

## ASEM12 Side-Events

Numerous side-events will be organized for specific audiences in the lead up to the ASEM12 Summit, amongst them:

### The 10<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP10)

is a forum for inter-parliamentary contacts, exchanges and diplomacy among parliaments, and to promote mutual understanding among the people and countries of Asia and Europe.

**The 12<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum (AEPF12)** is the 'grass roots' level of ASEM and an interregional network of civil society and societal movements across Asia and Europe.

**The 16<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF16)** is a meeting of business leaders from Asia and Europe, created by ASEM to strengthen economic cooperation between the business sectors of the two regions and to provide opportunities for interaction between business and political leaders.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Asia-Europe Young Leaders Forum (AEYLF3)** is an annual event bringing together young professionals of ASEM countries with the objective to strengthen cultural links and understanding, create networks among young leaders of the two regions and to foster the common vision of Asia-Europe co-operation.

**The 11<sup>st</sup> Asia-Europe Labour Forum (AELF11)** engages trade unions from Asia and Europe to address social development, social protection and industrial transformation.

**The 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Editors' Roundtable (ASEFERT9)** creates exchange and networking opportunities for up to 20 editors-in-chief and senior journalists representing leading media agencies in Asia and Europe.

**The 15<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Economic Forum (AEEF15)** is a high level forum for in-depth research-based exchange on global issues between Asian and European policy makers and economists.

In addition, the **ASEM Cultural Festival** at BOZAR will be open to the general public from 18-31 October and is the first edition of an annual festival which will be organized in the sidelines of the Summits or Foreign Ministers meeting.



## THE 12<sup>th</sup> ASEM SUMMIT (ASEM12)

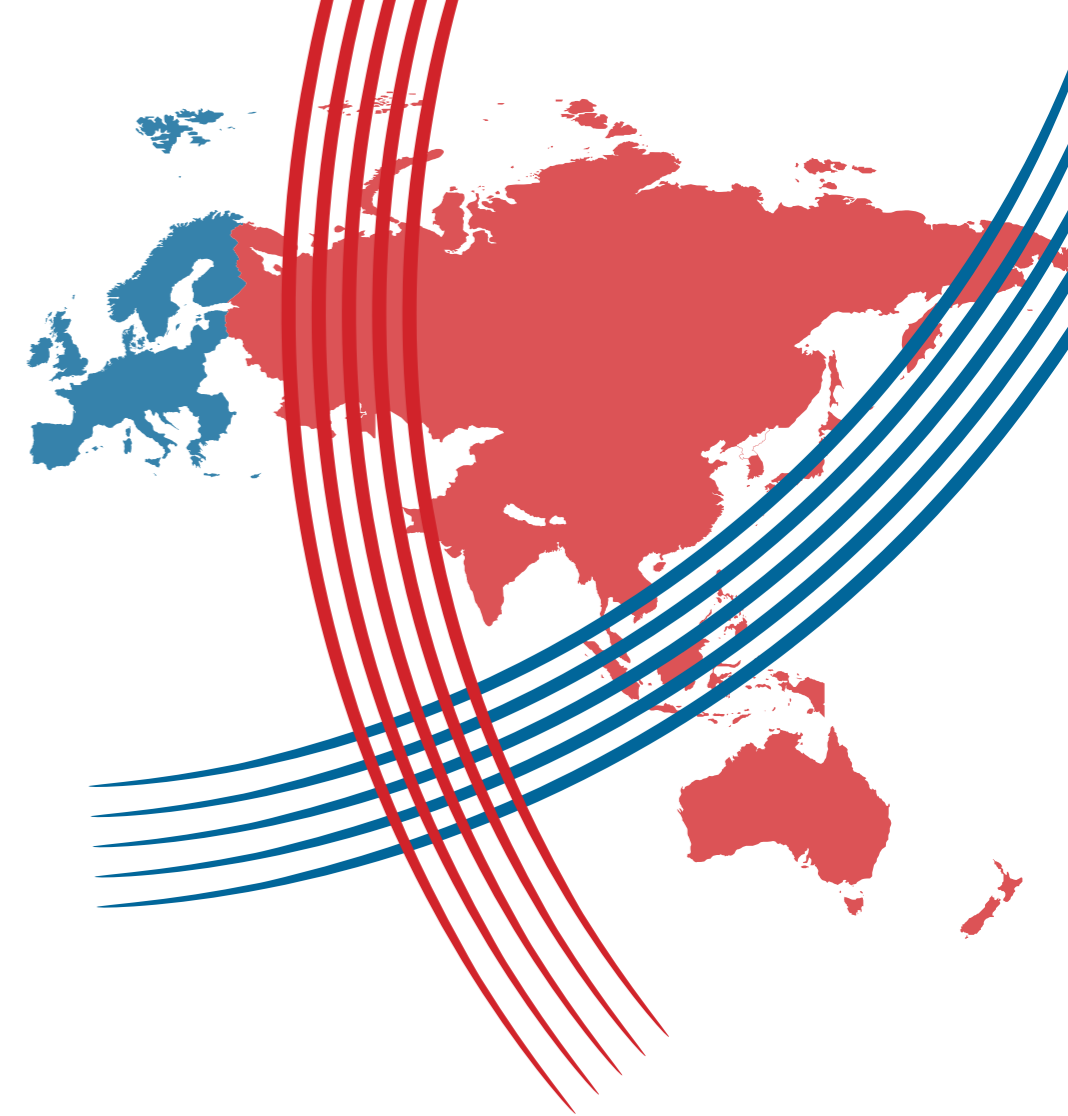
The 12<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit (ASEM12), with the theme "Global Partners for Global Challenges" will be held in Brussels on 18-19 October 2018. This Summit comes at a time of increasing interactions between the two continents with a growing number of trade and cooperation agreements, as well as stronger common engagement on security cooperation. This Summit will allow European and Asian partners to exchange views on governance issues, to champion effective multilateralism and tackle global challenges such as climate change, hybrid threats, terrorism and migration.

