

**International Asia-Europe Conference on Enhancing Balanced
Mobility**

5-6 March 2012

Pullman Bangkok King Power, Bangkok, Thailand

Conclusions by the Chair

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Balanced mobility has been one of the core topics during the last Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education in Copenhagen, May 2011. According to the ASEM members' information, the overall situation for the exchange between Asia and Europe varies from country to country. Some countries are "net importers" of mobile students while others are "net exporters". However, European countries still count more incomings than outgoings, while most Asian countries do the other way around.

According to the Chair's conclusions from the third Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME3), the leaders encouraged ASEM members to organize thematic training seminars on removing obstacles to mobility, funded by the EU or national resources. The Ministers welcomed Thailand's offer to host an international ASEM conference on Mobility in late 2011. Originally, this conference was scheduled for November 2011 but a terrible flood made it impossible to meet in Thailand at that date.

Consequently, about 180 participants met in Bangkok from 5-6 March 2012. The majority of them were representatives from Thai universities and other organizations relevant to education; others were representatives from embassies and educational organizations of Australia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Spain, Estonia, India, Japan,

Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sweden, ASEAN University Network, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Secretariat, Fulbright Thailand and SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development. During the two-day seminar, Asian and European experts informed the audiences about the current situation on student and staff mobility in the different regions and presented different national and institutional approaches to better balance mobility.

The participants reaffirmed:

- the necessity to enhance mobility between Asia and Europe;
- the need to improve other factors relevant to balance mobility, this includes the quality enhancement of teaching and learning, the increase of institutional cooperation and the provision of transparent information;
- the need to promote staff mobility along with student mobility;
- the necessity of cooperation among Ministries of Education, Ministries of Higher Education and universities to set up a mobility strategy.

In order to move towards a more balanced mobility, participants have come to the following conclusions:

- mobility strategies should be set up by Ministries of Education, Ministries of Higher Education and universities. They should formulate an “International Strategy” to embed mobility at national level both at bilateral and multilateral level and. In this respect, communication with stakeholders in order to involve them in implementing mobility strategies is needed. Higher education institutions should be highly committed to academic mobility. They should put national strategies into practice by formulating specific plans to embed mobility in institutional frameworks both at bilateral and multilateral level;

Ministries should promote balanced mobility by providing funds to support both student and staff mobility; in this regard mobility for all should be envisaged;

- national database/information on academic mobility needs to be improved and kept updated ;
- arrange international sessions to promote international academic activities;
- industry should be more involved in mobility programmes.

In this context, some instruments were proposed:

At Ministry level:

- to set national standards and guidelines for recognition;
- to establish a National Qualifications Framework;
- to elaborate a credit transfer mechanism;
- to set up national scholarship schemes such as ASEM-DUO Fellowship programme in order to give incentives for temporary mobility;
- to appoint and promote ambassadors for mobility, internship and placements;
- to encourage university-business cooperation;
- to fund more joint study programmes;
- to arrange education fairs for promoting global education.

At higher education level:

- to set internal quality criteria for credit transfer;
- provide transparent two-way information through universities' websites in different languages;
- to provide accredited and attractive international short-term programmes such as summer schools;

- to promote joint education and joint research programmes;
- to improve accessibility to education such as offering online courses or using online application system;
- to provide university scholarships;
- to pay attention on learning outcomes;
- to lessen barriers for mobility;
- to provide more programmes taught in English.

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