- Two-way trade and investment, business-to-business dialogue and cooperation in priority industrial sectors;
- Health;
- Science and technology including information and communication;
- Sustainable development;
- Climate change, environment, water, energy and food security;
- Intercultural and interfaith dialogue as a means to promote mutual understanding;
- Human rights;
- Non-proliferation, combating illicit trafficking in and accumulation of small arms and light weapons;
- Migration;
- Culture and education;
- Dialogue among parliaments and civil society.

**ASEM Family**
- The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), Singapore-based, international, not-for-profit foundation, is the only permanent institution of ASEM and is charged with promoting cultural, intellectual and people-to-people contacts between the two regions.
- The Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (AEP) promotes cooperation between parliaments in Europe and Asia and offers parliamentarians an opportunity to influence the ASEM process.
- The Asia-Europe Peoples’ Forum (AEPF) is the ‘grass roots’ level of ASEM and serves as an interregional network of civil society and societal movements across Asia and Europe.
- The Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF) aims to enhance business-to-business dialogue and cooperation between the two regions and to provide opportunity for interaction between business and political leaders.

**ASEM brings together**
- Government representatives of Asian and European ASEM partner countries and institutions.
- Lawmakers, businesses and civil society - parliamentarians, the business community and civil society groups meet at the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership, the Asia-Europe Business Forum and the Asia Europe People’s Forum respectively, held every two years alongside ASEM Summits.

**People of Asia and Europe** - ASEM aims to promote greater understanding and collaboration between the peoples of Asia and Europe through cultural, intellectual and people-to-people exchanges. For this purpose, ASEF is the main working tool.

**ASEM aims to**
- Build a greater understanding between the peoples of the two regions and establish a strengthened dialogue to address global issues.
- Continue reinforcing the partnership between Asia and Europe in the political, economic, socio-cultural and other areas of cooperation.
- Foster open discussions on geopolitical issues of common concern, create a space of peace and shared development with common interests and aspirations such as upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respect for democracy, the rule of law, equality, justice and human rights, concern for the environment and other global issues of interest.
- Promote poverty eradication, protection of cultural heritage and the promotion of intellectual endeavours, economic and social development, knowledge and educational resources, science and technology, commerce, investment and enterprise.

**EU and the ASEM process**
- The European Commission is a founding ASEM partner. In 2014, following a decision on aligning the status of the EU in the ASEM process with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, a conversion was made from the European Commission to the European Union (EU).
- The ASEM Dialogue Facility, an EU-funded project, was created by the European Commission in 2008 (currently in its 4th phase). It aims to enhance support for the established ASEM process, to strengthen its coordination and provide a solid platform for sustainable ASEM cooperation. Given the increasing number of countries involved in the ASEM process and their diversity, the Facility also aims to ensure balanced participation of less-developed ASEM partner countries in the ASEM dialogue.
- The EU makes substantial financial contribution to the Trans-Eurasia Information Network (TEIN) which provides a large-scale research and education data-communications network for the Asia-Pacific region. TEIN was launched at the 3rd ASEM Summit in 2000.
The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is the key forum for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. It provides a stable platform for partnership to foster political dialogue and reinforce economic cooperation as well as collaboration in various other areas, including in the socio-cultural field and on global issues. ASEM enhances mutual understanding and awareness through a process of dialogue and tangible cooperation on key issues and by working together to address challenges and translate them into opportunities. ASEM is conducted as an informal process, on the basis of equal partnership, mutual respect and benefit. ASEM aims to stimulate and facilitate progress in other fora without duplication.

To summarise, ASEM is the most influential comprehensive partnership between Asia and Europe, crossing hands across continents.

ASEM Mission Statement

The Asia-Europe Meeting ASEM is the key forum for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. It provides a stable platform for partnership to foster political dialogue and reinforce economic cooperation as well as collaboration in various other areas, including in the socio-cultural field and on global issues. ASEM enhances mutual understanding and awareness through a process of dialogue and tangible cooperation on key issues and by working together to address challenges and translate them into opportunities. ASEM is conducted as an informal process, on the basis of equal partnership, mutual respect and benefit. ASEM aims to stimulate and facilitate progress in other fora without duplication.

ASEM Key Messages

- Unique multilateral and inter-regional framework to increase convergence between Asia and Europe;
- Political, economic, social and cultural platform, promoting cooperation between two dynamic regions;
- Open, evolutionary and informal partnership working for peace, security, human rights and prosperity for all.

ASEM Partners

The Asia-Europe Meeting was founded in 1996 and is composed of 51 partner countries:

- Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Myanmar; the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam.

Besides the above countries, ASEM includes also two institutional partners, namely the ASEAN Secretariat and the European Union.

