



9th February 2012

Dear ASEM Senior Officials,

12th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights: “Human Rights and Information and Communication Technology”
27-29 June 2012, Seoul, Korea

We are writing with regard to the 12th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights, on the theme “Human Rights and Information and Communication Technology” which will take place on 27-29 June 2012 in Seoul, Korea, and is hosted by the National Human Rights Commission of Korea. **The French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Sweden, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs and the Asia-Europe Foundation are pleased to invite each ASEM partner to nominate one official representative to attend the Seminar.**

The organisers are responsible for the identification and invitation of civil society participants.

At the 10th ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, the commitment to cooperate in the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international law was reaffirmed. In the Chairs’ Statement, ministers expressed their appreciation of the dialogue carried out by ASEM partners through the informal ASEM Seminars on Human Rights, held annually since 1998 under the coordination of the Asia-Europe Foundation. They also underlined their commitment to increase cooperation on issues related to the promotion and protection of human rights.

The main objective of the 12th Seminar is to facilitate dialogue on human rights and information and communication technology (ICT). Specifically, the Seminar aims to develop recommendations to protect and strengthen human rights in relation to ICTs.

The seminar will begin with an opening plenary on the evening of 27th of June with introductory messages and keynote speeches. The second day will be devoted to working group discussions which will focus on a) right to privacy; b) certain aspects of freedom of expression; c) the digital divide and d) right to cultural enjoyment of the internet. The closing plenary will feature the reports from the working groups and the seminar conclusions.

In recognition of the value of informal civil society- official dialogue, participant feedback from recent Seminars have increasingly called for greater and more specialised participation from the official side.

Given the nature of the topic, ASEM partners are requested to encourage participation of officials or experts from (but not limited to) their respective planning ministries, commissions/agencies on individual privacy protection; departments/ombudsmen offices on access to information policies; national ministries/agencies/commissions of information; Human Rights Ambassadors; representatives from Human Rights Commissions; ministries of justice or home affairs; agencies for copyright issues; and industry regulation.

The Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights, launched in 1997, provides an arena for non-confrontational debate on human rights issues. Previous seminars have generated meaningful and constructive discussions on topics of common interest for both regions, bringing balanced and tangible benefits for ASEM partners.

This will be the largest dialogue event of this nature with over 120 participants. The following invitation arrangement has been put in place since the 7th Seminar in 2006 in order to ensure balance between Asian and European participants, modified now to include new ASEM partners:

1. From the 16 Asian partner countries and the 3 ASEM countries (Australia, New Zealand and Russia) who joined in 2010: two civil society participants and one official representative each
2. From the 27 EU partner countries: one civil society participant and one official representative each

Any additional accompanying officials shall be registered as Observers.

English will be the working language of the seminar. As is the usual practice, the organisers will be pleased to provide 3 nights accommodation (27, 28, and 29 June 2012) and meals as per the programme for 1 official representative from each of the ASEM partner countries.

Beyond this, each ASEM partner is asked to defray the costs of its official representative (such as airfare, transportation, per diems, et cetera). The organisers will not cover the participation of any observers.

Kindly complete the registration form attached with the name and details of the official (designation, address, contact numbers, email address etc) you would like to recommend by **31st March 2012** to the seminar secretariat at ASEF. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Sol Iglesias, Director for Intellectual Exchange, email: sol.iglesias@asef.org.

Thank you for your kind cooperation. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,



Michel Filhol

Executive Director
Asia-Europe Foundation



Marie Tuma

Director
Raoul Wallenberg
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Frederic Tiberghien

Conseiller d'Etat
Representative of the
French Ministry of
Foreign and European
Affairs



Rosario Manalo

Philippine Commissioner
of the ASEAN Inter-
Governmental
Commission on Human
Rights (AICHR)