

**CHAIR STATEMENT**  
**EIGHTH ASIA EUROPE MEETING, ASEM - FOREIGN MINISTERS’**  
**MEETING**  
**HAMBURG 28 – 29 MAY 2007**

**ASIA-EUROPE COOPERATION IN THE ENLARGED ASEM FRAMEWORK**

1. The Eighth ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting was held in Hamburg, Germany from 28-29 May 2007. The Meeting was chaired by the EU-Presidency, German Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. For the first time ASEM Foreign Ministers met in the enlarged format with 45 ASEM-partners, representing around 50% of the world-GDP, approximately 58% of the world’s population and 60% of world trade.

2. As a follow-up to the ASEM VI-Summit in Helsinki in 2006 which tasked the next Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Germany in 2007 to report on the completion of internal procedures of new ASEM-partners, i.e. the ASEAN Secretariat, Bulgaria, India, Mongolia, Pakistan and Romania, the Meeting noted with satisfaction that all ASEM candidates had completed their internal procedures. The Meeting extended a special warm welcome to the new ASEM partners and looked forward to the celebration of their formal admission at the next ASEM-Summit on 24-25 October 2008 in China.

3. Ministers held fruitful discussions on a broad range of issues of common interest: Global issues such as energy and climate change, counter terrorism, non-proliferation, world trade and the United Nations; international issues such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, the Korean Peninsula, the Middle East; recent developments in Asia and Europe. They noted with satisfaction the common ground of ASEM-partners in numerous fields and agreed to continue to make utmost use of the ASEM dialogue and cooperation, being a unique, practical, flexible and comprehensive platform for the Asia-Europe partnership in view of finding joint responses to global challenges.

4. The Meeting encouraged ASEM partners to continue to implement ASEM-Summits’ and ASEM-Ministers’ Statements and Declarations since 1996 while taking into consideration the “Helsinki Declaration on the Future of ASEM” and “ASEM Working Methods and Institutional Mechanisms”, endorsed by the ASEM VI-Summit in Helsinki on 10-11 September 2006.

5. The Meeting agreed to enhance and deepen the Asia Europe Partnership in the ASEM framework in order to tackle together international and global challenges, as spelled out in the Helsinki-Summit Documents of September 2006. Against this background, the Meeting recalled in particular the ASEM 6 Summit Chair Statement of 11 September 2006, tasking the ASEM-Senior Officials “to reflect on the possible need to adapt the

Asia Europe Cooperation Framework (AECF) of 2000 to the requirements of ASEM's second decade and the new developments of the process". The Meeting further tasked ASEM-Senior Officials to report on the progress of this task until the next ASEM Senior Officials Meeting in the second half of 2007 in Asia and take into account the findings of their work in the run-up to the next ASEM Summit in China 2008.

## **INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND GLOBAL ISSUES**

6. The Meeting reaffirmed ASEM partners' continued and long-term commitment to assist Afghanistan to bring peace, stability, security and prosperity to the country and its people within the framework of the Afghanistan Compact. While much has been achieved, the Afghan government and people still face major challenges in the fields of security, counter-narcotics, rule of law, human rights, economic and social development. The Meeting welcomed the decision of the EU to deploy a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) Mission in the field of policing with linkages to the wider rule of law (EUPOL Afghanistan) as an important contribution to strengthening Afghan National Police Forces. The Meeting also welcomed the launch of the complementary programme for reform of the justice sector by the European Commission. It recognised the central role of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, JCMB as the main coordination body both within the International Community and with the Afghan government. The Meeting encouraged ASEM partners to consider ways to assist and engage with Afghanistan to promote stability which is crucial for the development of the country as well as to the region and beyond. In this context they welcomed the endeavour of the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan to further develop cooperation between the two nations also with the support of G8 countries. The Meeting further welcomed the enhanced regional cooperation in South Asia, as the recent Summit of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation, SAARC, on 3-4 April 2007 in New Delhi welcomed Afghanistan as its eighth member.

