



2<sup>nd</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference: Asia-Europe Higher Education Leadership Dialogue

***"Asia-Europe University Cooperation:  
Contributing to the Global Knowledge Society"***

Korea University  
Seoul, Korea, 26-27 October 2010

## **Conference Recommendations**

### **I. Introduction**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference took place at Korea University in Seoul on 26-27 October 2010. It gathered around 80 university leaders and representatives of ASEM higher education institutions, networks and organisations at the highest level.

Building on the results of the [1<sup>st</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference](#) held at the Free University in Berlin in October 2008 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME2) in Hanoi in May 2009, the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference was jointly organised by the **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)**, **Korea University (KU)** and the **ASEAN University Network (AUN)**.

Conference discussions focused on the role of universities in building knowledge societies. Specifically, the Conference covered knowledge transfer, research collaboration, the mobility of staff, higher education governance and accountability as well as curricular reforms for teaching global citizenship.

### **II. The ASEM Education Process – enhancing synergies and fostering cooperation**

The ASEM Education Process has gained substantial ground in the past year, as the Education Ministers of the ASEM countries decided, at their last meeting in Hanoi in May 2009 ([ASEMME2](#)), to convene on a biennial basis. An ASEM Education Secretariat (AES) charged with the preparation, coordination and follow-up of the ministerial meetings was established on a four-year rotating principle.<sup>1</sup> The synergies between the ministerial and stakeholder processes can help make big steps forward in fostering higher education dialogue and cooperation in ASEM.

**The ASEM Rectors' Conference serves as a platform and vehicle for stakeholder participation in the ASEM education process.** The ASEM RC has been recognised by the ASEM education ministers as a vital component of higher education (HE) dialogue in ASEM and a significant platform to ensure the contribution of the stakeholders in the ASEM Education Process.

**The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)**, as the only permanent institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process, was recognised as the **"permanent secretariat" of the ASEM Rectors' Conference** – thus providing sustainability and stability to the stakeholders' participation in the dialogue process of ASEM governments and higher education sector. ASEF and its partner organisations, namely the ASEAN

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<sup>1</sup> The first four years of the ASEM Education Secretariat will be supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

University Network (AUN) and the European University Association (EUA), seek to engage the stakeholder community in various ways. Individual institutions, universities and national university organisations are invited to participate and can volunteer as hosts, while ASEF's ASEM Education Hub (AEH) Advisory Committee assists ASEF and its partners in the agenda-setting and formulation of wider policy recommendations. Workshops, roundtables and other initiatives serving the build-up and exchange of knowledge and good practices further facilitate the continuity and follow-ups to the recommendations of the higher education leaders (By way of example, ASEF organised the 1<sup>st</sup> Asia-Europe Education Workshop on the Impact of the Financial Crisis in March 2010 which fed into the discussions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference).

### III. Recommendations

Resulting from the discussions at the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference, the ASEM university leaders convey the following recommendations for the consideration of the ASEM Ministers for Education at their next meeting in Copenhagen, in 2011, as well as to higher education institutions in ASEM and other relevant stakeholders in the higher education sector.

These recommendations reflect the topics discussed in the working groups and aim at further enhancing cooperation and dialogue in the ASEM higher education field. They constitute a testament of support from the ASEM higher education community to the continued development of the ASEM Education Process.

#### **(1) Recognise and support universities as motors for economic growth and for the creation of knowledge societies.**

*ASEM Governments and Ministries for Education, Science and Research are called upon to:*

- *Recognise the 'investment' side of higher education rather than treating it as a 'cost'. To achieve this, it must become generally understood that lifelong learning and research are core elements of higher education's mission.*
- *Foster balanced scientific competition with appropriate coordination and cooperation. The ASEM Rectors' Conference identified the need for fundamental research and for intra-regional and intercontinental collaboration in order to achieve the most outstanding research. The Europe 2020 Vision for the European Research Area (ERA) could serve as a reference for improving framework conditions within ASEM.*
- *Recognise the need for a greater focus and recognition of impact of research, the hands-on involvement of researchers in physical and economic development and programmes to stimulate this, within and across nations, regions and continents.*

*In practical terms, ASEM university leaders recommend the following:*

- *Commission the evaluation of ASEM research cooperation, similar to the recent white paper on ["Africa-Europe Higher Education Cooperation for Development: Meeting Regional and Global Challenges"](#).*
- *Support the set-up of joint doctoral schools by removing regulatory obstacles to the establishment of joint programmes. To this end, ASEM Ministries for Education should further invest in intercontinental, bilateral and multilateral pilot schemes.*
- *Prioritise and support initiatives in areas that are most effective in supporting socio-economic development of a nation, such as*
  - a. *stimulating entrepreneurship/new business/more incubators for graduates which include experienced coaching and even venture capital support;*
  - b. *bringing talent from underrepresented groups into higher education;*
  - c. *attracting talent from abroad;*
  - d. *stimulating, e.g. through tax incentives, private sector engagement in research and in education;*

