM ME7 (2019); *AES progress report for ASEM ME8 (2021).	*Exchange of information an increased collaboration on regional and interregional quality assurance, recognition and mobility.
			***ASEAN Plus Three:** ASEM ME, SOM, AES, ASEAN Secretariat.	See above.	*exchange of information an increased collaboration on regional and interregional quality assurance, recognition and mobility.

Conclusions and outlook

No	Tasks relating to the political level	Recommendations	Actors/Fora	Proposed timeline	Possible outcomes
	Connect AEP priorities with international policies and technological developments		***European Commission:** ASEM ME, SOM, AES, DG Education and Culture.	See above.	*increased use of EU programmes (e.g. Erasmus+, Horizon Europe) for AEP initiatives and EU- Asia connectivity.
			*UNESCO: ASEM ME, SOM, AES, UNESCO.	See above.	*Exchange of information an increased collaboration on regional and interregional quality assurance, recognition and mobility.
		(7) make digitalisation (Industry 4.0) and UN's Sustainable Development Agenda transversal themes of the AEP and support corresponding initiatives (e.g. development of MOOCs for joint degree programmes, establishment of a digital platform for exchange of best practices; creation of opportunities for virtual mobility; when setting up such initiatives, reference should be made to the Sustainable Development Goals);	*ASEM ME, SOM.	*SOM2, ASEM ME7 (2019).	*exchange of experience on implementing the Sustainable Development Agenda;
			*stakeholders.	*whenever appropriate.	
			*AES.	*ASEM ME8 (2021).	*connection of AEP priorities to important global challenges of the future.
			*stakeholders.	*whenever appropriate.	

Conclusions and outlook

No	Tasks relating to the political level	Recommendations	Actors/Fora	Proposed timeline	Possible outcomes
	Connect AEP priorities with international policies and technological developments		*coordinators of initiatives.	*whenever creating an initiative.	*motivation of ASEM partners/stakeholders to coordinate initiative relating to digitalisation and/or SDGs.
		(8) make TVET more prominent in the AEP by:	*SOM, ASEM ME, stakeholders.	*ASEM ME7 (2019).	*strengthened profile and increased visibility of TVET in the AEP.
		(a) promoting initiatives and wider networking opportunities amongst the ASEM partners (e.g. by organising joint seminars for experts from the fields of politics and education and the world of work);	*stakeholders, AES.	*whenever appropriate.	*exchange of information, needs analysis and development of joint actions;
			*stakeholders.	*ASEM ME8 (2021).	
		(b) preparing a compendium on TVET systems in Asia and Europe; and	*AES in cooperation with stakeholders.	*whenever appropriate.	*greater transparency and improved cooperation;
		(c) presenting Asian-European TVET cooperation examples of good practice in AEP policy meetings and on AES website;	*SOM, ASEM ME, AES, stakeholders.	*whenever appropriate.	*possibility to learn from each other.

Conclusions and outlook

No	Tasks relating to the political level	Recommendations	Actors/Fora	Proposed timeline	Possible outcomes
	Connect AEP priorities with international policies and technological developments	(9) Revitalise ASEM LLL Hub and AEP University-Business Forum.	ASEM partners and stakeholders, ASEM LLL HUB Research Network University College Cork (new host ASEM LLL Hub)	*SOM2, ASEM ME7 (2019).	*two permanent discussion platforms for cross-cutting AEP themes in view of new economic and societal challenges such as implications of industrial change on lifelong learning (incl. TVET), inclusion and mobility.
4	**Strengthen involvement of stakeholders**	(10) Define official AEP stakeholders entitled to attend (I)SOMS and ASEM ME with the right to speak.	*SOM and ASEM ME.	*SOM2, ASEM ME7 (2019).	*Identification of official AEP stakeholders; *regular participation of stakeholder delegates in SOM and ASEM ME.

