



ASEP III/SR

**ASEP III
Summary Report**

Hue, Viet Nam, 25-26th March 2004

The third Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP III) was held in the imperial city of Hue, Viet Nam on 25th - 26th March of 2004 under the theme “*Towards the ASEM-5 Summit Meeting – Parliamentarians’ contribution to the Asia-Europe Partnership*” with the participation of Speakers and Heads of Delegations from the ten Asian countries, the Member States of the European Union and the European Parliament, the representative of the European Commission, the secretaries General of AIPO and ASEAN were invited as guests of the host parliament

Prior to the March 25th and 26th official meetings, ASEP Parliamentarians held informal consultations to take up organizational matters (see the meeting summary report in the annex).

The inaugural ceremony on 25th March 2004 heard the speeches by H.E. Nguyen Van An, President of the National Assembly of the S.R Viet Nam and the host of the ASEP III, by H.E Vu Khoan, Deputy Prime Minister of the S.R Viet Nam and by Hon.Mr Juan Flavier, President Pro-tempo of the Philippines Senate, respectively. Following the adoption of the Agenda and Programme, the rules of the meeting and election of officers of the Conference by the plenary session, delegations and guests participated in the discussion of the following four topics relating to the three political, economic and cultural pillars of the ASEM process.

Topic 1: Current International Security Situation and Challenges to International Law

Topic 2: Asia-Europe cooperation for a fairer and more equal global trade

Topic 3: Cultural identity and diversity in the context of the Asia-Europe partnership

Topic 4: Towards the ASEM-5 Summit Meeting: Further revitalizing and substantiating the Asia-Europe Partnership

The following are the summary reports of discussions on the political, economic and cultural topics:

Topic 1. Current International Security Situation and Challenges to International Law

The session was co-chaired by Hon. Mrs. Ton Nu Thi Ninh, Vice-Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Vietnam National Assembly and Hon. The Glyn Ford, Member of the European Parliament. The meeting heard lead statements by Hon. Zhang Zhijian, Head of China's delegation and by Hon. Edouard Ballaman, Head of the Italian Delegation. Hon. Imam. Addaruqutni from the Indonesian delegation served as Rapporteur for the Meeting

1. Parliamentarians had an extensive discussion on traditional and non-traditional threats to international security and dwelt on the situation in Iraq and on the Korean peninsula.
2. Parliamentarians emphasized that beside traditional threats such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, non-traditional threats, namely international terrorism, transnational organized crimes, epidemics, drug trafficking, human trafficking, environmental issues were threatening international peace and security.
3. Parliamentarians agreed in particular that international terrorism emerges as the most dominant threat to international security. Parliamentarians also took this opportunity to express condolences to families of victims of the deadly bombings in Madrid on 11th, March, 2004.

4. Parliamentarians stressed that international terrorism should not be linked to any single country, religion or culture and countries should take a holistic and multilateral approach in dealing with international terrorism and other security threats. Economic and political measures should be taken together with promoting dialogues with Muslim countries, protecting national identities, respecting cultural diversity, reducing the negative impacts of globalization and dealing with root causes of international terrorism.
5. Parliamentarians considered that certain reactions to international terrorism constituted challenges to fundamental principles of international law and the UN Charter.
6. Parliamentarians emphasized that in face of such security threats, countries should cooperate closely with each other on the basis of respect for and strict observation of fundamental principles of international law and UN Charter.
7. Parliamentarians agreed that the United Nations as the greatest global organization should continue its role as the sole bulwark of international peace and security, building equal, healthy international relations. Moreover, the United Nations, especially the UN Security Council and the General Assembly should be reformed to make effective contributions to maintaining international peace and security.
8. Parliamentarians agreed that Parliamentarians should make contribution to development of international law, as well to the domestic legislative process in support of international instruments in the fight against international security threats, especially terrorism.
9. Parliamentarians stressed that efforts should be made to promote dialogues and cooperation between the two continents, contributing to the process of confidence-building, mutual understanding among nations for a peaceful, stable world and sustainable development.

10. Some parliamentarians stressed that the Iraq crisis has been a valuable lesson for every country of Asia and Europe and the rest of the world to further promote multilateralism.