- e. *stimulating work-integrated learning schemes to make students better employable<sup>2</sup>*
- f. *exposing students substantially to different learning and working cultures through mobility, etc.*

## **(2) Foster effective knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing**

*ASEM Governments, Ministries for Education, Science and Research and universities should:*

- *Consider the various dimensions of knowledge transfer and sharing, comprising of (a) knowledge sharing between countries, (b) knowledge transfer from universities to business, and (c) knowledge at the service of society.*
- *Broaden the ASEM understanding of knowledge transfer, one which is not limited to technology transfer, but also reflects the role of the university as motor of knowledge transfer in the domain of social sciences and humanities. Furthermore, it is important to include a social dimension into impact-driven research, not only economic or commercial aspects.*

*In practical terms, ASEM university leaders recommend the following:*

- *To foster effective knowledge transfer, collaboration between higher education institutions and industry partners should be enhanced, e.g. by support for international internships at national and international level.*
- *Knowledge transfer for societal impact and for public goods must respond to needs. This being a two-way, multidisciplinary process, ASEM should commission studies or pilot projects involving higher education institutions and governments for measuring knowledge transfer and effectiveness.*

## **(3) Support curricular reform and education for global citizenship**

*ASEM Universities should:*

- *Encourage the schools of education in ASEM universities to focus on preparing basic education teachers to impress upon their pupils basic ethical values, such as honesty, truth, tolerance, caring, fairness, and justice. Concerns shared by universities in Asia and Europe about cheating and plagiarism cases among students, particularly with the increasing reliance on sources from the web, suggest that these fundamental values need strengthening.*
- *Seek dialogue with their counterparts in ASEM to clarify the characteristics of global citizenship they can agree to promote. They should (a) articulate the characteristics of "global citizenship" in their context, (b) articulate programmes to achieve this and (c) identify resources and mechanisms to monitor the envisaged outcomes.*

*ASEM Governments and Ministries for Education should encourage universities to provide incentives for curricular renewal and involve university staff in the process. Public support is also needed for creating platforms for bridging the differences between ASEM countries by including international comparability and recognition in the discussions.*

## **(4) Widen perspectives for mobility**

*ASEM Governments and Ministries for Education, Science and Research are called upon to:*

- *Foster mobility within ASEM countries of both students and staff (comprising teaching, research, and administrative staff). The different levels of international staff exchange can become a driving force for cooperation in ASEM.*

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<sup>2</sup> *The World Association for Cooperative Education (WACE) is planning to organise a conference for ASEM countries in Bangkok, in July 2010, which hopes to forward an ASEM agenda for work-integrated learning.*

- Strengthen institutional and network links, which are the basis for high-quality mobility, and ensure sustainability of these links.
- Create framework conditions (e.g. visa, pension rights) to foster staff mobility and identify good practice examples for finding incentives to overcome obstacles such as salary, legal problems, living conditions, and family bonds.
- Recognise any kind of structured international programme as a learning experience, regardless of the length of stay.
- Further promote balanced mobility between Europe and Asia.

In practical terms, ASEM university leaders recommend the following:

- Increase the visibility of education systems as proposed by the ASEM Education Ministers in their Hanoi meeting. A first step was taken by the progress on “credits and learning outcomes” and the work on EU-Asia portal on jobs and learning opportunities in ASEM. It is recommended to use synergies with other existing initiatives.
- Establish an ASEM joint grant to promote teacher mobility between the two regions. This could be realised through two concrete pilot projects, one focused on academics (teaching and research staff), one on administrative staff, to analyse existing schemes (e.g. of the [Compostela Group of Universities](#)) and to suggest their expansion.
- For the mobility of students, further focus on an ASEM-wide assessment of learning outcomes (to include success in professional life) and on recognition.
- Support European students’ placement in Asian companies and vice versa through an expansion of existing schemes.

#### **(5) Support student involvement in the programming of the ASEM Education Process**

The ASEM higher education community should:

- Involve students in the various levels of the ASEM Education Process, i.e. in the ASEM Education Ministerial Meetings and working groups, as well as in exchanges of civil society platforms such as the ASEM Rectors’ Conference and other initiatives serving the build-up and exchange of knowledge and good practices in ASEM.
- Encourage and support the formation of an Asian students’ association to achieve balanced representation. This could be facilitated by the support for the organisation of an Asian Council of Rectors, analogous to the European Council of Rectors.

#### **IV. Outlook**

Next ASEM Ministerial Meeting. The Conference forwards its recommendations to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME3) to be held in May 2011 in Copenhagen, for their consideration, and reaffirms its willingness to continue in an interactive and sustainable dialogue process with the Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education.

Towards 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM Rectors’ Conference (3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM RC). The Conference welcomed the University of Groningen’s offer to host the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM Rectors’ Conference in The Netherlands in 2012.