Connectivity is a top priority for ASEM. All ASEM partners agree that connectivity is about bringing countries, people and societies closer together, and a means to foster deeper economic and people-to-people ties. It must be inclusive, mutually beneficial, and should work towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

The European Commission Joint Research Centre, together with European and Asian experts, have developed the ASEM Sustainable Connectivity Portal. This aims to provide a science-based contribution to the policy discussions within the framework of ASEM and connectivity.

The Portal is an interactive online tool, which contains a data repository to explore how connectivity relates to sustainability amongst ASEM countries.

The Portal gathers into one place a wealth of connectivity-related data from a range of international sources. It is structured on the basis of two indices, one which measures cross-border connectivity via five pillars, and the other which measures sustainability related to connectivity via three pillars.

ASEM policymakers, as well as researchers, businesses and citizens, can use the Portal to explore how their countries connect with other ASEM peers and further investigate how each country performs in terms of sustainable connectivity.
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 60% of global GDP, 60% of global population, 75% of global tourism 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 dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe on the big challenges of the 21st century.

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, such as exchanges between civil society representatives, youth representatives, experts in various fields.

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, countering terrorism and cyber security
- Migration
- Culture and education
- Dialogue among parliamentarians and civil society

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 10th 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 20th anniversary Summit in Mongolia moving forward to the challenges of the 21st century.

2018
On 18-19 October 2018, the EU hosts the 12th ASEM Summit under the title ‘Global Partners for Global Challenges’ aiming to chart a common response to pressing global challenges