Topic 2. Asia-Europe Cooperation for a fairer and more equal world trading system

The meeting was co-chaired by Hon. Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Tran, Vice chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of Viet Nam and Mr. Nassauer, Member of the European Parliament. Hon. Madame Helga Moos from Denmark delegation served as rapporteur for the meeting

1. Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Tran, made an introductory statement, underlining the fact while the world had changed considerably with the integration of an increasing number of developing countries in the world trading system, the current international trading system remained unfair and inequitable at the expense of developing countries' interests. He pointed out specific recommendations for promoting economic cooperation within ASEM and expressed the hope that with EU's economic power and Asia's economic dynamism and potential, ASEP Parliamentarians are well-placed to turn these recommendations into reality.
2. Jordan Ryan, Country Representative of UNDP, made a background presentation, clearly pointing out that trade can be a poverty-reduction engine and that fair trade is the eighth goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) endorsed by Heads of State and the key to achieving other MDGs such as poverty reduction, empowerment of women, reduction of child and maternal mortality.
3. Hon. MP Mr. Kent Harstedt from Sweden, as the lead speaker for Europe, said that trade is a two-way traffic and that EU is not a project that builds walls and borders to keep neighbors out. The European economic model is attractive and respected not just for its export potential but for its ability to import as well.
4. Hon. Senator Nor Azah Awi from Malaysia, as the lead speaker for Asia, stated that while globalization, fueled by the ICT development, capital mobility, global standards and trade liberalization, has

- contributed to economic growth and development of both developed and developing countries, the income gap between developed and developing countries and the number of people in absolute poverty had been widened. To remedy this situation, it was necessary to provide assistance to developing countries through providing international financing, increasing their involvement in policy formulation as well as reshaping the global economic structure.
5. The Parliamentarians reaffirmed their commitment to the successful conclusion of the WTO Doha Development Agenda (DDA). They also stressed the importance of ASEP parliamentarians' role in contributing to overcoming the current obstacles to the Doha Development Agenda. They all agreed that quick progress in this regard must be seen in 2004 to make sure that 2004 would not be the "lost year" for the multilateral trading system. The Parliamentarians also agreed that ASEM governments to provide necessary assistance for Viet Nam's early completion of WTO's accession.
 6. They further agreed that while FTAs/RTAs have been beneficial from certain perspectives, they should complement and reinforce multilateral trade relations and be consistent with the rules and regulations of the WTO. It was important the FTAs/RTAs involving developing countries should take into account their development needs and try to avoid imposing WTO plus conditions upon them.
 7. Parliamentarians observed that while the world economy had been liberalized at unprecedented levels, prevailing protection remained biased against developing countries' interests such as high tariff on agricultural items and labor-intensive manufacturing goods that developing countries have a comparative advantage in. In this regard, Parliamentarians noted that market access carries a development dimension as well because 1% of increase in the developing countries' share of world trade can lift 9 million poor people out of poverty in the developing world.
 8. Parliamentarians noted that the excessive use of subsidies, high technical sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards and anti-dumping procedures have acted as a disguise for protectionism to the detriment of developing countries and should be avoided. Yet, the continued use of subsidies should be permitted, to some extent, for developing countries, as a form of preferential and different treatment.

9. Parliamentarians noted that besides positive benefits, the current age of globalization has brought about negative side effects such as the risk of crisis, widening development gap and marginalization. Yet, those international organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank, established to manage globalization, have tended to lack democratic control. As elected representatives, it is a duty of ASEP parliamentarians to recuperate a voice in these bodies to push for policy changes through well-informed recommendations to better manage globalization for the sake of fair trade and a more equal world.
10. Parliamentarians also noted that trade is not an end in itself but only a means to realize socio-economic development and poverty reduction in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and that market access alone does not help but must be supported by domestic institutional and legal reform, technological and educational development and external support for improved capacity for developing countries. All this will contribute to increased national resilience sorely needed by developing countries to respond to challenges of globalization and to compete in this highly competitive world.
11. Concerning Asia-Europe economic cooperation, parliamentarians noted that current levels of economic cooperation remained limited and should be further enhanced to take advantage of Asian and European immense economic potentials, good political relations and the well-established ASEM cooperation framework. Among the EU, the US and Asia, the Asia-Europe link constitutes an important force, thus the furtherance of cooperation and dialogue through ASEM would ensure stability and prosperity for the two continents and the world at large.
12. Given the existing development gap within ASEM, ASEM parliaments indicated their need for sharing experience in establishing a legal system for economic integration, poverty reduction and the narrowing of the development gap, especially the digital divide within ASEM.
13. Parliamentarians emphasized the complementary role of Asia-Europe parliaments in supporting ASEM Governments' economic cooperation activities. More specifically, parliamentarians would urge members of government to review and make more pro-development

the existing technical barriers and take specific measures to promote trade and investment cooperation between the two continents. ASEP III would send such key messages to the ASEM 5 Meeting to be held in Ha Noi in October 2004.

Topic 3: Cultural identity and diversity in the context of the Asia-Europe partnership

The Meeting was co-chaired by Hon. Mr. Ngo Anh Dzung M.P. Vice Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee of the Viet Nam National Assembly and Hon. The Lord Inglewood, Member of the European Parliament. Hon. Mr. Markku Rossi, Member of Parliament of the Republic of Finland served as Rapporteur for the Meeting.

