



2nd ASEF Policy Panel

CULTURE & THE CREATIVE ECONOMY: WHAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASIA-EUROPE EXCHANGE & COLLABORATION?

22 June 2016, Gwangju, Korea

Alongside the 2nd Senior Officials' Meeting
of the 7th ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting

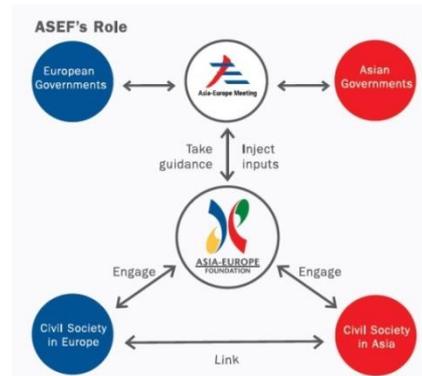
REPORT

Supporting diversity of creative production, facilitating the dissemination of creative content, promoting equality of partnerships and cultural mobility were some of the key recommendations from the ASEF Policy Panel to the [7th ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting](#) (ASEM CMM7) in Gwangju, Korea. These pressing issues have also been recently highlighted by UNESCO in its recent 2005 Convention Global Report, *Reshaping Cultural Policies*.¹

The panel took place at the 2nd Senior Officials' Meeting of ASEM CMM7 on Wednesday, 22 June 2016. Its purpose was to provide insights from civil society as inputs to the Ministerial meeting, which is being organised in the framework of the [Asia-Europe Meeting \(ASEM\)](#)². As such, topics discussed closely reflected those on the agenda of ASEM CMM7.

The panel brought together Dr. Amareswar GALLA (Australia/India), Executive Director, International Institute for the Inclusive Museum & Curator, Buddhist heritage in Amaravati ancient town, India; Ossi LUOTO (Finland), Executive Producer and CEO, Europe-Asia Roundtable Sessions (EARS); and, Jérémy SEGAY (France), specialist in Asian cinema & Audio-Visual Attaché, Bureau Français. It was moderated by Anupama SEKHAR, Director, Culture Department at the Asia-Europe Foundation.

The panel was organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Korea, host of ASEM CMM7. As the only institution of ASEM, ASEF has an important function in connecting the views and concerns of civil society in Asia and Europe with reflections at the ASEM level.



¹ *Re-shaping Cultural Policies – A Decade Promoting the Diversity of Cultural Expressions for Development, 2005 Convention Global Report* (UNESCO, 2015), p. 3; <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002428/242866E.pdf>

² The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is an intergovernmental forum for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe, focusing on political, economic and socio-cultural issues of common concern. Established in 1996, ASEM now brings together 53 partners (21 Asian and 30 European countries, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the European Union). <http://www.aseminfoboard.org/>



1. Future of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and the Creative Industries

Key conclusions

- The panel acknowledged that technology can play a game-changing role in **reducing asymmetries** in cultural representation, production and dissemination.
- Technological development has **facilitated cultural and knowledge production** by reducing capability gaps and enabling the mobility of ideas and resources.
- It has **positively disrupted** the filmmaking and visual effects industries by enabling hobbyists, semi-professionals and smaller production houses to **compete in markets** where traditionally only dominant players could afford to procure the required equipment, software, and expertise.
- In terms of **access to and consumption of films**, language barriers between regions, countries, and even localities have also become less burdensome with the advent of **multi-language subtitling**, now an increasingly widespread feature given the popularity of video-on-demand (VOD).
- Amidst the massive amount of content now available in the digital space, creative industries must find ways to **enhance the quality of connections**, both among artists as well as with their audiences.
- An example of the lasting value of physical, people-to-people meetings in generating new ideas (which technology still struggles to replicate) is the trend of week-long song writing camps that physically bring together song writers from all continents. These camps have resulted in a big wave of **collaborative music**, profoundly impacting the music business in Scandinavia.
- Scandinavia-Asia collaborations, in particular, have **inspired** and led to the **co-production** of some of Scandinavia's biggest contemporary music hits.
- The increase in the **intensity** of cultural and knowledge production has not necessarily translated into a concomitant increase in content **diversity**.
- The ASEM Outlook Report 2016/2017³ cites that while every child around the world is likely to recognise famous Disney characters and their stories, they are so much less likely to have seen a single cartoon, or read a single book, from a neighbouring country.

