

ASEM Science and Technology Ministers' Meeting

Beijing October 14-15, 1999 - Ministerial Communiqué (As of Oct. 15, 1999)

1. Following the recommendation of the Second Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM 2) held in London in 1998 to promote greater cooperation between ASEM partners in the field of science and technology, and acting upon a Chinese initiative, Ministers or their representatives responsible for science and technology from the ten Asian and the fifteen European countries of ASEM, namely, Austria, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom and Viet Nam, with representatives from the European Commission responsible for research, have met in Beijing on 14 and 15 October 1999 for the ASEM Science and Technology Ministers' Meeting on "ASEM Science and Technology cooperation in the 21st Century". The list of heads of delegations is attached at Annex I.
2. In pursuit of the ASEM objective to create a strengthened partnership between Asia and Europe, conducted on the basis of equal partnership, mutual respect, mutual benefit and increased synergies, Ministers emphasise the importance of the science and technology cooperation between the two continents, taking into account the richness of their history and civilisation and the diversity of their cultures and languages.
3. Within the Asia - Europe Cooperation Framework adopted at ASEM 2 in London in 1998, Ministers identify the following principles for ASEM S&T cooperation:
 - Cooperation should be conducted on an equal and voluntary basis, with equal opportunities rendered to all ASEM members to join in regional S&T programmes;
 - Cooperation should aim at common development, with due consideration to different interests of participating countries;
 - Policy dialogue on S&T cooperation should be conducted in a timely manner among S&T policy makers and leading officials in the two continents.
4. The Ministers emphasise that a favourable research and technological environment for equitable and sustainable development and for economic cooperation entails the full participation of the relevant sectors of society of ASEM partners. They recognise that availability of and access to information is a major tool of science and technology cooperation, as well as the need to invest significantly in human, cultural and institutional capital.
5. The Ministers encourage complementary and collaborative public and private business sector investments, especially with small and medium-sized enterprises. They emphasise the importance of providing effective protection of intellectual property rights in line with the relevant international conventions.
6. Ministers encourage initiatives to promote Asia-Europe S&T cooperation, including the transfer of knowledge and technologies targeted at solutions to economic and social problems with clear trans-boundary and inter-regional added value.
7. The Ministers identify a number of areas of potential cooperation development where they have common interests and priorities:
 - Broad issues, including basic science, joint utilization of large-scale scientific facilities, knowledge transfer from research institutions/universities to industry and S&T human resource development;
 - Agricultural S&T issues, including forestry, water management, agro-technology and agro-industry;
 - Environmental protection issues, including sustainable cities, sustainable and clean production technologies, sustainable development of ecosystems and cultural heritage; and
 - Upgrading of technical and research capabilities of enterprises.
8. Furthermore, bearing in mind the need to reinforce and to monitor S&T cooperation between Asia and Europe, and in accordance with the general understanding among ASEM partners that ASEM need not be institutionalized, Ministers welcome efforts by groups of ASEM partners to

- establish task forces to coordinate individual activities in the thematic priority areas to facilitate discussion among relevant ASEM partners.
9. They also recognize the importance of general coordination and exchange of information being assured by S&T contacts in each partner country, in accordance with the process established in the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework.
 10. Ministers encourage relevant S&T senior officials from ASEM partners, in accordance with the ASEM process:
 - to develop appropriate mechanisms for information and effective collaboration;
 - to monitor and document the progress of ongoing activities;

 - to identify and prepare new ones, if needed; and

 - to strategically assess the opportunities for S&T cooperation and report on the outcome of this ASEM Science and Technology Ministers' Meeting to ASEM 3 to be held in Seoul in 2000, with a report on subsequent cooperation activities to be delivered via the ASEM SOM to ASEM 4 in 2002.