Conclusions and outlook

No	Tasks relating to the political level	Recommendations	Actors/Fora	Proposed timeline	Possible outcomes
		(11) present and discuss main ARC recommendations and outcomes of other ASEF projects during ASEM ME.	*ASEF and ARC university host prior to ASEM ME, ASEM ME.	*as of ASEM ME7 (2019).	*grass-root feed-back and fresh ideas.
5	**Continue to make the informal AEP more efficient and effective**	(12) Introduce an action plan with clear objectives and measurable targets (including a timetable to achieve the targets) to implement the AEP Vision 2030 (see Task No 1); try to identify possible funding schemes.	*SOM, AES (drafting); ASEM ME (discussion, adoption), ASEM partners and stakeholders.	* SOM1 of ASEM ME8 (first draft); SOM2 and ASEM ME8 in 2021 (final draft; discussion and adoption).	*Clear picture of progress in implementing the AEP Vision 2030 and achieving the objectives set out in the action plan by ASEM ME.
		(13) continue to improve the format of (I)SOM meetings already tested in Jakarta and Krems (2018) and introduce new elements into ASEM ME (e.g. retreat sessions).	*AES together with host of meeting.	*Constantly.	*flexible meeting formats (including workshop and retreat elements) allowing for in-depth discussions also beyond the protocols;
		(14) Ensure effective cooperation and thematic continuity of meetings between different hosts of ISOM, SOM1 and 2, ASEM ME and AES.	*AES together with hosts of meetings.	*whenever appropriate.	*close thematic cooperation of meeting hosts and streamlined preparation of ASEM ME in case of having different hosts of ISOM, SOM1/2 and ASEM ME.
6	**Monitor the AEP and its initiatives and analyse their progress and**	(15) Establish regular contacts between coordinators of initiatives and prepare/collect	*AES in cooperation with coordinators of initiatives.	*Constantly; results to be presented in Stocktaking Report for ASEM ME.	*In-depth information on progress, conclusions and recommendations of AEP initiatives.

Conclusions and outlook

No	Tasks relating to the political level	Recommendations	Actors/Fora	Proposed timeline	Possible outcomes
	results from a policy perspective	summaries of individual meetings.			
		(16) support initiatives in harnessing synergies (for a detailed list of tasks in this context, cf. Table 4).	*AES in cooperation with coordinators of initiatives.	*whenever appropriate.	*close cooperation between initiatives who work on similar topics to avoid overlapping.
		(17) prepare a comprehensive Stocktaking Report including an analytic view on the progress of initiatives and an assessment of the implementation of the AEP Vision 2030 action plan and achievement of its objectives and targets; Identify practical and user-friendly report mechanisms.	*AES in cooperation with SOM (and Task Force or Standing Working Group).	*after SOM1 (first draft); SOM2 (final draft), ASEM ME (acknowledgement, discussion).	*policy-relevant information on the progress of AEP initiatives (including their contributions to achieve the AEP objectives) and on the implementation status of the AEP Vision 2030.
7	**Make the AES more visible**	(18) Present AEP examples of good practice on AES website and in social media.	*AES in cooperation with coordinators of initiatives.	*Constantly.	*Enhanced presence and greater visibility of AEP on AES website and in social media.
		(19) Present activities and results of AEP on ASEM Infoboard website and monthly ASEM Infoboard newsletter.	*ASEF	*ASEM ME8 (2021);	*increased public interest; get-together of representatives from politics, business, education and civil society.

Conclusions and outlook

No	Tasks relating to the political level	Recommendations	Actors/Fora	Proposed timeline	Possible outcomes
	Make the AES more visible	(20) Introduce an ASEM Education Week with an ASEM Education Fair in connection with ASEM ME or the ASEM day on 1st of March (and EU higher education fairs, if possible).	*ASEM ME, EU, host of ASEM ME, AES, ASEM partners and stakeholders.	*ASEM ME8 (2021).	*headline-grapping award ceremony for the ASEM prize winners with great media interest.
		(21) Award an ASEM prize to top-class AEP demonstration initiatives during ASEM ME and disseminate information via all sorts of media.	*SOM, ASEM ME, AES, coordinators of demonstration initiatives.		*additional motivation for other ASEM partners and stakeholders to participate in AEP initiatives.
8	**Increase working capacity, continuity and stability of the AES**	(22) For the **short term:** establish a Standing Working Group (SWG) to support the AES in its strategic work (e.g. SWG could explore how the four AEP priority areas and related initiatives can contribute to implementing SDG4 and make progress in achieving an inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all).	*SOM, ASEM ME; with ASEF as participant/observer	*SOM2, ASEM ME7 (2019);	*Short-term assistance for the AES in strategic issues;

Conclusions and outlook

No	Tasks relating to the political level	Recommendations	Actors/Fora	Proposed timeline	Possible outcomes
	Increase working capacity, continuity and stability of the AES	(23) For the **long term:** set up a permanent Secretariat or a rotating Secretariat with permanent core staff (complemented with staff seconded by host of the AES or other partners or stakeholders) to cope with the increase in workload and activities and to avoid loss of expertise and continuity.	*SOM, ASEM ME, ASEM partners.	*(I)SOM (2020/2021), ASEM ME8 (2021).	*permanent experienced AES which can meet comprehensive challenges in a long-term perspective.