7. The Meeting welcomed the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1747. It urged Iran to comply with the requirements of Resolution 1747 and to suspend its enrichment related activities. The Meeting noted with great concern and disappointment the findings of the report by the Director General of IAEA of 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2007, concluding that Iran has not suspended its enrichment related activities as well as Iran's further restriction to cooperate with the Agency and the need for Iran to restore international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. The Meeting strongly urged Iran to comply with all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions as well as resolutions and requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA Board of Governors. It underscored the need for more active and transparent cooperation with the IAEA in order to resolve the outstanding verification issue. The Meeting further recalled the urgent need for a diplomatic solution and a comprehensive arrangement with Iran, through dialogue, while respecting Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy under safeguards and in accordance with its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

8. The Meeting voiced concern over the continued instability in Iraq. It reaffirmed their support for the Iraqi government and its efforts to ensure unity, security, stability and prosperity in Iraq. The Meeting also encouraged the Iraqi government to pursue an approach of national reconciliation. It warmly welcomed the successful holding of the Iraqi conferences in Sharm El Sheikh on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007 with a broad international participation. It commended the Iraqi government for the ambitious commitments in the “International Compact with Iraq”, endorsed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, to promote reforms in the political, security, economic and social fields. It underlined that the implementation of these commitments is crucial for the stability in Iraq and Iraq’s relations with its international partners. The Meeting also expressed hope that the Ministerial Conference of Iraq’s Neighbouring Countries on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007 will further contribute to a sustained process of regional confidence building through dialogue and cooperation. Furthermore, the Meeting noted the International Conference of Islamic Leaders for Reconciliation in Iraq, held in Bogor, Indonesia on 3-4 April 2007.

9. The Meeting welcomed the agreement on the Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement reached in Beijing on 13 February 2007 after the resumption of the Six Party Talks. The Meeting called upon the parties involved to implement the February 13 agreement without delay. It reaffirmed that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula remains an international priority and essential for maintaining long term peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia. The Meeting called upon all parties concerned to work towards the swift denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and implement the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party-Talks. The Meeting reaffirmed the need for full implementation of the UNSC Resolutions 1695 and 1718 by all parties and their commitment to the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and negotiation. It also emphasized the importance of addressing the issue of humanitarian concerns of the international community. The Meeting further highlighted the need to effectively address the humanitarian situation in the DPRK. The Meeting voiced support for and underlined the importance of continuing the process of the Six Party Talks, being the most viable mechanism for peacefully resolving the nuclear issue.

10. The Meeting reaffirmed ASEM partners’ support to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It further reaffirmed their support for a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on existing agreements, including the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the principles as laid down in the Road Map. In this connection, the Meeting voiced support for the recent efforts of the Middle East Quartet made up of the UN, the EU, the US and the Russian Federation in promoting a result orientated dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in the framework of a renewed political process, aiming at meaningful negotiations on the final status. The Meeting also expressed their hope that dialogues will be facilitated by the Arab League peace Initiative, which was re-launched at the Riyadh Summit in March 2007. It called on all parties to refrain from taking actions that could jeopardize the peace process.

11. The Meeting reiterated that the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, WMD and their means of delivery presented one of the greatest risks to global and regional security. In this respect, the Meeting underlined the importance to adhere to relevant

international instruments as well as the effective compliance with non-proliferation obligations that states have undertaken. It welcomed the work undertaken in relevant UN and other multilateral bodies such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, ARF.

12. The Meeting reaffirmed ASEM partners' support for a fair, just, rule-based international system with the United Nations at its heart. The Meeting recalled the ASEM Declaration on Multilateralism of Kildare, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2004 and encouraged ASEM partners to continue to follow-up on the implementation of the Kildare document and to cooperate in order to promote UN reform, including its principal organs, with a view to enhancing their representativeness, transparency and effectiveness.

13. The Meeting recalled the "ASEM 6 Declaration on Climate Change" adopted by the ASEM-Summit in Helsinki in 2006 and commended its swift follow-up, including the successful ASEM Environmental Ministers' Meeting in Copenhagen from 24 -26 April 2007, which recognized the importance of the global effort to strengthen international environment governance with a view to ensuring a more effective and integrated approach to the sustainable management of the world's natural resources, as well as its preparation done in Jakarta in March 2007. The Meeting further encouraged and affirmed their support for a closer ASEM-cooperation on climate change and sustainable energy including cooperation on technologies that promote sustainable use of energy, the development and utilization of renewable and alternative energy, and measures to deal with the loss of biodiversity and deforestation. The Meeting acknowledged the role of targets in proving investment security specifically for renewable energy and energy efficiency taking national circumstances into account. The Meeting also encouraged and affirmed support for a closer ASEM-cooperation on energy security and multilateral measures for stable, effective and transparent global energy markets, including the promotion of the principles of the Energy Charter Treaty. The Meeting further stressed the need for a global and comprehensive post 2012 climate regime to tackle climate change, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and looked forward to ASEM partners' constructive contribution to this. In this respect, the Meeting underlined the importance of the Bali UN International Climate Conferences in December 2007. Negotiations should be completed by 2009 at the latest, in order to avoid a gap between the first and second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. The Meeting referred to the scientific evidences of the 4<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, stressed the need for urgent action and recognized that a common understanding of the necessary overall efforts is useful for future actions to reduce emissions. The Meeting further welcomed the offer by Viet Nam to host the First ASEM Forum on Energy Security Policy in September 2007 in Hanoi.

14. The Meeting welcomed the outcome of the 2<sup>nd</sup> East Asia Summit in Cebu on 15 January 2007. It noted with particular interest the Cebu Declaration on East Asian Energy Security which recognizes the urgent need to address global warming and climate change, the need to strengthen renewable energy development such as the sustainable development of bio fuels as well as goals and measures as spelt out in the foresaid Declaration. The Meeting further took note that the 2<sup>nd</sup> East Asia Summit had agreed to initiate concrete projects in priority areas of cooperation, namely energy, education, finance, avian influenza, national disaster mitigation and poverty reduction.

15. The Meeting also discussed security implications of climate change and its potential to exacerbate conflict, particularly amongst the most vulnerable and fragile states. The Meeting noted the United Nations Security Council debate on Energy, Security and Climate, initiated by the UK in April 2007. The Meeting further recognized the important role of energy and climate change as a major challenge for foreign policy.

16. The Meeting reaffirmed ASEM partners' resolution to join efforts in the fight against terrorism. The Meeting agreed that there can be no justification for any act of terrorism. It supported the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted by the UN General Assembly by consensus on 8 September 2006 and the UN's relevant conventions and resolutions. The Meeting continued to be committed to reaching an agreement on the UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) as soon as possible. The Meeting further commended the ASEM-cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism, building on the 2002 ASEM Cooperation Programme and the ASEM Conference Series on Counter-Terrorism since Beijing/China 2003, followed-up in Berlin/Germany 2004, Semarang/Indonesia 2005, Copenhagen/Denmark 2006 and the 5<sup>th</sup> ASEM Conference on Counter Terrorism on 15 – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2007 in Tokyo/Japan. The Meeting looked forward to the next ASEM Counter Terrorism Conferences to be held in Madrid in 2008. The Meeting further encouraged ASEM-partners to continue to identify practical measures to enhance cooperation between Asia and Europe by exchanging knowledge, experience and strategies on countering terrorism. The Meeting underlined the importance of a comprehensive approach from the international community to fight terrorism, carried out in accordance with international law, in particular the UN Charter, respecting human rights, and international humanitarian law. The Meeting further welcomed the signing of the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism. The Meeting also noted with satisfaction the work carried out by the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC), the South East Asian Regional Centre for Counter Terrorism (SEARCCT) in Kuala Lumpur and the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok as very useful, including the support given to the creation of regional networks of expertise and information-sharing, and especially the capacity building support.

