

3rd Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME3) Copenhagen, 9/10 May 2011

Shaping an ASEM Education Area

Conclusions by the Chair

The Third Meeting of the Ministers for Education of the ASEM countries was hosted by Denmark in Copenhagen on 9 and 10 May 2011. The meeting was attended by 160 participants from 40 ASEM member countries and chaired by the Danish Minister for Education.

The Meeting warmly welcomed representatives from the new ASEM members Australia, New Zealand and the Russian Federation, who joined the ASEM Process during the 8th ASEM Summit held in Brussels, October 2010.

Four main topics were discussed during this third ministerial meeting and introduced by speakers of different ASEM members. The topic of quality assurance and recognition was introduced by both the European Commission and the Republic of Korea. The second topic of engaging business and industry in education was presented by Malaysia. The introductory remarks on the third topic of balanced mobility were given by China. Vietnam focused on the fourth topic of lifelong learning including vocational education and training.

The Meeting congratulated Denmark for successfully hosting the Third Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education and thus giving continuity and new momentum to the ASEM Education Process and education policy dialogue started in Berlin 2008 and Hanoi 2009.

The Ministers:

- (1) Underlined their wish for an intensive and sustainable Asia-Europe education partnership on the basis of mutual respect and benefit, thus contributing to the overall strategic dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe, reaffirmed by the ASEM Leaders during their Summit in Brussels on 4 and 5 October 2010.
- (2) Renewed their views that high-quality research, education and training systems that encourage and foster lifelong learning in all its diversity are crucial for the attractiveness of their education and training provision and hence for the devel-

opment of highly qualified and employable citizens and economic growth in Asia and Europe, and no less for democracy and social cohesion in both regions; therefore, investment in all education and training sectors is of utmost importance, also and especially in times of financial crisis.¹

- (3) Stressed the key role of the ASEM Education Process for the dialogue and cooperation in the field of education and training between Asia and Europe for the broader context of relations between both regions; the results of the ASEM Education Process should be transferred for consideration to the Bologna Policy Forum and the ASEM Summits of Heads of State and Government.
- (4) Acknowledged that the ASEM Education Process made good progress since the first two ministerial conferences in Berlin and Hanoi and noted with appreciation the numerous initiatives taken by ASEM members², the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) through the ASEM Education Hub, the ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning in order to strengthen cooperation and mobility between Asia and Europe and to improve transparency and understanding of the different education systems.
- (5) Emphasised the importance of keeping the momentum of the ASEM Education Process and strengthening the efforts to further develop the ASEM Education Area by continued joint activities and concrete measures taken by the ASEM members. Future cooperation between the ASEM countries should build on existing structures and international conventions (e.g. UNESCO), in the field of recognition, quality assurance and mobility of both students and researchers. If new structures are needed, lessons learned by members should be taken into account in order to ensure that the goal of cost effectiveness is met.
- (6) Thanked the ASEM Education Secretariat which was established by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and hosted by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for effectively coordinating the ASEM educational activities and providing a comprehensive progress report on the implementation of these activities. In order to get a systematic overview and analysis of the ASEM educational activities on a regular basis, the Meeting called on the Secretariat to prepare a stocktaking report for the biennial Ministerial Meetings. In this context the Ministers thanked Belgium, China, Indonesia, Luxemburg and the Netherlands for the secondment of staff to the Secretariat.
- (7) Recognised the need to involve stakeholders, through the ASEM Rectors' Conference, and other initiatives from higher education institutions and student repre-

¹ Noted from the conclusions of the ASEF-organised initiatives in 2010: the 1st Asia-Europe Education Workshop on the Impact of the Financial Crisis to Higher Education and the 4th Connecting Civil Societies of Asia and Europe (Eight points for ASEM8).

² For more details, please refer to the AES Status Report

sentatives, in the ASEM Education Process to achieve a broad consensus on the aims and measures of the Process, and acknowledged the recommendations from the 2nd ASEM Rectors' Conference which was held in Korea, October 2010.