The Secretariat's analysis shows that the AEP needs to address eight main tasks as regards its future development. **The first four** of these tasks refer to the **political level** and the other **four tasks relate to the management level**. The **23 recommendations** proposed by the AES in Table 7 aim at contributing towards the completion of these tasks, as explained in the following.

TASK 1: It is obvious that the number of Education Ministers attending ASEM Ministerial Meetings has declined over the last ten years. This is not only an AEP phenomenon and can be observed also in other political forums, maybe due to the increasing number of meetings. In the AEP context, however, there has been also the assumption that ASEM Education meetings are politically not attractive enough and that measures have to be taken to make the AEP strategic meetings (i.e. SOM, ASEM ME) more policy-relevant. This could be achieved by **presenting, discussing and adopting more policy-related documents** (e.g. analytic Stocktaking Report) in these meetings. Setting up a strategic policy dialogue for the **proposal of the AEP Vision 2030**, and defining future orientations in this framework, will certainly be a crucial contribution to any strategic policy dialogue. Such proposed AEP Vision 2030 document could be supported with an **action plan** (cf. TASK5). Systematic further development of new **interactive meeting formats** (including for ASEM ME) will also help make AEP meetings more lively and attractive and/or allow for informal exchange of opinions beyond diplomatic protocols.

TASK 2: ASEM Education is part of the overarching ASEM process, covers a broad spectrum of political areas. Regarding the impact on policy areas such as environment, economy, employment and people-to-people connectivity, the importance of ASEM Education has been constantly growing since the first ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting in Berlin (2008). However, cooperation and interaction between the ASEM process and the AEP are weak and need to be improved. Against this backdrop, continuously including key **AEP results in the Chair's Statement of ASEM Summits** would be just as important as improving exchanges of information. The presentation and discussion of AEP results during ASEM Summits and the presentation of examples of good practice in an AES booth during the conference breaks would be possible first steps to bring the AEP closer to the ASEM process.

TASK 3: The ASEM Education Process deals with many educational topics under its four priority themes that are also on the agenda of other **international political actors and forums** relating to regional and interregional dialogue and cooperation in and between Asia and Europe. To create synergies and to work jointly on themes of common interest, a regular exchange of information and continuous collaboration between the different actors (e.g. ASEAN Plus Three, EU, UNESCO, Bologna Policy Forum) are needed, which do not exist at all or only occasionally. Intensified relations to actors like the EU, in particular, are key for the future development of the AEP as their programmes may be used in a very concrete way for improving mobility and cooperation in education (and research) between Asia and Europe. The four thematic priorities of ASEM Education remain topical, even a decade after the launch of the AEP. However, new political and technological contexts (i.e. Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, implications of industrial change) suggest that the **Sustainable Development Goals and digitalisation should be included**

as transversal themes in the AEP. Initiatives with reference to these themes should be given special attention and support. ASEM Education, so far, is focussing on higher education. **TVET** has always been part of the AEP under Priority 4 (Lifelong learning) and surely is an important sector for the employability of the citizens and the economic development in Asia and Europe. The importance of TVET, however, is not reflected in the number of AEP initiatives that took place in this field to date. In several ASEM education meetings during 2018, some proposals were made to make TVET more prominent in the AEP (cf. Recommendation 7).

TASK 4: The analysis of AEP initiatives made by the AES in this Stocktaking Report clearly demonstrates the great **importance of stakeholders as coordinators of initiatives** and cornerstones of ASEM Education. Some of them even may attend AEP policy meetings (i.e. I/SOM, ASEM ME). As there is no list of official AEP stakeholders, it is not clear and transparent who can take part in the political AEP debates and who cannot. Therefore, it is advisable that ASEM ME **endorses a list of stakeholders** (like in the Bologna Process) who are entitled to attend the Ministerial and Senior Officials' Meetings and have the right to speak and enrich the discussions with fresh ideas and expert knowledge.