17. The Meeting took note with satisfaction of the active and sustained ASEM-cooperation on financial issues and welcomed the offer by the Republic of Korea to host the next ASEM Finance Ministers' Meeting in 2008.

18. The Meeting reaffirmed ASEM partners' commitment to an ambitious, balanced and comprehensive overall outcome of the Doha round and emphasized the need to deliver on the development agenda of the Doha round. The Meeting further appealed to all WTO-partners to bring the negotiations to a successful close, further supporting the development of world trade and the economic integration of developing countries. The Meeting supported the strengthening of economic cooperation between the EU and Asian partners building on the platform of the WTO while reaffirming that the Doha Development Agenda remain the priority. It reaffirmed the commitments to promote sustainable development and to strengthen the social dimension of globalization. The Meeting further welcomed the launch of EU-ASEAN FTA negotiations on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007 in Brunei Darussalam and the launch of the EU-Korea FTA negotiations on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

19. The Meeting recalled the “ASEM-Closer Economic Partnership”, as endorsed by the ASEM 5-Summit in Hanoi October 2004, aiming at deepening the economic cooperation between Asia and Europe through action-orientated programmes and policy dialogue. In this regard the meeting warmly welcomed the offer by Indonesia to host the next ASEM Economic Ministers’ Meeting in 2008 and looked forward to a preparatory Senior Officials Meeting on Trade and Investment, SOMTI. The Meeting furthermore underlined the potential of ASEM-economic dialogue and cooperation to be a showcase for concrete ASEM achievements. It stressed the important role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in promoting economic developments and welcomed the upcoming SMEs Ministerial Meeting and Trade and Investment Fair to be held in China in October 2007.

20. The Meeting also acknowledged the importance of European and Asia transport systems in fostering the ASEM closer economic partnership. In this respect, it welcomed the initiative of Lithuania to organize the first ASEM Ministerial Meeting on Cooperation on Transport in Vilnius in 2009 and encouraged ASEM partners to engage actively in this process.

21. The Meeting took note with satisfaction of the ASEM-cooperation in the field of science and technology as well as the 1<sup>st</sup> Information and Communication Technology, ICT- Meeting in Viet Nam in 2006. It encouraged and welcomed follow-up activities such as the ICT-Senior Officials Meeting in 2007/2008 to be hosted by the European Commission.

22. The Meeting noted that the 5<sup>th</sup> ASEM Meeting for Directors General on the Management of Migratory Flows between Europe and Asia, held in Kuopio, Finland in December 2006, had provided a good opportunity for a comprehensive and productive exchange of views on a range of topics. The Meeting also noted that practical co-operation had been further developed at the ASEM Biometrics and Border Control Conference, jointly hosted in Singapore by the UK and Singapore in March 2007.

## **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ASIA AND EUROPE**

23. The Meeting welcomed the outcome of the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-Summit in Cebu, the Philippines, on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2007, in particular the Cebu Declaration on the Blueprint of the ASEAN Charter, as well as the Cebu Declaration on the Acceleration of the Establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015. The Meeting voiced their support for regional integration and cooperation in Asia-Pacific, contributing to peace and stability in the region.

24. The Meeting welcomed the enhanced cooperation in the ARF. It reconfirmed their support for the ARF as the primary political and security forum in Asia Pacific with ASEAN as its driving force and encouraged ARF-members’ involvement in implementing measures of confidence building and preventive diplomacy, as well as strengthening ties between Track I and Track II activities and between the ARF and other regional and international security organisations.

25. The Meeting took note with satisfaction of the 30-years of cooperation between the EU and ASEAN. It welcomed the recently adopted “Nuremberg Declaration on an Enhanced EU-ASEAN Partnership” endorsed during the 16<sup>th</sup> EU-ASEAN Ministers’ Meeting in Nuremberg/Germany on 14-15 March 2007 marking a major step of deepening the unique partnership between the two regional organisations in the next decade. The Meeting looked forward to its follow-up in the EU-ASEAN Plan of Action to be endorsed in the second half of 2007 as well as to the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit to mark the 30th anniversary of their relations, to be convened in Singapore in November this year.