³ Koržinek, Nina Obuljen (2016). ASEM Outlook Report 2016/2017 – Chapter 4.2: How to Promote the Diversity of Cultural Expressions?. <http://tinyurl.com/jt4527y>



- Panellists further echoed the view that **diversity of cultural expression cannot be supported by markets alone**. Rather, **state-directed action** is needed to drive and support diversity of cultural expression, be it through public policy or public financing.
- Australia's *Creative Nation* and *Creative Australia* interventions present positive examples of state-level policy, where certain proportions of national/regional content are mandated as a matter of public importance.
- On the issue of **content dissemination**, the panel noted that distribution channels continue to be dominated by large commercial players. This trend looks set to continue given the increase in media convergence.
- Digital technologies are but a means to an end. Beyond ICT skills, countries must still develop the necessary **capabilities and capacities** to deal with issues surrounding culture and creativity.

Ideas for Asia-Europe collaboration

- The panel affirmed that **public policy interventions** can go a long way in encouraging, even ensuring, content diversity. State-supported collaborative efforts present win-win opportunities for collaborating parties to widen their consumption markets, thereby enhancing commercial viability and sustainability of their co-production(s).
- The effectiveness and resource optimisation potential of such interventions is exemplified in some segments of the performing arts, where the East Asian Dance Platform (comprising dance festival organisers from Korea, Japan, and China) **coordinates programming and provides shared touring options** in Europe for international groups. These touring networks, in turn, help the dance groups **bridge creative content with their international audiences and take advantage of economies of scale**.
- **Curation of content** is also an important way of preserving the essentially human aspects of culture and the creative arts amidst a cluttered digital landscape. Governments can do more to **support curatorial efforts**, especially those designed to involve **diverse voices from across both regions**.
- *La Cinetek*, a union of filmmakers in France, provides a successful example of Asia-Europe collaboration in this area. Unlike conventional digital platforms which rely on digital algorithms to identify search results, *La Cinetek* works closely with well-regarded filmmakers and experts from both regions to carefully curate and bring a uniquely human angle to its online film collection.

2. Traditional Cultural Heritage and the Creative Economy

Key conclusions

- The panel recognised that there are significant ways in which creative economy **intersects** with heritage, be it tangible or intangible.
- A **creative tension** exists between that which is traditional and living, and that which is contemporary – but this is likely to be an **oversimplification** of the relationship as contemporaries inevitably draw upon their socialisation and histories to inform their creativity.
- The **younger generation is bearing the brunt** of this creative tension – the desire to connect with their traditional roots while conforming to modern notions of what is economically useful/practical.



- **Heritage is a valuable resource for creativity.** Governments and administrators must think beyond the economic maximisation frame and recognise the **mutuality** between grounded/organic and commodified creativity.
- It was observed, by way of example, that a **contemporary resurgence** of Korean living heritage and traditions has taken place via the cinematic re-representation of the **traditional art form Pansori** (a genre of musical storytelling performed by a vocalist and a drummer).
- Another instance of said mutuality between heritage and economic impact is that of France's next Filipino film release. The film is a Filipino classic from the 1970s and highly-valued on the French film market, but was hardly accessible for many decades until French filmmakers decided to restore it to its former glory.

Ideas for Asia-Europe collaboration

- Build on the idea of **reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage**, one of the three pillars proposed as part of the EU's 'strategy for international cultural relations'⁴.
- **Identify and revitalise** some of the intangible heritage which inform the creativity of contemporary art forms.
- For a start, to lay the foundations for the future, governments can support **small-scale pilots – transmission projects** that deal with the creative tension that young people feel and help connect them with their traditional past.
- This is especially so for the more culturally and linguistically diverse countries, where an interesting initiative could be to help the younger generations connect with the source communities of their parents in other regions.

3. International Co-operation for Revitalising the Creative Industries

Key conclusions

- The panel affirmed the **importance of physical interaction** as a counterpoint to the process-related and economic efficiencies so extensively promoted by digital communications technologies.
- Ultimately, cooperation in culture and the creative industries is heavily rooted in **people-to-people dialogues** between talented individuals and artists as they come together to find common ground.
- The nature of collaboration is such that it is not easy. Governments would do well to adopt a more **open approach** to creative collaboration. This starts with allowing greater room for experimentation and failure. After all, it is through **serendipitous experimentation and dialogue** that new and unique ideas are inspired.
- The first step to collaboration is always the **invitation**, followed by an **exploration of what happens next**. The latter is a resource-intensive issue that involves myriad elements such as access to studies, information, facilitation support, guidance, funding, and target markets.
- Public institutions and public policy should therefore be designed **with both stages of collaboration in mind**.

⁴ European Commission High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (2016). Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations.

- There is a **danger of co-optation of cultures**, not just of Asia into Europe but even within Europe itself, of smaller countries that do not have possess the financial/policy strength to hold their own and develop their cultural richness.

Ideas for Asia-Europe collaboration

- Public investment in **cultural mobility between regions** is more important than ever before. This calls for a review of both the **technical** (e.g. travel visas for artists) as well as **philosophical** (e.g. cultural mindsets) aspects of people-to-people exchanges.
- Governments can continue to support the creative industries by **facilitating fora** for the sharing of best practices and the collective resolution of common challenges. Institutions like ASEM, which have created a safe space for discussing and experimenting with unsafe ideas, must be fully maximised.
- Beyond supporting creative practitioners, it is also important to **develop and groom local audiences through education** (e.g. by introducing diversity at an early age) so that they will gradually come to appreciate and value the creative works produced by the industry.
- In the spirit of equal partnership, parties to collaborations should attempt to ensure **equity in the co-creative process**, rather than having the party generating the initial dialogue or in possession of greater financial resources play a disproportionately dominant role.
- In this regard, public institutions can provide the **intellectual rethinking** needed around the idea and practice of co-creation/co-production.
- The manner in which the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) obtains and redistributes funding presents an example of **innovative design** – a common financing pool bypassing conventional modes of categorisation (e.g. developed vs. developing), thereby offering equitable partnership and benefit sharing among all ASEM partners.
- Cultural institutions in Europe, such as the International Council of Museums South East Europe (ICOM SEE), also demonstrate how more localised **regional alliances** can help smaller countries more effectively address their collective peculiarities and challenges.





This report was prepared by Daniel HO Sheng and is based on the discussions at the 2nd ASEF Policy Panel on *Culture and the Creative Economy: What Opportunities for Asia-Europe Exchange and Collaboration?* on 22 June 2016 at the Senior Officials' Meeting of the 7th ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting (June 2016, Gwangju, Korea). For concept note and programme of the ASEF Policy Panel, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/z5fjkac>. The event was also covered live on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) via social media handles #ASEFculture and #ASEMCMM7.

The 2nd ASEF Policy Panel is part of an ongoing series of conversations on cultural policy issues of common interest and mutual relevance for Asia and Europe. The 1st ASEF Policy Panel took place at the 6th ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting (October 2014, Rotterdam, Netherlands). The idea for the ASEF Policy Panel series was born at the Europe-Asia Roundtable Series / EARS (September 2014, Helsinki, Finland).

ASEF is represented at ASEM CMM7 by:

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About the Organisers



The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, economy, education, governance, public health and sustainable development.

ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

Together with about 750 partner organisations ASEF has run more than 700 projects, mainly conferences, seminars and workshops. Over 20,000 Asians and Europeans have actively participated in its activities and it has reached much wider audiences through its networks, web-portals, publications, exhibitions and lectures.

For more information, please visit www.asef.org.



The **Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism** of Korea works to make happy life through arts and culture. The vision of the Ministry is to establish a brand as a cultural country and to strengthen innovative capacity for cultural contents. It also wants citizens to enjoy culture in the daily life through diverse cultural spaces and content.

For more information, please visit <http://www.mcst.go.kr>.

In the framework of



The **7th ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting (ASEM CMM7)** took place from 22-24 June 2016 in Gwangju, Korea. It is organized in the framework of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), which commemorates its 20th anniversary in 2016. ASEM CMM7 discussed issues, trends and challenges relating to culture and the creative economy with specific focus on the future of Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the creative industries; traditional cultural heritage and the creative economy; and, international co-operation for revitalising creative industries.

For more information, please visit www.asem2016cmm.org.
