



**PRESS RELEASE
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**ASIA EUROPE FORUM FOSTERS DISCUSSION ON MAJOR GLOBAL ISSUES
IN MARINE FISHERIES**

“Dialogue is essential if we are to resolve the issues that both Asia and Europe must tackle across the marine fisheries sector,” says the European Commission’s Director General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Mr. Fokion Fokiadis.

The Forum will explore ways of addressing some of the biggest challenges confronting international marine fisheries. Delegates from more than 40 countries will seek to work together to improve dialogue and mutual understanding.

The two day event will be hosted by the European Commission’s DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. Marine fishing is a very important sector of the economy in both Europe and Asia, and delegates will seek to balance the security and prosperity of those working in the sector with the need for sustainability and the preservation of the planet’s resources.

Vast numbers of people depend on the fisheries industry for their livelihoods in markets and as processors and producers, but there are serious threats attached to quality and stock levels. The ASEM Forum will aim to address these openly by building on areas of common interest.

Specific areas which speakers and delegates at the Forum will debate include:

- Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. A new EC regulation, adopted in 2008 and applicable from 1 January 2010, aims at preventing, deterring and eliminating such activities. This is also a critical issue within Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs).

- Future challenges for tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). Asians and Europeans have to work hand in hand to take up challenges of Tuna RFMOs: harmonisation of their work, compliance, the role of developing countries etc.

- Sanitary and phytosanitary measures in trading of high quality of foodstuffs and looking ahead to future development policies. The EU attaches great importance to high quality goods and sustainable trade, but European standards are often perceived as one of the most important trade barriers to exports. This is a vital area for discussion.

- Tools for sustainable development of aquaculture. Countries in Asia and Europe agree that the importance of aquaculture in supplying world markets will grow. The industries in both continents need to work in close collaboration in order to achieve sustainable development.

The ASEM Forum will take place alongside the 16th Annual European Seafood Exposition (ESE), the largest seafood event in the world, which will be held at the Parc des Expositions in Brussels from April 28 to 30.

ASEM Forum delegates will be visiting the seafood event to view the stands, to network and to share insights, information and intelligence. They will also be able to learn at first hand about the latest developments in the global seafood industry.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Asia-Europe Meeting is the premier multilateral channel for communication between Asia and Europe. An informal collection of members, it has facilitated dialogue between governments and created greater understanding between peoples since its creation in 1996. It now represents 50 per cent of the world's GDP, nearly 60 per cent of its population and 60 per cent of global trade. ASEM is made up of 43 countries plus two international organisations (The European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat) and has implemented almost 100 initiatives with experts in themed working meetings and symposia.

The first meeting of the ASEM Forum on Trade and Investment in Marine Fisheries took place in Yantai, China last September, where delegates agreed to further enhance their mutual understanding. The EU is the largest import market for fisheries products in the world, with imports totalling €16.4 billion in 2007. South East Asian countries are the second most important providers of fish and fisheries products to the EU.

The second ASEM Forum on Marine Fisheries "Towards Enhanced Co-operation and Better Understanding of Marine Fisheries" takes place on the premises on the European Commission, Berlaymont, Brussels from 0900 on April 28, with a visit to the Seafood Exhibition at the Parc des Expositions on the morning of April 29.

For more information on ASEM please visit ec.europa.eu/external_relations/asem/in_tro or www.aseminfoboard.org. For further information on the 16th Annual European Seafood Exposition (ESE) please visit www.euroseafood.com and www.europrocessing.com

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