

ASEM DECLARATION on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilisations

1. At the Fifth Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM 5) held in Hanoi, Vietnam on 8 and 9 October 2004, the heads of State and Government of 13 Asian and 25 European nations and the President of the European Commission exchanged views under agenda item "Cultural Diversity and National Cultures in the Age of Information Technology and Globalization" and agreed the following:
2. Developments in the international situation since the Copenhagen Summit (September 2002) have demonstrated the persistence of the major challenges facing the international community. Against the backdrop of the stepping up of trade liberalisation movements and growing globalisation, we are witnessing a process whereby the world is becoming more open, more inter-linked and more integrated with the development of new information and communication technologies and the emergence of globalised mass culture. At the same time, international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the spread of racism as well as racial and religious intolerance, the widening gap between the rich and the poor constitute urgent threats to the international community, challenging our capacity to build a peaceful and harmonious world.
3. In the face of these challenges, the international community needs more than ever before to define responses together. This calls for dialogue among cultures and civilizations on the basis of equality and mutual respect, which not only contributes to the prevention of potential conflicts, the promotion of common development, and the humanisation of globalisation so that it can benefit all, but also is fundamentally important for safeguarding the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and promoting universal human rights as defined notably in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
4. The Heads of State and Government of ASEM reaffirmed that cultural diversity is the common heritage of humanity and a source of innovation, inspiration and an important driving force for economic progress and social development of human society. It provides a tremendous opportunity to build a more stable and peaceful world, because it calls not for exclusion, but for inclusion, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation.
5. The Heads of State and Government recognized ASEM encompasses cultures and civilisations of both the East and the West, among which geographic convenience and long-standing interaction have laid a favourable foundation for enhanced dialogue and cultural exchange. They recognized that the ASEM process should also seek to foster a sense of partnership among the peoples of the two regions. They noted with satisfaction the progress made in the dialogue among cultures and civilisations

organised by ASEM, which has helped to promote mutual understanding and respect of cultural diversities and thereby enhancing a culture of peace, tolerance and harmony among societies which provide the foundation for sound and stable relations between the two regions. In this context, they underlined the important role of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in building a bridge between civil societies by means of its programmes to promote intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

6. The Heads of State and Government welcomed the results of the ASEM Conference on Cultures and Civilisations held in Beijing on 3 and 4 December 2003 and the recommendations adopted by the Ministers. They underlined the importance of relevant international instruments and the need for implementing the commitments they have made, in particular the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by consensus by the 31st Session of the General Conference of UNESCO. They called, in particular, on the ASEM States to become parties to the conventions on culture adopted at UNESCO.

7. In view of the above, the Heads of State and Government affirmed the importance of concerted actions for dialogue among cultures and civilizations and decided to continue the co-operation started in ASEM, making priorities of the following areas:

7.1. Education, higher education and training:

- *Stepping up educational exchanges, in particular by means of programmes developed by ASEM, e.g. ongoing ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programme Phase I and II, Asia-Europe Institute(AEI), taking note of the Erasmus Mundus Programmes set up by the European Commission, and the substantial financial contribution foreseen for Asia-Europe fellowships and exchanges;*
- *Enhancing and intensifying youth exchanges between Asia and Europe through youth-friendly programmes such as ASEM Youth Games and ASEM Young Political Leaders Forum;*
- *Giving a greater place in education to improving knowledge of other cultures and civilizations in order to promote tolerance towards ethnic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic groups and nations, Creating conditions for the eradication of ethnic prejudices and religious intolerance;*
- *Facilitating exchanges of experience in education and training, including the continuation of the ASEM Life-Long-Learning initiative.*

7.2. Cultural exchanges and cooperation:

- *Recognising the right of States to develop public cultural policies (audiovisual, publishing, translation, etc.);*
- *Facilitating exchanges of experts in the field of arts and culture including performing arts, visual arts and literary works, as well as exchanges of information and experience relating to this field among ASEM countries;*

- *Encouraging exchanges of films, broadcasting programs, publications, exhibitions, concerts and theatrical performances among ASEM countries;*
- *Supporting participation in international festivals, fairs, fora, exhibitions, conferences, seminars and other cultural events organized by ASEM countries;*
- *Promoting cooperation in other cultural activities to enhance understanding of other cultures and civilisations, and to strengthen friendly relations among ASEM countries.*

7.3. Exchange of ideas and knowledge, and promotion of creativity:

- *Sharing the new information and communication technologies to facilitate the flow of ideas between Europe and Asia;*
- *Developing co-operation between Asia and Europe to protect intellectual property and copyright;*
- *Promoting exchange of experiences in the field of creativity;*
- *Developing policies favorable to creativity and artistic innovation.*

7.4. Promotion of sustainable and responsible cultural tourism:

- *Promoting preservation and rational utilization of natural and cultural heritage;*
- *Exchanging experiences in developing sustainable and responsible cultural tourism;*
- *Promoting and supporting cooperation in human resource development and other areas to expand sustainable and responsible cultural tourism as a means to bring about poverty alleviation.*

7.5. Protection and promotion of cultural resources:

- *Preserving and developing both traditional and contemporary forms of arts and culture;*
- *Exchanging experiences and conducting cooperation in the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage;*
- *Promoting experiences exchange and cooperation on creative industry;*
- *Supporting cooperation and exchange among museums in Asia and Europe, e.g. ASEMUS.*

7.6. Strengthening the capacity of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF):

- *Encouraging civil societies in Asia and Europe to actively participate in cultural exchange activities within ASEM framework;*
- *Supporting initiatives taken within the framework of ASEF, giving priority to the ongoing ASEF Cultures and Civilisations Dialogue Programmes.*



8. The Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their support for the work undertaken within the framework of the United Nations to promote the dialogue among cultures and civilisations. They looked forward to actively participating in relevant follow-up activities when UN celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2005.
9. The Heads of State and Government welcomed, in particular, the launch at UNESCO of negotiations for an international convention on the protection of the diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions as an important potential contribution to the promotion of consolidation of cultural diversity and enhancement of intercultural exchanges at the national, regional and international levels. In this context, the specific nature of cultural goods and services should be recognized. The right for each State to define and implement the policies required to protect and develop cultural and linguistic diversity should be recognized; the current negotiations, without prejudice to their result, should also allow a proper articulation between the provisions of the convention and other international agreements. International solidarity and the development of capabilities in this area should be encouraged.
10. The Heads of State and Government expressed their appreciation for the continued dialogue among cultures and civilisations within ASEM at political level. They welcomed with satisfaction the announcement of the next Culture Ministers' Meeting in Paris in 2005, and requested the ministers to develop a long-term plan on promoting dialogue among civilizations and stepping up cultural exchange between Asia and Europe.