- (8) Recognised with appreciation the successful activities in mobility joint research and industry contacts achieved by European-Asian University networks such as the ASEA-UNINET and EURASIA-PACIFIC Networks.

In order to advance and deepen the ASEM educational cooperation in the four topics discussed in their meeting, the Ministers agreed on a number of activities and measures to be carried out and implemented in the coming years.

A. Quality Assurance and Recognition

The Ministers:

1. Laid emphasis on strengthening interregional cooperation in the field of external quality assurance between quality assurance agencies and networks in Asia and Europe by organising joint meetings, with a view to develop common principles of quality assurance across the ASEM education area. Germany offers to host a first expert seminar in 2011. In order to ensure the continuity of the dialogue on quality assurance a seminar will be held in France in 2012. Progress and results will be presented for ASEMME4. With support of the ASEM Education Secretariat, an extensive glossary of quality assurance terms used in both regions should be compiled;
2. Urged the ASEM members to improve mutual recognition of qualifications by developing a common understanding of credits and learning outcomes; the ASEM Education Secretariat has already compiled relevant information on credits and learning outcomes in ASEM countries and is asked to regularly update this information on its website;
3. Suggested exploring the feasibility of setting up an ASEM convention on mutual recognition of degrees and study achievements (including the establishment of National Information and Recognition Centres in all ASEM countries); Austria volunteers to take an active part in establishing an ASEM pilot group of experts who will inform ASEMME4 about the progress;
4. Proposed to consider the implementation of the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education across the ASEM Education Area.

B. Engaging Business and Industry in Education

The Ministers:

5. Agreed to make the ASEM University-Business Forum (organised for the first time in Bangkok, March 2010) an annual event; the Forum should identify examples of good practice, develop ideas and make recommendations on how to

improve university-business cooperation between ASEM countries; Germany offers to host the second ASEM University-Business Forum in late 2011. Malaysia offers to host a stakeholder meeting in 2012;

6. Invited the European Commission to link the ASEM University-Business Forum to the EU University-Business Forum and include a specific session with Asian and European representatives from academia and the world of work that will contribute to deepen the dialogue on bi-regional university-business cooperation in areas such as participation of employers in curriculum development and the labour-market relevance of graduate qualifications; also the organisers of future ASEM University Business Fora are asked to consider balanced participation from Asia and Europe.
7. Invited ASEF through the ASEM Rectors' Conference to contribute to the ASEM University-Business Forum, in order to enhance the dialogue on higher education-business cooperation between stakeholders;
8. Considered the establishment of an ASEM placement programme in terms of setting up a pilot scheme for higher education-business mobility of qualified students between Asia and Europe (partly funded by public resources and industry);
9. Asked to explore the possibility to open up the EU ERASMUS Mundus Programme to the exchange of ASEM placement students in the next phase of the programme.

C. Balanced Mobility

The Ministers:

10. Shared the view that learning mobility between Asia and Europe should be more balanced and urged the ASEM Education Secretariat to organise workshops in order to develop, together with experts from ASEM members, a strategy for balanced mobility and prepare a first draft with recommendations for the next ministerial meeting;
11. Underscored the need for more and better data on student and staff mobility between Asia and Europe to provide a solid basis for political conclusions and decisions;
12. Resolved to improve the level of information on educational opportunities in Asia and Europe among people and invite ASEM members to support ASEF in its effort to update and maintain the DEEP database;
13. Encouraged the ASEM members to increase the number of joint study programmes (e.g. in Asian and European studies) and summer schools between Asian and European higher education institutions by using various programmes and funding schemes; an ASEM pilot scheme for joint curriculum development, funded by interested ASEM countries, could be envisaged;
14. Agreed to promote student, teacher, researcher and administrative staff exchanges by using existing mobility schemes; the Ministers acknowledged the ef-

forts made by ASEM DUO to strengthen the bilateral student and teacher exchange between Asian and European institutions and took note of the extension of the ASEM DUO programme to its third phase; the ASEM DUO secretariat is to be evaluated and looks forward to presenting the results at ASEMME4;

