

Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Thursday 16 and Friday 17 October in Milan, Italy

*The 10th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) will take place in Milan, Italy on Thursday 16 and Friday 17 October, 2014, under the theme "**Responsible Partnership for Sustainable Growth and Security**".*

The meeting in Milan will be hosted by the Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi. The President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, will chair the meeting and the EU will equally be represented by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. Heads of State and Governments of 29 European States and 22 Asian partners will attend. ASEM leaders will at this summit also welcome Croatia and Kazakhstan as the 52nd and 53rd ASEM partners.

The meeting will start at 14.00 on Thursday with an opening ceremony (in the presence of the media) and a session with the three ASEM fora; the representatives of the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP), Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF) and Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF).

*At the first plenary session '**Promoting Financial and Economic Cooperation through Enhanced Europe-Asia Connectivity**' leaders will focus on economic and financial cooperation, multilateral trade and fostering growth and jobs.*

*The second session on '**Europe-Asia Partnership in Addressing Global Matters in an Inter-Connected World**', will be devoted to issues such as climate change, Millennium Development Goals, human rights, disaster management and energy security.*

On Thursday evening a dinner for the ASEM leaders will be hosted by the President of the Italian Republic Giorgio Napolitano.

*In a retreat session, starting at 09.30 on Friday morning, leaders will discuss in a more informal manner under the heading '**Enhancing Dialogue and Cooperation between Europe and Asia and Future direction of ASEM**'. This session will include non-traditional security challenges such as piracy and maritime security and transnational crime, as well as regional and international matters.*

Following a short closing ceremony, a press conference will be held at the end of the meeting (+/- 13.00).

At the end of the summit a Chair's Statement, including a list of ASEM initiatives and the ASEM work programme 2014-2016, will be issued.

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

First plenary session: 'Promoting Financial and Economic Cooperation through Enhanced Europe-Asia Connectivity'

The summit will provide an opportunity for the leaders to discuss and welcome the strengthened global economic and financial outlook and reaffirm the importance of continued reforms. In this context, focus is expected to be on the potential of trade and foreign investments in promoting growth and jobs. Leaders are also expected to resist protectionism, and confirm their commitment to a transparent and rules-based trading system based on international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The summit should also express support for the G20 efforts to make the global economy more resilient and sustainable.

Leaders will also discuss connectivity and call for improved transport, as well as digital, links between Europe and Asia. They should underline the importance of connectivity by discussing how to make it easier to move for goods, capital, services and persons along the so called "New Silk Road".

Other topics of discussion at this plenary session will be youth employment and the important role of small and medium-sized companies, science, technology and innovation.

Second plenary session: 'Europe-Asia Partnership in Addressing Global Matters in an Inter-Connected World'

Leaders will seek to promote closer understanding and cooperation on a number of issues of global concern. The summit should provide an opportunity to look for synergies in addressing climate change, not least ahead of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris in 2015 (COP 21).

The summit will equally discuss efforts to reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, with leaders likely to underscore the centrality of poverty eradication and the need for the post-2015 agenda to reflect the different dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner.

Human rights, disaster response and cooperation, as well as food, water and energy security are other topics that will be addressed at this working session.

Retreat session: 'Enhancing Dialogue and Cooperation between Europe and Asia and Future direction of ASEM'

The retreat session is a new format at the ASEM Summit. It should give the leaders the opportunity to exchange views on regional and international issues of common concern and steer the future direction of ASEM, also in view of the upcoming 20th anniversary in 2016.

A specific focus could be put on how to tackle the root causes of security threats and on fighting terrorism.

The situations in the Middle East, Syria and Iraq as well as in both continents, including Ukraine and the Korean peninsula will most likely be discussed. The situation in Africa and in particular the Ebola epidemic could also be addressed.

Non-traditional security matters like trafficking of persons, cyber-crime, illegal trade in weapons, drugs wildlife products, as well as piracy and maritime security are expected to be on the agenda, too.

Public events and press conferences by video streaming: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu>

Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4): www.eucouncil.tv

Photos of the event: www.consilium.europa.eu/photo