TASK 5: For quite some time already, there have been discussions and endeavours among AEP partners and stakeholders to make AEP policy meetings and the entire Education Process more efficient and effective. For example, the Chair's Conclusions of Seoul (2017) mandated the AES to reorganise the format of SOMs in order to improve effectiveness of these meetings. Consequently, the AES tested new meeting formats (e.g. workshop discussions) during ISOM (Jakarta, 2018) and SOM1 (Krems, 2018). Despite first positive results, however, further efforts need to be invested to optimise the new formats. To make the entire AEP more effective, the AEP Vision 2030 (cf. Recommendation 1) should be complemented by an **action plan with concrete objectives, measurable targets, main actors and timelines**. This would allow for monitoring and assessing AEP's development more closely and for analysing its strengths and shortcomings more precisely (cf. also TASK 6). In the end, this will lead to an **improved political management of ASEM Education**. Effective political management is also needed when preparing AEP policy meetings. Up to and including ASEM ME4 in Kuala Lumpur (2013), SOM1, SOM2 and ASEM ME were hosted by the same ASEM member country. During ASEM ME4, Ministers agreed to introduce ISOMs. Since then, ISOM, SOM1 and SOM2, ASEM ME can be hosted by different hosts (cf. current situation: ISOM, Indonesia, SOM1, Austria, SOM2 and ASEM ME, Romania). It is very likely that different host countries have different political agendas and policy priorities. As a consequence, and in order to harmonise priorities and themes of the policy meetings, the various **meeting hosts and the AES have to cooperate very closely** in the run-up of (I)SOMs and ASEM ME.

TASK 6: AEP initiatives and projects coordinated and implemented by AEP partners and stakeholders have been essential pillars of ASEM Education since the early years of the Process. However, their potential and achievements have not been fully exploited for the AEP. In particular for the government led initiatives, no systematic monitoring took place and synergies

were not created or used. Therefore, regular contacts and exchange of information between the AES and the coordinators of initiatives should be implemented so that the Secretariat can offer support if needed and encourage coordinators to **create synergies** with initiatives that deal with similar topics. The results and the progress of the initiatives and projects as well as the implementation of the proposed AEP Vision 2030 and related action plans will be monitored by the AES from a political point of view in the Stocktaking Report. This kind of **analysis** gives a broader and deeper insight into the overall development of the AEP and lays the foundation for future political debates.

TASK 7: Compared to its geographic scope and economic size, ASEM has a "visibility problem"[9]. The same is true for the AEP. That is why ASEM Education Ministers, in Seoul (2017), encouraged ASEM partners and stakeholders to **strengthen AEP's visibility**. Something has already been done (e.g. creation of a new AES website), but much more can be envisaged. For example, the presentation of examples of good practice on the AES website, the ASEM Infoboard and in social media can serve as source of inspiration for new initiatives or projects. A similar effect can be expected from top quality demonstration initiatives which will receive an ASEM award during ASEM ME. At the same time, prize awarding ceremonies can give rise to considerable media interest. An ASEM Education Week and/or an ASEM Education Fair in connection with ASEM ME could include representatives from politics, the world of work, the education sector and the - ASEM Education Stakeholders, and could motivate the public in Asia and Europe to learn more about ASEM and the AEP.

TASK 8: The **rotating AES with a four-year mandate** is unique in ASEM and has multiple tasks. It guarantees appropriate administrative and intellectual support to AEP partners and stakeholders in matters relating to ASEM Education, coordinates and analyses the AEP and its initiatives, inform the wider public about the AEP via a website and a newsletter, compiles a comprehensive Stocktaking Report and help the hosts of (I)SOMs and ASEM ME with the preparations of the meetings. Given the diversity of tasks, the increasing amount of work, the lack of continuity and the loss of expertise due to the change of staff upon completion of the four-year AES mandate, it seems only consequent to look for a long-term solution to keep the Secretariat fully operational and enable it to meet future challenges. **The setting-up of a Standing Working Group** would be a helpful short-term solution which could immediately support the AES, for example, in its strategic work. In order to achieve a long-term solution, however, AEP partners could discuss and agree upon the establishment of a permanent AES or consider the possibility of setting up a rotating AES with permanent core staff complemented by seconded staff from the AES host or other AEP partners and stakeholders.

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[9] Brovelli, A., Chaban, N., Lai, S.-Y. and Holland, M. (2010). Invisible Forum? The Public Outreach of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). In: *Journal of Contemporary European Research.* Volume 6, Issue 4, pp. 535-550.