1. The two lead statements were delivered by Hon. Kosugi Takashi, Former Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Head of the Japanese Delegation and Hon. Birraux Claude, M.P. of the French Parliament. The meeting also listened to the background paper presented by Mr. Brian Zottoli, representative of UNESCO Office in Hanoi and presentations of the representatives from Belgium, Indonesia, Vietnam, Republic of Korea, China, Singapore, Thailand and Ireland.
2. The participants actively took part in the discussion and reached consensus on the following issues:

Culture is one of the most important pillars for sustainable development

3. International integration for development is intimately linked to the respect for cultural diversity. The role and position of culture in the reinforcement and safeguarding of world peace has been reaffirmed,

emphasized and placed high on the agenda of every international forum.

4. Dialogue among cultures and civilizations could be considered a norm of conduct for cooperation in a globalized world. This context necessitates national efforts to preserve national identities while harnessing the values of cultures and civilizations of humanity. The meeting also underlined that the dialogue and cooperation between cultures and civilizations are among the most effective measures to enhance knowledge, mutual understanding and tolerance and to end conflict among different nations and countries.
5. Regional and international integration demands that each and every nation- state respect the values and the differences of other cultures and show a fair attitude towards the values of each and every nation.
6. Delegates emphasized the role to be played by ASEM and ASEP in the encouragement of cultural diversity and the policy notably in Ensuring access to cultural values for people from all segments of the society.

International Convention on Cultural Diversity.

7. Participants underlined the value of adoption of the Convention on Cultural Diversity. This international instrument would be one of the most effective measures to protect the cultural identity and diversity in the context of globalization, especially for the developing countries to preserve their national identity and to look upon the opening-up to the world with more confidence.
8. Some delegates noted that "cultural goods" must not be subjected to a pure business logic, and cultural "goods" must be solely treated as special in the context of free trade.

Measures to promote Asia - Europe cultural co-operation and exchanges

9. Promoting cultural exchanges and dialogue among member countries through regional, inter-regional, bilateral and multilateral cultural activities.

10. Encouraging and supporting initiatives concerning the cooperation and dialogue among member parliaments of ASEP with a view to promoting the spirit of UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.
11. The meeting called on ASEP members to establish a suitable legal framework to facilitate cultural dialogue and cooperation among ASEM members and to pursue efforts towards formation and adoption of international standard instrument for the preservation and promotion of cultural identity and diversity.
12. The Participants attached great importance to promoting international exchange of foreign students, especially, between the two continents.

Participants agreed on concrete initiatives and recommendations:

I. Within ASEP framework:

13. ASEP should collaborate with Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNESCO in organizing the forum: “Parliamentarians promoting exchanges among cultures” in 2005 as a follow-up to the 3rd ASEP. This forum aims to contribute to the current endeavours of ASEM and UNESCO in developing international legal means for cultural diversity. The participants also called upon countries to build up a legal framework to facilitate cultural and educational exchanges between Asia and Europe, especially among ASEP members. At the same time, each country should ensure equal access of its people to the cultural quintessence of other countries.

II. Within ASEM framework:

14. The participants suggested that ASEM members organize the following activities:

- “ASEM day of cultural diversity” on 21st May every year.
- ASEM Folklore Festival annually in each ASEM member on a rotational basis. In this respect, Viet Nam will consider hosting the first Festival in Hue in 2006.
- Exhibitions on Asia-Europe cultural heritages.

- “ASEM Youth Festival”.

Topic 4: Towards the ASEM-5 Summit Meeting: Further revitalizing and substantiating the Asia-Europe Partnership

The Meeting was co-chaired by Madame Ton Nu Thi Ninh, Vice-Chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Viet Nam National Assembly, and Hon. The Lord Inglewood, member of the European Parliament. Hon. Glyn Ford from the European Parliament, served as the Rapporteur for the Meeting.

1. The two keynote speeches were delivered by Hon. Roel Deseyn, MP, Deputy Chairman of the Special Committee on Globalization of House of Representatives of Belgium, and H.E. Mr. Chew Heng Ching, Vice-President of the Parliament of Singapore.

