

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ASEM WORKING METHODS

Following the mandate from the Chair Statement from FMM5, the ASEM SOM in Rome 13-14 November 2003 agreed that more substance, efficiency and vitality should be reintroduced into the ASEM process and had a broadly convergent and constructive exchange of views on how to enable this.

SOM mandated the Coordinators to work constructively together to produce for FMM 6 a detailed set of practical proposals for improving ASEM working methods.

Taking into account the ASEM SOM discussions in Rome 13-14 November 2003 and in Kildare 16 April 2004, the following recommendations are made for the Foreign Ministers' approval.

1. FMM

Foreign Ministers' meeting is to be convened every second year (i.e. between the Summit years) which should improve participation of foreign ministers and provide better articulation with Summits. It is proposed to apply this approach from 2006. This could be complemented by *ad hoc* FM meetings which take place in ASEM Summit years if deemed by consensus to be necessary.

Best efforts should be made to realize full participation by Foreign Ministers, given open dialogue nature of ASEM. To facilitate ministerial travel schedules and participation levels, all possibilities to arrange for ASEM FMM should be investigated, including in relation to other major EU-Asian meetings.

The benefits of an informal, retreat, open dialogue FMM meeting style are agreed. Officials are to further encourage this style for future FMM.

General agreement was reached that FMM agendas should be focused on major strategic issues within one overarching theme of mutual interest, including the one chosen by leaders at the preceding Summit Meeting, such as the multilateral approach to major international challenges. (This would be encouraged by reinforced ASEM coordination in the margins of UN meetings.)

2. SOMs

The role of the SOMs should be strengthened.

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SOMs should be held at least twice a year.

SOMs should be a place for substantial policy discussion as well as for preparation of FMMs and Summits.

It should be clearly stated in a revised AECF 2000 that regional coordination should take place before the plenary SOM.

SOMs should be empowered to approve and/or filter individual initiatives. If SOMs agree an initiative its implementation can begin even before being formally endorsed by the ASEM Leaders/Ministers.

SOMs should better monitor the follow-up of initiatives in all three pillars.

3. Coordinators

The duties and responsibilities of the Coordinators should be further specified so that their role could be strengthened as follows:

As is already the practice, the Coordinators can hold *ad hoc* meetings as and when needed.

The Coordinators' role in follow-up and reporting on initiatives should be strengthened. Information sharing would be enhanced by using the ASEM Contact Points and other methods of communication.

4. Management issues

With regard to the coordination within each respective region, the European side will use the existing EU mechanisms, while the Asian partners may wish to investigate specific arrangement in this regard.

The visibility of ASEM should be increased. The generalised use of the ASEM Logo would assist somewhat in this regard.

The ASEM Infoboard should be set up as a pilot project under ASEF.

5. Handling of ASEM initiatives

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As long as an initiative is compatible with AECF 2000, and as long as the initiative has been endorsed at ASEM SOM by consensus, the initiative can be implemented even before the formal approval by ASEM Leaders/ Foreign Ministers.

Individual initiatives should be more substantial. To this end, the host country should collect comments on its initiative from other members. The comments may be examined and adopted in some case, or those who send the public comments will receive explanation from the host country, if needed. SOM should monitor and assess ASEM initiatives in all three pillars by using for example a template model for evaluation for the purpose of technical reference along the lines of attached annex. (Note: see annex)

Publicity for endorsed initiatives should be strengthened through ASEM Infoboard, i.e. publicizing the initiative on the ASEM website before its implementation. Information of initiatives held in the past should be gathered, organized and compiled so that it can be widely shared. This process should be carried out by the ASEM Infoboard. (Note: For the ASEM Infoboard see Concept Paper on ASEM Infoboard.)

It is encouraged that as much information as possible about each initiative, including both pre-event explanation and post-event assessment of results, will be shared among ASEM partners through the ASEM Infoboard.

The ASEM logo (endorsed at FMM 5) should be widely used at individual ASEM initiatives in accordance with its guidelines.

Template for the evaluation of initiatives

1. Did the initiatives succeed in carrying out the intended concept (e.g. objectives) as it was endorsed?
2. Did the initiative have the participation of a large number of ASEM partners?
3. What are the benefits of the initiative for the ASEM partners?
4. What is the contribution of the initiative to the future ASEM process?
5. Is it necessary to continue this initiative?

* As for the question 1, 3 and 4 each ASEM partners should give a numerical evaluation (on the scale of 1 to 10) as well as specific written answer to each question. The average point for each question can be calculated and informed to ASEM partners.

For the question 2, the number of ASEM partners who participated can be mentioned. The answer to question 5 will be taken into consideration when considering the need to follow-up an initiative.