

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF ASEM

*H.E. Mr. Bui Thanh Son
First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam*

Since its inception in 1996, the Asia - Europe Meeting (ASEM) has overcome barriers and differences to evolve from a group of 26 members to a family of 53, forming the largest cooperation forum between the two continents. After a quarter century of establishment, ASEM has grown beyond the initial expectations and established itself as an important platform for dialogue and cooperation, a key factor in the global setting in the 21st century, championing for peace, security, stability, prosperity and development of the two continents.

Given the fast-changing and ever-more complex developments in the regional and global landscape, the Forum keeps up its own transformation for a stronger and more dynamic partnership, while upholding its cardinal values and principles of equality and mutual respect and benefit. As the key drivers of economic growth and innovation in the 21st century, ASEM members have full ability and responsibility to drive forward multilateral cooperation, promote inclusive growth and sustainable connectivity, and advance Asia-Europe partnership on global challenges.

At this critical stage of transformation, it is important for ASEM to renew its agenda and map out a vision to assume its responsive and responsible global leadership role, fostering dialogues to promote peace, security and stability for a comprehensive, people-centered Asia - Europe partnership. ASEM also should strive for a holistic approach that balances the Forum's informality nature and effective cooperation with tangible, concrete results across its all three pillars of cooperation.

As one of the co-founding members of the Forum, over the last 25 years, Viet Nam has played a part in every historic moment of the Forum's journey, making every effort to be an active and responsible member and contributing effectively to enhancing ASEM's role and profile. At the same time, through ASEM, bilateral relations between Viet Nam and other ASEM partners have also been deepened and strengthened.

For Viet Nam, ASEM cooperation is of great importance to our reform, development and international integration. We attach high priority to joint efforts to uplift ASEM cooperation, promote Asia-Europe connectivity and are firmly committed to working closely with ASEM members to strengthen the Forum's cooperation towards an ASEM community that is human-centered, dynamic, connected and resilient by nature.