Asia matters – for Europe. And Europe matters – for Asia. It is with this simple premise in mind that the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) was created in 1996.

**What Is ASEM?**

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is a unique, informal platform for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe on the big challenges of a fast-changing world, such as Connectivity, trade and investment, climate change, but also broad security challenges such as counter-terrorism, migration, maritime security and cyber issues. Bringing together 53 partners from across Europe and Asia, ASEM is the main multilateral platform linking Europe and Asia with significant global weight: ASEM partners represent around 60% of global GDP, 60% of global population and 60% of global trade. ASEM main purpose is to provide a platform to foster political dialogue, strengthen economic cooperation and tackle global challenges together. In many respects, recent developments in the international landscape have increased the value of ASEM as a key building block for an open, cooperative and rules-based international system.

ASEM is conducted as an informal and flexible process on the basis of equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual benefit. ASEM aims to promote the exchange of ideas and best practices and thus act as a breeding ground for new policy ideas. In short, ASEM is the most influential comprehensive partnership between Asia and Europe, boosting Connectivity in all its dimensions between the two regions.

**ASEM Partners**

The initial ASEM partnership which was inaugurated in Bangkok, Thailand on 1-2 March 1996 consisted of just 15 EU member states and 7 ASEAN member states plus China, Japan, Korea and the European Commission. Today ASEM comprises 51 partner countries: the 28 Member States of the European Union [1] plus Norway and Switzerland on the European side and the 10 ASEAN countries [2] plus Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Russia on the Asian side. It also includes two institutional partners: the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat.
Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

How it Works

ASEM works through **meetings** and **activities** organised at different levels.

The **ASEM Summit** is a meeting between the 51 Heads of State or Government, the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The summits are held every second year, alternating between Asia and Europe.

**Ministerial Meetings** are organised in-between the ASEM Summits, gathering ministers of foreign affairs, finance, economics, labour and employment, culture, education, transport and environment. Occasionally other ministerial conferences are held on specific issues and areas that are not covered by the main ministerial meetings.

**Senior Officials’ Meetings (SOM)** bring together high-level civil servants from the Foreign Ministries of all ASEM partners for the overall coordination of the ASEM process. Sectoral SOMs are also held in preparation of the various Ministerial meetings.
Activities and initiatives are organised by ASEM partners on a wide range of issues of mutual interest. A full overview of all ASEM meetings can be found at the ASEM InfoBoard:

At the 11th ASEM Summit held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 15-17 July 2016, leaders outlined their decision "to mainstream connectivity in all its dimensions, including political, economic, digital, institutional, socio-cultural and people-to-people, into all relevant ASEM activities". The Summit also included the decision to establish an ASEM Pathfinder Group on Connectivity (APGC) for a term of two years (i.e. until the next ASEM Summit, to be held in the 2nd half of 2018). Its aim is to explore more deeply and through a range of specific activities how ASEM could add value in the area of connectivity.

**SEM has no secretariat.** Foreign ministers and their senior officials have an overall coordinating role within the ASEM process. They are assisted in this by an informal group of coordinators: two from the Asian side (currently Myanmar representing the ASEAN and New Zealand the non-ASEAN (NESA) countries) and two from the European side (the European External Action Service (EEAS) as the permanent coordinator and the rotating EU Presidency).

**The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** is an international non-profit organisation, based in Singapore, with the aim to promote cultural ties and foster people-to-people contacts between both civil society and business leaders from the two regions.

**Meetings**

The 11th ASEM Summit at which ASEM celebrated its 20th anniversary took place in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 15-16 July 2016, under the chairmanship of the President of Mongolia. President of the European Council Donald Tusk and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker participated, accompanied by High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini. At the 11th ASEM Summit Leaders adopted the Ulanbaatar Declaration setting out their vision for the future of ASEM:

In 2017, the following ASEM Ministerial Meetings are foreseen:

- Education Ministers, 9-10 May 2017, Seoul, Republic of Korea
- Economic Ministers, 21-22 September 2017, Seoul, Republic of Korea
- Transport Ministers. 26-28 September 2017, Bali, Indonesia
- Foreign Ministers, 20-21 November, Naypyidaw, Myanmar

**For more information**

**Documents**

ASEM factsheet and ASEM brochure
See also

Information about ASEF
Information about the ASEM process and its activities
ASEM according to Herman Van Rompuy, former President of the European Council
www.eeas.europa.eu

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