15. Proposed to enhance mobility between Asia and Europe by intensifying promotional activities in both regions, appointing competent students and staff with a mobility experience as “ambassadors for mobility” in each ASEM country and organising ASEM education fairs in Asia and Europe (e.g. with EU support). The ASEM Education Secretariat is asked to set up an expert group to explore the usefulness of a promotion strategy for the ASEM Education Area;
16. Encouraged ASEM members to organise thematic training seminars on removing obstacles to mobility (e.g. recognition), funded by EU or national resources; the Ministers welcomed Thailand’s offer to host an international ASEM conference on mobility in late 2011.

D. Lifelong Learning (LLL) including Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The Ministers:

17. Affirmed their commitment to enhancing adult and community education and acknowledged the importance of lifelong learning as the space in which democratic social and political participation can be fostered and practised, in the service of social cohesion and the quality of life;
18. Encouraged the strengthening of lifelong learning research base in universities and research institutes in the ASEM area, including their capacity for international exchange of information and analysis, in order to contribute to evidence-based educational reform and innovation;
19. Recommended dissemination of good practices, such as learning cities, learning communities, learning festivals, learning entitlements, lifelong learning accounts, vouchers for lifelong learning and academic credit banks system, literacy programmes, professionalization of adult teachers, etc., and sharing of research findings in lifelong learning between ASEM countries through the coordination of ASEM LLL Hub in cooperation with UNESCO and other international organisations;
20. Encouraged workplace learning and increase of both employer responsibilities for provision and employee opportunities for participation;
21. Welcomed Denmark’s offer to host an “ASEM Forum on Lifelong Learning” in April 2012 under the coordination of the ASEM LLL Hub during the Danish EU presidency;
22. Called attention to continuing the dialogue on qualifications frameworks between Asian and European experts in order to improve transparency and knowledge of the varied approaches to and understandings of lifelong learning in both regions;

23. Encouraged the exchange of experience on how qualifications frameworks affect lifelong learning and assure broad stakeholder acceptance of new forms of adult learning, thereby especially underlining the idea of enhancing and supporting the development of qualifications frameworks – including validation and recognition of informal and non-formal learning outcomes and flexible pathways to further education and career. In this context, the Ministers welcomed Vietnam's offer to host a conference on qualifications framework and Germany's offer to organise the next Vocational Education Training Symposium with special regard to qualifications frameworks in early 2012;
24. Requested the Senior Officials and the ASEM Education Secretariat to provide the ASEMME4 with a systematic overview on existing qualifications frameworks models (including conclusions concerning ASEM education cooperation);
25. Asked to document best practices in VET, particularly those reflecting industry-school partnerships which can be shared by all participating countries; a workshop hosted by Austria will present these examples;
26. Suggested establishing an expert group in order to elaborate the development of joint VET initiatives;
27. Welcomed Malaysia's offer to host an expert meeting on e-learning as a component of lifelong learning;
28. Agreed to support, disseminate and utilise the ASEM LLL Hub's research activities in national contexts and invited countries to contribute to the operation of the ASEM LLL Hub secretariat, for example by sending staff to work at the secretariat for a period;
29. Encouraged ASEM members to support the cooperation between the ASEM LLL Hub, relevant EU networks and the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning in order to maximise knowledge and scholarly exchanges in the field between Asia and Europe.

The Ministers mandated:

The ASEM Education Secretariat to observe and assist the member countries in implementing the proposed initiatives and to inform the Ministers on the progress achieved with the stocktaking report for ASEMME4 in 2013.

The Ministers welcomed:

- Malaysia's offer to host the Fourth Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME4) in 2013;
- Indonesia's offer to host the ASEM Education Secretariat as of October 2013. ASEM members are invited to second staff to the ASEM Education Secretariat;



- Latvia's offer to host the Fifth Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME5) in 2015;
- The Republic of Korea's offer to host the Sixth Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME6) in 2017.

Copenhagen, May 10th 2011, 12.00 am