Representing about 60% of the world’s GDP of its population and of global trade, ASEM embraces virtually the whole of Asia and Europe.

ASEM History

- The origins of ASEM lie in the mutual recognition, in both Asia and Europe, that the relationship between the two regions needs to be strengthened, reflecting the then new global context of the 1990s and the perspectives of the approaching new century.
- In November 1994, Singapore and France proposed that an EU-Asia summit meeting be held, to consider how to build a new partnership between the two interconnected regions. The first ASEM Summit was held in Bangkok in March 1996, with 15 European Union member states and 10 Asian countries participating, as well as the European Commission.
- ASEM is an open and evolutionary process; its enlargement is conducted on the basis of consent by the heads of state and government. The ASEM family has continued to grow through successive rounds of enlargement.
- The 5th ASEM Summit in Seoul in October 2000 provided an opportunity to review the process and its achievements and to consolidate this foundation for a comprehensive and sustained cooperation between the two regions. In this regard, ASEM leaders adopted the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework (AECF) 2000, which sets out the vision, principles, objectives, priorities and mechanisms for the ASEM process.
- In 2006, ASEM celebrated its 10th anniversary by adopting at the 6th ASEM Summit the so-called Helsinki Declaration on the Future of ASEM in which the Heads of State and Government expressed their resolve to take the ASEM process forward and reasserted ASEM’s role as a catalyst in the broader context of EU-Asia relations.
- In 2016, ASEM celebrates its 20th anniversary, offering the forum the opportunity to push forward and enhance the partnership between Asia and Europe through increased connectivity. The Ulaanbaatar Declaration, to be adopted at the 11th ASEM Summit, will provide the forum with a roadmap setting ASEM’s priorities as it enters its third decade.

ASEM Characteristics

- Informal: ASEM provides an open forum for policy makers and officials to discuss any political, economic or socio-cultural issues of common interest. In this way, it complements rather than duplicates the work already being carried out in bilateral and multilateral fora.
- Equilateral: A platform to enhance understanding and awareness amongst the ASEM partners through dialogue and cooperation on topics of mutual interest on the basis of equal partnership, mutual respect and benefit.
- Open and evolutionary: With regard to both its enlargement and the issues addressed.
- Multi-dimensional: It covers the full spectrum of relations between the two regions and devotes equal weight to political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions.
- High-level and people-focused: It provides a platform for meetings not only of heads of state and government, ministers and senior officials, but also puts an increasing focus on fostering contacts among all stakeholders in the regions, including experts, civil society representatives and the youth.

How ASEM Works

ASEM works through meetings and activities organised at different levels:
- Summits – Attended by heads of state and government of the European and Asian countries, the Presidents of the European Council and of the European Commission, and the ASEAN Secretary General. It serves as the highest level of decision-making in the ASEM process. The summits are held every second year, in Asia and Europe alternatively.
- Ministerial Meetings – Foreign, economic, finance, environment, education, labour and culture ministers meet on a regular basis to discuss issues of mutual concern. Additional ministerial conferences are held irregularly on specific issues and areas that are not covered by the main ministerial meetings.
- Official’s Meetings – Senior Official’s Meetings (SOM), Senior Official’s Meetings for Education meetings, Senior Official’s Meetings on Trade and Investment (SOMTI), Finance Deputies’ meetings, Customs Director-Generals’ meetings as well as many other formats are held on a regular basis.

Activities – ASEM actively involves itself in a wide range of activities to get its message across - from conferences on information technology to cultural diversity to sustainable development.

ASEM 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 – representing the ASEAN and non-ASEAN (NESA) groups – and two from the European side – the European External Action Service (EEAS) as the permanent coordinator and the rotating EU Presidency.

The three pillars of ASEM

- Political – important issues and challenges affecting both continents, including the fight against terrorism, common response to international security threats, global environmental issues, management of migratory flows, human rights, welfare of women and children, etc.
- Economic and Financial – promoting growth and employment, enhancing cooperation on international financial issues, dialogue in priority industrial sectors, fostering connectivity between the two regions, etc.
- Social, cultural, intellectual – a wide range of enhanced contacts and dialogue between the two regions on topics such as education, social protection and employment, and co-operation on the protection of cultural heritage.

In a globalised world, closely working together across these three ‘pillars’ makes ASEM an important meeting point for dialogue and communication, and for promoting a common vision of peace, prosperity and sustainable development in both regions.

ASEM Themes

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ASEM Themes

ASEM covers potentially all topics of common interest to Asia and Europe:

- Global and regional challenges of common concern;
- Globalisation, competitiveness and structural changes in the global economy including finance, labour issues, education and human resource development;
- Connectivity: infrastructure and people-to-people links between the two regions;