In a world of accelerating changes, the ASEM12 Summit represents a unique opportunity for the 53 ASEM partners to engage on political, economic and cultural topics. ASEM12 will be the most significant Europe-Asia gathering in 2018 and the largest summit in Brussels this year. The Summit will be chaired and hosted by the President of the European Council; the President of the European Commission, who will be accompanied by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, will also participate. The ASEM12 Summit's three plenary sessions will focus on: (i) financial & economic issues; (ii) global challenges & Europe-Asia connectivity; and (iii) international & regional issues.

ASEM12 comes at the right moment to seek greater convergence between European and Asian partners on global governance, to promote effective multilateralism and encourage global partners to tackle global challenges such as climate change, cyber threats, terrorism and migration, while seeking cooperation on reaching the Sustainable Development Goals, education and cultural heritage protection.

Connectivity will be a cross-cutting theme for the ASEM12 Summit. Connecting Asia and Europe at all levels - political, economic, cultural, digital, institutional and people-to-people. At the Summit, the EU will present the Sustainable Connectivity Portal - an innovative visual tool to assess Connectivity between ASEM partners on a wide range of indicators: physical infrastructure (transport, energy & ICT), institutional framework (rules & laws) and people-to-people (tourism, cultural exchanges, research connections, etc.). The Portal has been developed by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, in close collaboration with Asian and European connectivity experts.

The Summits are the highest level of decision-making in ASEM, and are held every second year, alternating between Asia and Europe. The initial ASEM Summit was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 1-2 March 1996, when ASEM consisted of 25 countries.



## Global Partners for Global Challenges

BRUSSELS 2018

12<sup>th</sup> ASEM SUMMIT

## ASEM: CONNECTING ASIA AND EUROPE



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### Information about ASEM

The ASEM InfoBoard is a one-stop-shop for everything about ASEM, gathering information about ASEM, details on all its events and meetings, as well as key partnership documents.

[www.aseminfoboard.org](http://www.aseminfoboard.org)

<http://eeas.europa.eu/asem>



# What is ASEM?

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is a unique, informal platform for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe on the big challenges of a fast-changing world, such as connectivity, trade and investment, climate change, but also broad security challenges such as counter-terrorism, migration, maritime security and cyber issues.

Bringing together 53 partners from across Europe and Asia, ASEM is the main multilateral platform linking Europe and Asia with significant global weight:

ASEM partners represent 65% of global GDP, 60% of global population and 55% of global trade. For more than 20 years, ASEM has been the most comprehensive partnership between Asia and Europe, crossing hands across continents.

ASEM's main purpose is to provide a platform to foster political dialogue, strengthen economic cooperation and tackle global challenges together. In many respects, recent developments in the international landscape have increased the value of ASEM as a key building block for an open, cooperative and rules-based international system. A unique multilateral, inter-regional framework to increase awareness, policy exchange and tangible cooperation between the Asian and European continents.

