



**ASEM Symposium on Promoting Tourism**  
**25<sup>th</sup> September 2015**  
**Tokyo, Japan**

*Chair's Summary*

1. At the 10<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit Meeting (ASEM 10) held in Milan in October 2014, ASEM leaders recalled the importance of tourism both as an engine for growth and decent job creation and as a tool to enhance people-to-people contacts, and reaffirmed their willingness to deepen cooperation in this area between Asia and Europe. Following this Summit Meeting, Japan decided to take a lead in promoting tourism, which can be one of tangible cooperation areas to enhance connectivity between Asia and Europe, and held the ASEM Symposium on Promoting Tourism in Tokyo on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2015.
2. The Symposium was hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in cooperation with JATA Tourism EXPO Japan and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (Japan Tourism Agency) and was held as an event of "Tourism EXPO Japan 2015." The symposium was co-sponsored by Cambodia, Greece, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Mongolia, the Philippines, Romania, Spain and Switzerland, and gathered Ministerial-level participants and government officials from ASEM countries, UNWTO representatives, business professionals engaged in the tourism industry, experts and scholars.
3. The delegates discussed a wide range of issues related to the tourism in Asia and Europe under the two main topics in two sessions. The followings are major ideas and input discussed during the Symposium.

(1) Session 1

The followings are the benefits of tourism and the factors contributing to successful tourism development pointed out in Session 1.

- (i) Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world (9% of GDP, 1 in 11 jobs, 6% of the world's exports etc.). Tourism is considered as the key to development, prosperity and well-being.
- (ii) Appropriate forms of tourism development and preservation of environment and cultural and historical assets need to proceed hand-in-hand for sustainable tourism exchanges.
- (iii) Security and political stability are key factors in creating a positive country image and attracting foreign and domestic investment for tourism development.

- (iv) The ICT (digital tools, social media etc.) plays a major role in tourism, travel and hospitality industry, and is essential for the success of tourism enterprise. The ICT can significantly enhance the quality of tourism and the tourism flow as it enables more accurate market targeting.
- (v) Cooperation such as joint marketing and promotion activities with neighboring states (ex. Three Baltic states, V4 countries) is an effective means to gain competitiveness and increase incoming tourists.
- (vi) Press trips for media channels such as magazines and travel guides and activities such as seminars introducing a country and its cultures/tourist destinations are effective tools to promote tourism.
- (vii) Promotion for a conference destination as well as for a holiday destination should not be ignored even at a place where pleasure tourism is dominant.
- (viii) To overcome seasonal challenges, collaboration with other areas of activities/events and with different destinations can be effective.
- (ix) The change of promotion methods is effective depending on targeted generations and the motivation of visits such as cultural interests, shopping and food.
- (x) Close inter/intra-governmental and public-private cooperation/network is a key to successful tourism promotion.
- (xi) Tourism has educational benefits. Students with different backgrounds can witness and experience different cultures and widen their horizon through such opportunities as education trips and exchange programmes.

## (2) Session 2

The following factors constraining tourism were pointed out in Session 2.

- (i) Infectious diseases as well as poor sanitation can be the most serious factor constraining tourism.
- (ii) Terrorism is a disaster for a tourism destination, and ensuing events would create a serious tourism crisis. Appropriate border controls, the provision of travel safety information to tourists and tourism industry, and public-private collaboration are examples of effective countermeasures against terrorism.
- (iii) Diplomatic relations can have a strong negative impact on tourism flow. When the diplomatic relationship of two countries, the sender and the receiver of international tourists, turns sour, the volume of tourism is quickly affected, while the attraction of tourism assets or products, which creates the motivation to travel, remains utterly unimpaired.
- (iv) Some countries are faced with challenges in generating stop-overs. Active marketing and attractive products such as stop-over packages will be effective in producing both stop-overs and future visitors.
- (v) Lack of adequate infrastructure, facilitative measures in the visa policies and airline connectivity are some of the factors which have negative impacts on greater growth in arrivals of foreign nationals and on the increase of jobs and exports.
- (vi) Tourism can contribute to poverty alleviation and development of communities. In this

regard, insufficient aid to this area both in terms of finance and human resource capacity building would be obstacles especially for least developed countries.

4. The outcome of this Symposium will be reported to the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Luxembourg on 5-6 November 2015. It is expected that the discussion at this Symposium will be duly followed up and tourism will be mainstreamed in the ASEM activities towards the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit Meeting in Mongolia in 2016 which commemorates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEM.