

**FOURTH ASEM CULTURE MINISTERS MEETING**  
**POZNAŃ, POLAND**  
**9 – 10 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT**

The Fourth Meeting of the ASEM Culture Ministers was held in Poznań on September 9-10, 2010. The main theme of the meeting was <<Heritage and the Challenges of the Present>>. The participants of the meeting included delegations from Commonwealth of Australia, Republic of Austria, Kingdom of Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Czech Republic, Republic of Estonia, Republic of Finland, French Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Hellenic Republic, Republic of Hungary, Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, The Republic of Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Republic of Latvia, Republic of Lithuania, Malaysia, Republic of Malta, Union of Myanmar, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Poland, Portuguese Republic, Russian Federation, Republic of Singapore, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Kingdom of Spain, Kingdom of Sweden, Kingdom of Thailand, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the European Commission, Asia Europe Foundation and observers from civil society.

The Ministers' proceedings came as a follow up to:

- the **Third Meeting of ASEM Culture Ministers in Kuala Lumpur in April 2008**, with the theme: "Cultural Diversity: Cultural Diversity – Realizing the Action Plan", which postulated, among others, fostering common understanding of the value of cultural heritage through initiatives in the field of protection of monuments, educational programmes aimed especially at young generation and exchange of expertise.
- the **Seventh ASEM Summit of Beijing (24-25 October 2008)** of Heads of State and Government, which appealed for more results-oriented discussions during the next meeting of Culture Ministers in Poland 2010.
- the **Ninth ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting of Hanoi in May 2009**, where the Ministers welcomed Poland's initiative to host the Fourth ASEM Culture Ministers Meeting in 2010, underlining the importance of the debate on the issues of cultural dialogue among the cultures and civilizations, with a special emphasis on cultural heritage.

ASEM Culture Ministers reiterated their support and commitment towards further promotion of cultural rapprochement of the peoples of Asia and Europe. They expressed their belief that the growing awareness and concern for common cultural heritage can enhance dialogue and cooperation among cultures and civilizations. The Ministers agreed that joint actions for safeguarding, promoting and disseminating awareness of the treasures of the past are the key steps to be taken to overcome the problem of ignorance and prejudice, and further promote mutual understanding, contributing to build welfare among the people.

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The Ministers agreed that heritage should be considered a fundamental medium for enhancing cultural diversity, which was the subject of a previous ASEM Culture Ministers' debate. Cultural heritage is one of the most important resources in any country, and can be one of the most effective ways of meeting the needs of citizens, the economy, local communities and the natural environment. These needs are the source of the

increasingly more urgent requirement to create visions and strategies for the protection and use of cultural heritage for sustainability purposes. The potential of cultural heritage is based on tangible and intangible values and a particular difficulty in terms of its management is rooted in its nature as a non-renewable resource. The Ministers expressed the need of joint discussion and activities focused on heritage that could spread knowledge about the past among the people of the ASEM countries and should result in increased awareness of and respect for cultural diversity.

Being aware of the growing importance of raising heritage awareness among each country citizens, as well as the significance of maintaining intercultural dialogue among various cultures, managing historic cities and preserving cultural heritage from contemporary threats the Ministers encourage all ASEM countries to tighten their cooperation especially in above mentioned areas.

ASEM Culture Ministers took into consideration the alignment of policies in the field of cultural heritage. Therefore they endorse all member countries to introduce and develop international cooperation as well as concrete actions especially in the following fields:

### 1. Heritage Awareness

In the face of intense modernization processes, increasing globalization, and climate change, the Ministers underlined the need of raising social awareness of the impact of the heritage on culture and environment. The Ministers are aware of the fact that subsequent generations will not be able to form a stable identity and future without any reference to the past and the achievements of their ancestors. To avoid losing the link with the past the Ministers encouraged all ASEM members to foster the awareness of common cultural heritage as a part of the youth education systems in their countries.

The Ministers acknowledge the fact that cultural heritage – tangible and intangible – is part of everybody's life. They emphasize that raising awareness is crucial in preserving and properly using this heritage as well as the fact that our cultural heritage is being approached and appreciated in many different ways.

