



ARC5 Students' Forum Policy Recommendations for the 6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME6) 2017, Korea

The ARC5 Students' Forum on "Employability: Asia and Europe Prepare the New Generation" took place on 4-7 April 2016 at Charles University in Prague, the Czech Republic. On this occasion, 51 student representatives from all 51 ASEM partner countries developed Policy Recommendations on how governments, higher education institutions, businesses and the third sector can better cooperate to equip students with employability skills. The students convey the following recommendations for consideration of the ASEM Ministers for Education at the upcoming 6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME6) in 2017 in Korea. Four student representatives personally handed over these Policy Recommendations to the Vice-Minister of Education of the Republic of Korea, Professor LEE Young, in Prague, at the Closing Ceremony of the 5th ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC5). The students also address these Recommendations to the stakeholders in ASEM partner countries.

The participants of the ARC5 Students' Forum reiterate the Recommendations of the ARC4 Students' Forum in 2015 in Hangzhou and have identified the following issues as priorities and commit themselves to promoting and finding ways of applying them. They call upon the ASEM members to engage them in working towards delivering tangible outcomes. ASEM students believe that both the new economy and its workforce need to be dynamic and adaptive to global phenomena, such as globalisation, technological development and innovation, service sector growth, sustainable development and inclusive change. Therefore, both tertiary education and lifelong learning should recognise formal, informal and non-formal learning and include transferable skills¹ in higher education curricula. ASEM Students encourage the cooperation and funding in the field of employability between governments, universities, and business and the third sector, particularly across three key areas. These are:

A) Developing a Continuous Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

To ensure employability and progress to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, there is a need for a multi-stakeholder approach. In particular, there is a need to identify best practices in the fields of employability, employment-friendly curricula and work-study balance. Towards this goal, ARC5 students call upon ASEM partners to:

1. Create a multi-stakeholder framework that encompasses an interactive platform for information and best practice sharing, as well as feedback mechanisms on matters of employability and lifelong learning.
2. Encourage a curriculum design that takes the demands of students, academia, business and the third sector into consideration.

B) Work Experience in the New Economy

Given the changes in the economic landscape, it is important to highlight the importance of work experience in the new economy. This is a two-fold approach that includes cross-sector approaches, as well as recognition by the higher education institutions.

To accommodate these approaches, ASEM partners can:

¹ Including but not limited to, self-learning, creativity and innovation skills, technological, and intercultural and communication skills

1. Work with higher education institutions to address the recognition of prior learning, extracurricular, exchange and work activities, including but not limited to summer schools, internships, research projects and volunteer work. A framework for the accreditation of curriculum-relevant activities should be taken into consideration.
2. Promote the inclusion of transferable skills in the curricula of higher education institutions.
3. Enable and direct universities to address the issue of work-study balance through the enactment of more work-friendly curricula, including flexible academic schedules.
4. Encourage the provision of internships and practical training for students in businesses and the public sector, in line with the 4th ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC4) Policy Recommendations.
5. Work with higher education institutions to ensure lifelong learning contributes to an increasing recognition of non-formal and informal learning in addition to formal education.

C) Mobility, Accessibility and Financing

There is a need to remove barriers to mobility and to increase accessibility for extracurricular activities, work experience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In order ASEM partners should:

1. Establish a comprehensive platform to improve access to information on exchanges and career opportunities for students in order to address the limitations of prevailing stand-alone platforms. This should incorporate the collective expertise of governments, academia, businesses and the third sector.
2. Work with businesses and the third sector to improve and standardize working conditions, including but not limited to, the adoption of policies to ensure safe working environments, working hours, and where applicable - equitable remuneration.
3. Cooperate for the removal of barriers to international mobility of students and recent graduates and act upon the ARC4 Rectors' Policy Recommendations *"for study and internship purposes, including those linked to visa matters"*. This includes improving the access to mobility for under-represented groups in both Asia and in Europe;
4. Address the inclusion of underrepresented groups in higher education, in particular gender and ethnic minorities, in order to increase their employability and provide better opportunities in the new economy.
5. Support free and/or affordable courses for international students on the topic of cultural awareness, local languages and provide necessary assistance where required.
6. Act upon the ARC4 Rectors' Recommendation on financial and service roles, especially with regard to the allocation of funding for the enhancement of Asian-European mobility, and tackling employability through seed grant financing, academic and student-led educational projects or quality talent pools for professionals.

Higher education must continue to adapt to the changes in the new economy, as well as work towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. In light of this, ARC5 students propose that the agenda of the upcoming 6th ASEM Education Ministers Meeting encompasses employability, sustainability and life-long learning amongst its priorities. Higher education students are a key stakeholder in this discussion, and therefore we recommend student involvement in relevant activities and meetings of the ASEM Education Process.

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