

**CLOSING REMARKS**  
**BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

AT THE HIGH-LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE “ASEM AT 25: STRENGTHENING ASIA –  
EUROPE PARTNERSHIP IN A TRANSFORMING WORLD”

*(Ha Noi, 22 June 2021)*

*Distinguished participants,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

1. After a half day of fruitful and constructive discussion, our “High-level Policy Dialogue has successfully concluded.

2. We've seen active and lively interventions by distinguished speakers and representatives from all ASEM members. Regardless of the distances, and the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, we are still gathered here today, both virtually and physically. This is clear and strong evidence of the strength of our Asia – Europe partnership and our determination to strengthen ASEM cooperation.

We are especially honored by the presence of ASEM Ministers and their insights on the resetting world, its implications for Asia and Europe, and their vision for stronger Asia – Europe partnership in the future.

3. The successful outcome of today's Dialogue will be duly reported to the 13<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit. And while it would be impossible for me to sum up all our discussions today, I think some key messages and recommendations stood out:

4. *First*, we see that the global reset is being driven by, among many other factors, technological changes, geo-economic and geo-political shifts, and the growing complexity of traditional and non-traditional challenges. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated some of the mega trends of our world today, which include digitalization, supply chain shifts, and a greater emphasis on inclusive and sustainable growth within regional and multilateral fora.

This critical stage of transformation have great implications for all countries and regions, including Asia and Europe. While our immediate priorities demand that we pursue economic recovery and contain the pandemic at the same time, over the long-term, new mindsets, policies and practices will be needed to successfully take advantage of the resetting world and to foster green, sustainable and innovative development, and closely link economic growth to development. The revitalization of multilateralism will gain greater prominence as global issues and challenges increasingly cannot be dealt with by any individual country or region.

5. *Second*, over the last 25 years, ASEM has grown beyond our initial expectations and established itself as a leading forum for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. With 53 members across the two continents, ASEM has continued to maintain its relevance in

guaranteeing peace, security, and prosperous development, making practical contributions to shaping major trends and the state of affairs around the world over the last decades. ASEM has successfully strived for a holistic approach that balances the Forum's informal nature and effective Asia – Europe cooperation through tangible, concrete results across all three pillars (political; economic and finance; and socio-cultural cooperation), ranging from political dialogue, public-private partnership, poverty reduction, women empowerment to climate change responses and sustainable management of water resources.

These achievements are the solid foundations for ASEM to strengthen its role in fostering Asia – Europe cooperation and shaping the global setting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to transform itself to include new elements of cooperation and integration.

6. *Third*, the Forum currently finds itself at the critical stage of transformation for a stronger and more dynamic partnership. I think we can all agree that recommendations for a new cooperation direction should be ambitious, strategic, but practical and sufficiently attainable to underpin an agenda for ASEM to respond more effectively to challenges and address the most pressing issues in the coming decade to ensure a peaceful and prosperous Asia and Europe.

To this end, it has been mentioned that ASEM should have a stronger voice in upholding international law and common principles of conduct so as to maintain peace and security, prevent conflict, and guarantee stability and prosperity in both regions. Built on past achievements, the new ASEM vision could incorporate inclusive growth, sustainable development and connectivity among countries, people and societies, upholding its cardinal values and principles of equality and mutual respect, fostering dialogues for a stronger, more dynamic, comprehensive, people-centered Asia - Europe partnership. At the same time, ASEM will also need to transform itself to incorporate new elements of cooperation and integration, including trade, investment, finance and digital economy, to build a solid foundation for long-term European-Asian economic relations.

7. While the formulation of a new ASEM vision is still in progress, our Dialogue will strengthen our understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing our regions and the need for enhanced Asia – Europe partnership. Once again, let me take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and heartfelt appreciation to the participation of Ministers and ASEM members for kind support and effective cooperation in the organization of this Dialogue.

I would also like to thank our keynote speakers, panelists, colleagues from embassies and representatives from international organizations for participating in the Dialogue. Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our staff, technicians and the press in ensuring the success of our discussions.

8. We hope that as we leave today, what will remain is the friendship, the close network we have created and the continued determination to work together in shaping the Vision of ASEM.

With that, I would like to officially conclude our Dialogue.

I wish you good health and success in all your future endeavors.

Thank you.