

ASEF 5-Year Anniversary

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) celebrated its fifth anniversary on 15 February this year. With the aim to strengthen the ties between the civil societies of Asia and Europe, members of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) established the foundation in 1997.

By *Jessica Yom*

In March 1996, the sixteen leaders of the European Union met ten leaders of East Asian countries in Bangkok. At this historic ASEM summit, leaders from the two continents agreed to a comprehensive engagement with each other, recognizing the need to establish diversified tracks to develop links between distinct segments of society in the two regions.¹ The different channels would facilitate increased direct interactions among the relevant constituencies across the continents - political leaders (Asia-Europe Meeting), the business entities (Asia-Europe Business Forum), and the civil societies (Asia-Europe Foundation).

The fifth anniversary celebration in Singapore started with a public lecture by European Union Commissioner for Trade, Pascal Lamy, on recent developments in Asia-Europe relations as well as his visions on the future relations. Then, the new ASEF website (www.asef.org) was ceremonially launched. In the evening, Singaporean Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar attended the official reception at ASEF. On the following evening, ASEF Executive Director, Ambassador Delfin Colomé conducted at an outdoor music concert performed by a European and an Asian orchestra on the ASEF lawn.

The anniversary celebration was resumed in Brussels, where the European Commission is located. Among other events, the inaugural meeting of the ASEF University Alumni Network

and the website launch took place there.

A 'Ground-Breaking Ceremony' has taken place on 6 July with the participation of visiting guest-of-honour, EC President Romano Prodi and Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong. The two dignitaries then placed the first two stones for ASEF's new home, into which we expect to move late next year. So we have about one year before we bid adieu to our beautiful home at No.1 Nassim Hill and move west! ◀

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¹ASEF and ASEM have the same twenty-six members – Austria, Belgium, Brunei, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam, and European Commission.

More info >

For more information about ASEF and its activities:

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