26. The Meeting welcomed Thailand’s stated determination to re-establish full-fledged parliamentary democracy, in particular the drafting of a new constitution which Thailand will put to a national referendum in September, and the convening of general elections scheduled in December 2007.

27. The Meeting took note of the briefing on the process of the European Constitutional Treaty, on the EU’s neighborhood policy, on the EU-strategy to shape its internal and external policy in accordance with its values in a globalized world and on the Berlin Declaration of 25<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

28. The Meeting had a frank exchange of views on the situation in Myanmar. The Meeting expressed deep concern on the lack of tangible progress in the declared transition towards a civilian and democratic government. It encouraged Myanmar to make greater progress towards national reconciliation as well as to involve constructively all political parties and ethnic groups in an inclusive dialogue. Furthermore, the Meeting called for the early lifting of restrictions placed on political parties and the early release of those under detention, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The Meeting welcomed the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit Chairperson’s Statement of 13<sup>th</sup> January in Cebu, the Philippines. The Meeting took note of the briefing by the Head of the Myanmar delegation on the latest developments in the implementation of the national Roadmap to Democracy. The Meeting noted the agreement between Myanmar and the International Labour Organization in February 2007 to set up a mechanism to deal with complaints of forced labour and encouraged Myanmar to follow-up on that commitment. The Meeting appreciated the ongoing efforts by the UN Secretary General to continue his good offices, and welcomed the appointment of Ibrahim Gambari as his Special Adviser. It called on the Government of Myanmar to remain constructively engaged with ASEAN, the United Nations as well as with the international community, international humanitarian organizations and NGO’s, to ensure the people of Myanmar benefit from assistance.

## **THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF ASEM**

29. The Meeting welcomed the manifestation of the social dimension of ASEM, initiated with the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEM Ministerial Meeting on Labour and Employment in Potsdam/Germany in September 2006, underlining the importance of concerted efforts to strengthen the social dimension of globalization. It commended Indonesia for the swift follow-up and

the hosting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Meeting on Labour and Employment in Bali in September 2008, to be prepared by a Senior Officials' Meeting at the end of 2007.

30. The Meeting noted with satisfaction the upcoming 1<sup>st</sup> ASEM Ministerial Meeting on Education and Qualification in Germany, co-sponsored by China, in spring in 2008 and connected activities such as the successfully sustained "life long learning-initiative" by Denmark, thus underlining the pivotal role of education and training for qualified human resources constituting a key factor for economic and social development in a globalized world. The Meeting warmly welcomed Viet Nam's offer to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEM Ministerial Meeting on Education in Hanoi in 2009.

31. The Meeting further welcomed regional and international cooperation on labour and employment especially in areas of vocational training, lifelong learning, migration issues, the implementation of decent work and occupational health and safety at work. In this context, the Meeting noted the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers signed during the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Cebu/the Philippines and looked forward to the convening of the 1<sup>st</sup> Global Forum on Migration and Development in Brussels from 9 to 11 July 2007.

#### **ASEM COOPERATION: DIALOGUE AMONG CULTURES AND CIVILISATIONS.**

32. The Meeting reiterated their commitment to the further promotion of dialogue and cooperation between the peoples of Asia and Europe being essential means to prevent and overcome ignorance and prejudice and to promote mutual understanding and tolerance as well as cultural diversity. It called on ASEM partners to ratify and implement the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In this context, the Meeting welcomed Malaysia's offer to host the third ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting in 2008 and the proceeding work by other ASEM partners, in particular China and France for hosting the first two ASEM Cultural Ministers' Meeting in 2003 and 2005. The Meeting further welcomed Poland's offer to host the fourth and Viet Nam's offer to host the fifth ASEM Culture Ministers' Meetings. The Meeting also agreed that tourism could contribute to mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity between Europe and Asia. Against this background, it welcomed Viet Nam's initiative for an ASEM Tourism Forum in Hanoi 2008.