2. At the session all delegates on both sides agreed that in the wider context of new developments, greater emphasis should be laid on multinational efforts to deal with the challenges posed by on-going globalization process. The establishment and development of Asia-Europe cooperation process are commensurate with the prevailing trend of peace and stability and have opened up great prospects for cooperation between the two continents in various fields, living up to the aspirations of people in member countries.
3. ASEP parliamentarians noted with satisfaction that significant progress have been achieved in ASEM cooperation on the basis of equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual benefit. While recognizing that the relations between ASia and Europe have been intensified, they stressed the need to further reinforce this interaction in the context of globalization and of an increasingly inter-dependent world in order to promote regional and international peace, stability and cooperation for development.
4. The meeting noted that apart from important achievements in three most important pillars of the Asia – Europe cooperation process political – security, economic and cultural, Asia and Europe also share a common interest in jointly dealing with such issues as international migration, illegal human traffic and drugs, information and technology, environment, health and etc.
5. Taking into account the dramatic development in the two regions and the world over that have brought about new opportunities as well as challenges, the meeting expressed strong support for ASEM members' endeavours to maintain the momentum of the process. To further substantiate the Asia – Europe partnership, parliamentarians emphasized that greater importannce should be attached to economic and cultural cooperation.
6. In this connection, ASEP parliamentarians fully supported the important work carried out by ASEM members, especially the Government of Vietnam as the host country to prepare for the fifth ASEM Summit. They noted that with the proposed theme “Further revitalizing and Substantiating the Asia- Europe Partnership”, the Summit would make important decisions to further elevate ASEM cooperation to a new height.

7. At the meeting, parliamentarians noted the outcomes of ASEP I held in Strasbourg in 1996 and ASEP II in the Philippines in 2002 and were of the opinion that ASEP III was another important bridge for the new comprehensive Asia – Europe Partnership. The Meeting also stressed that as representatives of the people and for the people, ASEP members should play an irreplaceable role in deepening mutual understanding, expanding common ground and further enhancing cooperation between Asia and Europe.
8. The parliamentarians stressed the ASEP important role in the ASEM process, and the need to establish mutually complementary links between ASEP and ASEM. In this regard, they also appreciated the National Assembly of Viet Nam's initiative in organizing ASEP III prior to the ASEM 5 Meeting.
9. The Meeting also touched upon difficult issues in international politics as well as in the relationship between the two continents, namely human rights violation and terrorism.
10. ASEP parliamentarians also proposed measures to promote Asia- Europe Partnership as a regular dialogue mechanism between Asia-Europe parliaments. Parliamentarians also considered holding regular ASEP meeting and in the same year when ASEM Summit is organized and to increase participation by parliamentarians in the existing ASEM cooperation channels and activities to better fulfill implementation supervision and make ASEM cooperation more substantive and effective,

Annex

Summary Report Of the informal consultation meeting of the heads of delegation

1. Informal consultations between the Heads of Delegation were held on March 24, 2004 to take up organizational matters. Participants were heads of delegation from 15 Parliaments of Asian and European ASEM member-countries and the European Parliament.
2. The Meeting agreed with the provisional agenda and program of activities of the conference.
3. In connection with the provisional agenda, while accepting the practice of the host country drawing up the provisional agenda, the EP reminded that in principle this should be done in agreement with the member delegations and recommended that this be reflected in the Rules of Procedures of ASEP. Rule 2 of the Draft Rules of Procedure of ASEP III would therefore be amended as “The host country *with the agreement of the member Parliaments* shall draw up the provisional agenda for the ASEP Meeting...”.
4. With regard Rule 11 of the Draft Rules of Procedure on the Co-chairing of the panel discussions, the EP representative proposed an amendment that each panel discussion shall be co-chaired by representatives of the two continents, but not necessarily to specify that the European Parliament shall always represent Europe.
5. The meeting discussed and confirmed the draft list of officers of the Conference including the President of ASEP III, the Co-chairs, Rapporteurs and Lead speakers of the panel discussion meetings. Meetings such as the panel discussions, the participation of guest speakers from UNDP and UNESCO in Ha Noi was also accepted.
6. Regarding the posts of Vice-Presidents of ASEP III, the meeting agreed that the heads of delegation of each participating parliament shall be designated as Vice-President of the Conference.
7. The meeting was informed about and agreed in principle with the attendance by the diplomats from countries, which have no member of the parliament representing at the conference. It also agreed with the explanation of the Chairman that those diplomatic representatives may

speak on behalf of their parliament, subject to authorization of their parliament.

8. For the Economic and Cultural panel discussions, the meeting agreed with the host country's initiative to invite two representatives from UNDP Ha Noi and UNESCO Ha Noi respectively to make introductory background presentations as resource persons.
9. The Chairman submitted to the consideration of heads of delegation the three resolutions introduced by the Philippines. Based on the principle that there will be only a Declaration of the Conference, which is expected to incorporate the main substance and decisions of the Conference, the Chairman suggested that the resolutions of the Philippines be examined in proposed structures of ASEP III Conference with subsequent results to be reflected in that one final document of the Conference.
10. The meeting welcomed the initiative of the Philippines delegation and agreed that the substance of the proposals shall be studied further and be discussed within the framework of this meeting.
11. It noted the wish of the Philippines proposal to set up a study group to work out a procedural framework for future ASEP meetings. It agreed to put this issue in the agenda of the first plenary meeting for consideration.