The workshop observes that the approach to cultural heritage can be top-down: from governments and heritage professionals towards the general public. It can also be bottom-up: self-initiated efforts from other, often local, stakeholders to preserve, enjoy, promote and give meaning to this heritage. These different approaches may strengthen each other, but can create tensions as well. This should be acknowledged and dealt with. The Ministers underlined that everybody should be able to play an active role in discussions regarding research, protection, enjoyment and giving meaning to cultural heritage. This may require a redefining of the role and abilities of the heritage professionals but also other stakeholders. The Ministers encourage governments to establish the conditions other stakeholders need to play an active role in the cultural heritage field. Countries may have a predominant top-down or bottom-up approach. To find the right balance, countries with different approaches in Europe and Asia can learn a great deal from each other.

### 2. Intercultural Dialogue on Heritage Policies

One of the main goals of intercultural dialogue should be to attempt to synthesize some of the various but equally important values contributed to the global civilization by different cultures. The Ministers encourage all ASEM countries to develop joint international programmes designed to produce broadly acceptable legal and practical solutions in the area of multicultural heritage protection, based on the experiences of partners of different cultural backgrounds.

Heritage policies should not only focus on tangible but also intangible aspects of culture, such as the livelihood of the creator/originator of culture. Heritage policies should respect the past and also focus on future oriented outcomes.

Consider to organize an ASEM cultural heritage week as a platform for Asian and European countries to showcase their heritage and also as a means to increase ASEM visibility.

Consider creating various tools (manuals, websites, publications) on heritage protection policies that would present problems and solutions specific to various ASEM countries, and especially describe the best practices in the field.

Consider to increase the involvement of young generation in the heritage protection by various actions undertaken by ASEM members.

### **3. Heritage and Development. Managing Historic Cities**

The philosophy of heritage and its protection, particularly the protection of historic cities, is one of the most significant and rapidly changing modern civilization problems. Globalization processes compounded by the re-allocation of capital and industrial production and tourism bring similar challenges and threats both in Europe and in Asian and Pacific states. In all cases, cultural heritage, as an important element of the public space, is currently facing irrevocable transformation in both historic cities and non-urbanized sites. ASEM Ministers stress the need of protecting both tangible and intangible heritage and to include such issues in development strategies for urbanized areas. The Ministers encourage ASEM countries to exchange the experience and knowledge in the field of heritage management. Moreover, the Ministers recommend to investigate the possibility of creation of a platform for future cooperation in a form of a think-tank combined with an educational centre to deal with the issues of historic cities' management in Asia and Europe.

### **4. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Threats**

The contemporary world is struggling with a number of problems occurring on regional and supra-regional scale. Weather anomalies, natural disasters of various sorts and armed conflicts in various parts of the globe are erupting regularly bringing death and destruction to innocent people and destroying monuments and cultural heritage in general. Furthermore, counteracting illicit trafficking of cultural goods acquires in modern times greater dimension and gravity, for instance the sales of the antiquities in the Internet.

All these troubles pose a serious threat to global cultural heritage. Facing up to such threats requires global actions. The Ministers encourage all ASEM members to initiate an analysis of common problems regarding protection against natural hazards and hazards caused by armed conflicts and illicit trafficking, and attempt to elaborate common solutions.

The Ministers emphasized the necessity of dealing with the threats to Intangible cultural heritage. The public awareness regarding this issue should be enhanced, particularly for the youth, through educational programs, festivals, etc.

The Ministers encourage the ASEM members that have not already done so to ratify UNESCO 1970 Convention on Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Goods, as well as other relevant international agreements in this field.

The Ministers expressed their interest in developing programmes of good practices sharing exchange of experts. The Ministers took into consideration the possibility of creating an Internet portal on heritage protection policies that would present problems and solutions specific to various ASEM countries, monitor changes in the current state of affairs, and describe the best practices in this field.

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The Ministers believe that the core of activities in the area of heritage is to prepare the personnel to cope with the challenges posed by the increasingly urgent need of protecting the heritage. This should involve management of the heritage potential, which would require the conservators to grasp the rudiments of economy, management theories, marketing, as well as law and public administration. It is also important to shape modern attitudes towards heritage. Taking all this into consideration the Ministers encourage all ASEM members to elaborate and implement a common initiative of specialized educational courses, seminars and trainings in this field.

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The Ministers acknowledged the Heritage Days, as an ongoing initiative in some ASEM members, and encourage to promote this initiative in Asia and Europe.

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Bearing in mind the conclusions of the previous meetings, ASEM Ministers acknowledged the progress in the process of ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions by all ASEM partners in Asia and Europe. Ministers recognized the actions and measures undertaken for the implementation of the Convention with regard to the operational guidelines for its implementation and future activities adopted by the Second Ordinary Session of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

In this context, the Ministers welcomed the results of ASEM Seminar on the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The Seminar was a joint initiative of Vietnam and the European Commission and was held in Hanoi in December 2008. This seminar offered an opportunity for officials and civil society representatives to exchange views and experiences on the ratification and implementation of this convention.

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The fourth meeting reaffirmed ASEM Culture Ministers commitment to continue stepping up cultural exchanges and cooperation in all cultural fields between Asia and Europe as identified through the **Action Plan of Culture Ministers** adopted in the Second ASEM Culture Ministers Meeting in Paris in June 2005. The Ministers also acknowledged the initiatives undertaken to realize the action plan which was translated into programmes and activities. To accelerate further, efforts to materialize the action plan, the Ministers seek the support from all member countries to participate and collaborate in the programmes and activities which were agreed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM CMM. In this regard, the Ministers noted the 'Asia – Europe Seminar on Conservation of Timber and Lime Buildings to be held in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia on 5-8 March 2011. The Ministers encouraged more intense cultural interaction among the people of Asia and Europe at all levels as well as for transforming the directions of the policy and the long term plans into concrete programmes and activities, especially with regard to strengthening heritage awareness among each country's citizens, developing intercultural dialogue between different cultures, managing historic cities as well as preserving cultural heritage from contemporary threats. ASEM Culture Ministers commend and fully support the move by member countries towards realizing the action plans for fostering closer cultural relationship between Europe and Asia and reiterate their support for the cultural initiatives applied to fulfill that scope.

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The Ministers were glad to note that the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEM Culture and Arts Festival was held in Beijing in September 2009 and encouraged member states to develop this initiative further, stressing the need to coordinate it with major ASEM Meetings.

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Ministers applauded the joint initiative of Vietnam, Hungary, Italy and ASEF to organize the *Workshop on Enhancing ASEM Visibility through Cultural Activities* as an important step forward in improving efficiency in cooperation between cultural and foreign ministries as well as facilitating the planning of concrete activities. They underlined the importance of ASEM visibility through culture for fostering promotion of ASEM on the global scale.

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ASEM Culture Ministers acknowledged the role played by the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF) and its flagship programmes in the process of aligning ASEF activities with ASEM priorities, as set out by the Heads of Government Summit. They welcomed and endorsed all the efforts taken to secure the long-term financial sustainability of ASEF.

ASEM Culture Ministers take note of the work by the Roundtable on Cultural Heritages of Asia and Europe organized by the Asia Europe Foundation and the International Institute of Asia Studies prior to and in view of the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEM Culture Ministers Meeting

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As fully endorsed during the previous ASEM Culture Ministers Meetings, the Ministers recommended ASEF to continue spearheading the development of **Culture360**, an Asia-Europe cultural web-portal set up to connect thousands of cultural practitioners of the two regions, and to facilitate bi-regional cooperation in the arts as well as to promote the exchange of ideas, information and experts in the ASEM countries.

The Ministers acknowledged the role of the **Culture360** web portal introduced during the Third ASEM Culture Ministers Meeting in Malaysia, showing a concrete deliverable of the ASEM process facilitated by ASEF, and welcomed the presentation of its over two years achievements.

The Ministers requested ASEF to continue the task of developing **Culture360** with the scope of opening it to new initiatives in the fields of culture not included hitherto as well as engaging the portal as a channel of a flow of expertise related to culture. The Ministers entrusted their engagement and support to make this unique initiative a sustainable success.

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The Ministers underlined the importance of continuous and systematic monitoring progress on their recommendations and look forward to an evaluation of **Culture360** at the next ASEM Culture Ministers Meeting. They encouraged ASEM member countries and their relevant Ministries to list and update cultural and herit-

age activities and to invite participation through the **Culture360** portal as well as to spread relevant information through ASEM Infoboard portal.

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The Ministers acknowledged with satisfaction the upcoming accession of Australia, New Zealand and Russia to ASEM, and encouraged them to join actively future cultural actions and initiatives within ASEM.

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ASEM Culture Ministers welcomed Indonesia's offer to host the Fifth ASEM Culture Ministers Meeting and looked forward to meeting again in 2012.

ASEM culture Ministers wish that the conclusions of this declaration be taken into account in the preparation and further during debate of the next meeting of the head of states and governments to be held Brussels in October 2010.

Poznań, September 10, 2010