33. The Meeting underlined the importance of the ASEM Interfaith Dialogue in contributing to the better understanding of and respect for world religions as well as its crucial role in providing a solid platform where governments, civil society, including religious organizations, can come together to advocate interfaith dialogue as a viable tool for peace. The Meeting welcomed the outcomes of the two Interfaith Dialogues in Indonesia 2005 and Cyprus 2006, stressing the importance of translating the shared values of peace, compassion, and tolerance expounded in the "Bali Declaration" into practical actions, in particular in the four recommended fields education, culture, media and religion and society. With this in mind, the Meeting expressed its support for the implementation of the Larnaca Action Plan (endorsed in 2006 Larnaca/Cyprus) and looked forward to the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM Interfaith Dialogue in China in June 2007 as well as to



the 4<sup>th</sup> Interfaith Dialogue in the Netherlands in 2008. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that Interfaith Dialogue would be one of the priorities during the Slovenian EU-Presidency in 2008. It also took note of Interfaith activities carried out by the Asia Europe Foundation, ASEF, and encouraged ASEM-partners, ASEF and civil society in Europe and Asia to continue to engage actively in this field. Furthermore, the Meeting welcomed bilateral initiatives such as the “Indonesia and United Kingdom Islamic Advisory Group” and multilateral efforts such as the UN sponsored “Alliance of Civilizations” to enhance dialogue and cooperation among cultures and civilizations.

### **10 YEARS OF THE ASIA EUROPE FOUNDATION, ASEF: TAKING STOCK, FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

34. The Meeting took note with satisfaction of the briefing of the ASEF Executive Director. It reaffirmed ASEM partners’ support for ASEF in enhancing dialogue and cooperation between the peoples of Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges, underlining in particular the importance of involving the young and reaching out to civil society. The Meeting welcomed the continued financial contributions by ASEM partners and encouraged those ASEM members who have not yet done so, to engage as well with ASEF’s work, by nominating a Governor and contributing financially. Furthermore, the Meeting stressed the need to optimize ASEF’s capacity in enhancing the visibility of ASEM. The Meeting further welcomed the offer by Poland to host the next ASEF Board of Governors’ Meeting in October 2007.

35. The Meeting acknowledged the valuable role plaid by ASEF in promoting dialogue on major issues such as human rights, interfaith, youth-exchange, art, culture and media-cooperation. It looked forward to the informal ASEM seminar on human rights to be held in Cambodia in September 2007. The Meeting further welcomed the presence of journalists from ASEM countries in the framework of the “4<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Journalists’ Seminar” taking place in connection with the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEM-Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Hamburg, with the support of the German government.

### **PREPARATIONS OF THE ASEM VII SUMMIT IN CHINA IN 2008**

36. China briefed the meeting on its preparation of the 7<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit to be held in Beijing on 24-25 October 2008. The Meeting expressed appreciation and support for China’s efforts in the run up to ASEM 7.

### **FUTURE OF ASEM-COOPERATION AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

37. The Meeting took note of the numerous ongoing ASEM-initiatives and cooperation reflecting the broad and dynamic Asia-Europe partnership and cooperation. The Meeting welcomed the European Commission’s intention to establish a facility to work with partners in advancing the dialogue in priority policy areas recognized by Leaders at ASEM 6 in Helsinki, such as economy and finance, environment, employment and social

affairs, and promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural affairs. It also took note of the findings of the ASEM visibility study financed by the European Commission. The Meeting encouraged all ASEM-partners to continue to engage actively in the ASEM process, making utmost use of the ASEM-framework as an operational, broad platform and catalyst for dialogue and cooperation, for the benefit of the peoples in Asia and in Europe.

38. The Meeting welcomed Viet Nam's offer to host the 9th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 2009.