5.3. Initiatives proposed by ASEM partners and/or stakeholders for the period 2019 – 2021

As in the run-up to previous ASEM ME, ASEM partners and stakeholders have proposed various (ongoing and new) initiatives under the four AEP thematic priorities to be implemented between 2019 and 2021. The AES has summarised these proposals in Table 8 and Annex 2 and suggests that the initiatives be included in the Chair's Conclusions of ASEM ME7 (Bucharest, 2019).

Table 8: Initiatives under the four AEP priorities proposed by ASEM partners and/or stakeholders for the period 2019 – 2021

Annex 2: Initiatives under the four AEP priorities proposed by ASEM partners and/or stakeholders for the period 2019 – 2021 with expected activities and outcomes

PRIORITY 1: Quality assurance and recognition			
No	**Initiative**	**Coordinator/Participants**	**Envisaged place/time**
1	* Working Group for Implementing the ASEM Recognition Bridging Declaration (also known as the Beijing Declaration) [Pillar 2]	Austria, Belgium (French Community), Brunei Darussalam, China, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Romania, United Kingdom	Any concrete activities planned? When? Where?
2	*Expert group on interregional credit transfer mechanisms and learning outcome systems	Australia, Belgium (Flemish Community), Brunei Darussalam, China, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Thailand, United Kingdom and SEAMEO RIHED;	2019-2021
3	Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications	UNESCO & ETF	2019
4	*EU-SHARE Project (second phase): Higher education in ASEAN Region	European Commission, ASEAN Secretariat, British Council, DAAD, Nuffic, Campus France, ENQA, EUA	2019-2021
PRIORITY 2: Engaging business and industry in education			
5	*AEP University-Business Forum	Still open	Still open
6	Peer Learning Activity: "Inclusion through Virtual and Blended mobility"	Belgium (Flemish Community)	Spring 2020
7	8th ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC8) & ARC spin-off events Official side-event of the 8th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME8)	ASEF as main organiser, supported by ASEM partners and stakeholders and hosting ASEM partner country	In conjunction with the 8th ASEM ME in Asia in 2021 Spin-off activities and preparatory events throughout 2019 – 2021 in various Asian and European countries.

Conclusions and outlook

No	Initiative	Coordinator/Participants	Envisaged place/time
8	*ASEM Work Placement Pilot Programme	Belgium (Flemish Community); Thailand; Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Germany	2019-2021 in partner countries participating in the programme
9	ASEF Innovation Laboratories (ASEF InnoLabs)	ASEF as main organiser, supported by ASEM partners and stakeholders	*3 editions: China, Germany and Portugal 2020 (TBC)
PRIORITY 3: Balanced mobility			
10	4th ASEF Young Leaders Summit (ASEFYLS4) & ASEFYLS Navigator Trainings *Official side-event of the 13th ASEM Summit (ASEM13)	ASEF as main organiser, supported by ASEM partners and stakeholders	Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2020 Side-events and spin-off activities Singapore, 2019 India, 2020 Poland, 2020 Other Asian and European countries
11	9th Model ASEM *Official side-event of the 13th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting (ASEM FMM13)	ASEF as main organiser, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Casa Asia and ASEM Stakeholders, supported by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of Switzerland	December 2019 Madrid, Spain
12	Developing an e-learning module on ASEM and ASEM-Education Process	ASEF and AES Belgium	2020
13	*23rd ASEF Summer University (ASEFSU 23) on "Developing Liveable & Sustainable Metropolitan Areas"	ASEF as main organiser, supported by ASEM partners and stakeholders	Bangladesh, India, Pakistan & Singapore (quarter 1, 2020);

No	Initiative	Coordinator/Participants	Envisaged place/time
14	*24th ASEF Summer University (ASEFSU24) on "The Arctic Region: A 'Hot Spot' for Asia-Europe Cooperation"	ASEF as main organiser, supported by ASEM partners and stakeholders	Finland, Norway and Sweden (quarter 3 2020)
15	Model ASEM Spin-offs	ASEF as main organiser, supported by ASEM partners and stakeholders	August 2019, Malta 2020-2021 Asian & European countries
16	*5th Asia-Europe Institute (AEI)-ASEM Summer School (AEI-ASS)	Asia-Europe Institute (AEI,), University of Malaya, Malaysia	11-17 June 2019-University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur 20-29 June 2019- University of Limerick, Ireland
17	*Pilot project: Creation of local student organisations supporting international students in Asia	Erasmus Student Network (ESN); ASEF, higher education institutions and students in ASEAN Region; civil society and umbrella organisations in Asia	Conference and training event in Singapore in May 2019; duration of pilot: around 2 years
18	ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programme	ASEM-DUO Secretariat, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Belgium (Flemish Community and French Community), Sweden	Mobility Programs in participating partner countries from 2019-2021 May 2019 (ASEM Duo Expert Meeting October 2020 (4thASEM-DUO Fellows Alumni Meeting)
19	8th European Higher Education Fair 2019	The European Union and Japan	in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan on 17-21 May 2019;
PRIORITY 4: Lifelong Learning (LLL) including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)			
20	Initiative to promote a dialogue on sharing best practices and future perspectives in TVET	Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Belgium (Flemish Community), France, Germany, Indonesia, Latvia, the Philippines, the Russian Federation	Russia (TBC)