An open and informal partnership working for peace, security, human rights and prosperity for all. ASEM is conducted as an informal and flexible process on the basis of equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual benefit. It aims to promote the exchange of ideas and best practices and thus act as a breeding ground for new policy ideas. In short, ASEM is the most influential comprehensive partnership between Asia and Europe, boosting connectivity in all its dimensions between the two regions.



## ASEM Milestones



**1994**  
Singapore and France propose that an EU-Asia summit meeting be held, to consider how to build a new partnership between the two regions.

**1996**  
The first ASEM Summit is held in Bangkok in March 1996, with 15 EU member states and 10 Asian countries participating, as well as the European Commission. Since then, the ASEM family has continued to grow through successive rounds of enlargement to 53 ASEM Partners today.



**2006**  
ASEM celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary by adopting the 'Helsinki Declaration on the Future of ASEM', reasserting ASEM's role as a catalyst in EU-Asia relations.

**2016**  
ASEM marks its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary Summit in Mongolia, looking forward to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**2018**  
On 18-19 October 2018, the EU hosts the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit under the title 'Global Partners for Global Challenges' aiming to chart a common response to pressing global ages.

# How does ASEM work?

ASEM works through meetings and activities organised at different levels.

**Summits** Attended by Heads of State and Government of the European and Asian countries, the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the ASEAN Secretary-General. They serve as the highest level of decision-making in the ASEM process, and are held every second year, alternating between Asia and Europe.

**Foreign Ministers Meetings** Attended by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European and Asian countries and the ASEAN Secretary-General. They have the responsibility for the overall coordination of the ASEM process and are a driving force of the ASEM political dialogue.

**Ministerial Meetings** Economic, Finance, Environment, Culture, Transport, Labour and Employment, Education, Science and Technology, ICT, Small and Medium Enterprises ministers meet on a regular basis to discuss issues of mutual concern. Additional ministerial conferences are held irregularly on specific issues and areas that are not covered by the main ministerial meetings.

**Senior Officials' Meetings** bring together high-level civil servants from the Foreign Ministries of all ASEM partners for the overall coordination of the ASEM process. Sectoral SOMs are also held in preparation of the various Ministerial meetings.

**Regular dialogues** e.g. Customs General Directors' Meeting; Conference of General Directors of Immigration; Informal Seminar on Human Rights; Rectors' Conference; Mayors and Governors Meeting. Ad Hoc activities on sustainable development, nuclear safety, disaster relief, biodiversity, youth, employment, etc.

**Activities and initiatives** are organised by ASEM partners on a wide range of issues of mutual interest. A full overview of all ASEM meetings can be found on the ASEM InfoBoard.



# ASEM is...

**Informal** ASEM provides an open forum for policy makers and officials to discuss political, economic or socio-cultural issues of common interest, complementing the work already being carried out in other bilateral and multilateral fora.

**Equal partnership** ASEM offers a platform to enhance understanding and awareness amongst its partners, through dialogue and cooperation on topics of mutual interest on the basis of equal partnership, mutual respect and benefit.

**Open and evolutionary** ASEM moves with the times, both in terms of issues addressed and with regard to membership.

**Multi-dimensional** ASEM covers a wide spectrum of topics between the two regions and devotes equal attention to political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions.

**High-level and people-focused** ASEM provides a platform for meetings of Heads of State and Government, ministers and senior officials.

However, ASEM also fosters people-to-people contacts between the two regions, such as exchanges between civil society representatives, youth representatives, experts in various domains, etc.

ASEM has no permanent secretariat. Foreign ministers and their senior officials have overall coordinating responsibility for the ASEM process. They are assisted by an informal group of coordinators (two from the Asian side – one each from the ASEAN and non-ASEAN group – and two from the European side – the European External Action Service (EEAS) as the permanent coordinator and the rotating EU Presidency).

# ASEM covers...

ASEM covers a wide range of topics of common interest to Asia and Europe:

- Global and regional challenges of common concern
- Globalisation, competitiveness and structural changes in the global economy - including finance, employment, education and human resource development
- Connectivity: infrastructure and people-to-people links between the two regions
- Two-way trade and investment, business-to-business dialogue and cooperation in priority industrial sectors
- Sustainable development
- Climate change
- Environmental protection, water, energy and food security
- Intercultural dialogue
- Human rights
- Non-proliferation, counterterrorism and cyber-security
- Migration
- Culture and education
- Dialogue among parliaments and civil society