↗ **Conclusions and outlook**

No	Initiative	Coordinator/Participants	Envisaged place/time
21	15th ASEF Classroom Network Conference (ASEFCLassNet15) on "Education for Sustainable Development and Artificial Intelligence: Re-imagining the Future of Learning"	ASEF as main organiser, supported by ASEM partners and stakeholders	Japan, 2019
22	16th ASEF Classroom Network Conference (ASEFCLassNet16)	ASEF as main organiser, supported by ASEM partners and stakeholders	2020, United of Kingdom (TBC)
23	17th ASEF Classroom Network Conference (ASEFClassNet17)	ASEF as main organiser, supported by ASEM partners and stakeholders	2021 Asia
24	Capacity Building Workshops and MOOCs in the field of Lifelong Learning Policy development and implementation and Learning Cities	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)	2019-2021
25	Distribution of Toolkits, studies, reports in the field of Lifelong learning including TVET to support the development of Qualification Frameworks	Cedefop, ETF, UNESCO, UIL	2019
26	ASEM Network of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)	The Republic of Korea, Brunei Darussalam (University Brunei Darussalam), Belgium (Flemish Community), China (Xuetangx), Denmark, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Thailand, United Kingdom	2019 meeting in ROK, 2010 meeting TBD, 2021 meeting TBD
27	Update version of Global Inventory National Qualification Frameworks	UNESCO, UNESCO Institute For Lifelong Learning (UIL), ETF, Cedefop,	2019-2021

Conclusions and outlook

No	Initiative	Coordinator/Participants	Envisaged place/time
28	Developing World Reference levels of learning outcomes to compare qualifications and credentials to support the recognition of skills and competencies across border	UNESCO	2019-2020
29	An International Handbook on Defining, Writing and Applying Learning Outcomes	UNESCO and Cedefop	2019-2020
30	Developing seven set of the training modules to support cities in the process of becoming learning cities	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)	October 2019
31	Handbook and Toolkit For Lifelong Learning: From Policy to Practice (+ workshops)	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Chinese National Commission to UNESCO, Shanghai Open University and East Asia Normal University	June 2019 (publication) October-November 2019 (workshop)

5.4. Call for involvement and commitment

The Stocktaking Report clearly demonstrates many positive aspects of the ASEM Education Process and the **strong commitment of various ASEM partners and stakeholders to develop Asia-Europe dialogue a**nd collaboration in the field of education under the political umbrella of ASEM. The Report, however, also shows that, in particular, the number of ASEM partners who coordinate an AEP initiative is low. In addition, quite a number of initiatives are **coordinated by the same ASEM partner or stakeholder**. The success of (informal) political processes such as the AEP is mainly built on the commitment of its partners and stakeholders.

For this reason, the ASEM Education Secretariat concludes this Report by inviting ASEM partners and stakeholders to express their interest (including concrete suggestions) to coordinate or participate in specific initiatives related to the four AEP priorities.

We hope that this report provides ASEM partners and stakeholders with new insights, motivation and inspiration to engage in the ASEM Education Process. The degree of commitment is of utmost importance for keeping up the momentum of the AEP and supporting its future development.

To conclude, the Secretariat believes that the proposed AEP Vision 2030 document including its action plans could be drafted with assistance of ASEM Education Senior Officials and stakeholders through a Standing Working group, to cultivate synergies between four thematic priorities, to stimulate involvement of all ASEM partners and stakeholders as well as to connect the AEP towards other relevant international policy arenas. Therefore, the Secretariat hopes that the Standing working group can be established after the Ministers' endorsement in ASEM ME7 to preserve co coherence and result-oriented approach within the AEP.

Thank you.

The ASEM Education Secretariat Belgium, May 2019.