

Concept Paper

ASEM Interfaith Cultural Photography Contest “Yes, We Believe in the Interfaith Dialogue” November 2009 – February 2010 Kingdom of Thailand * * * * *

Background

The ASEM Interfaith Cultural Photography Contest has been initiated under the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Interfaith Dialogue (IFD) which addresses inter-cultural, religious and social issues facing the global community. The ASEM IFD aims at promoting greater understanding among different faiths and beliefs. In promoting mutual understanding amongst such diverse groups, the ASEM IFD encourages extended and intensive dialogue with evolving themes among participants from various circles, including academia, government and religious communities – gradually translating ideas into actions since the convening of the ASEM IFD1 in Bali (2005), the ASEM IFD2 in Larnaca (2006), the ASEM IFD3 in Nanjing (2007), the ASEM IFD4 in Amsterdam (2008), and most recently, the ASEM IFD5 in Seoul (2009).

Thailand has actively participated in the ASEM IFD. Thailand has co-sponsored all the ASEM IFDs – from Bali to Seoul. Thailand also proudly co-hosted the ASEM IFD4 with the Netherlands, during 3-5 June 2008, in Amsterdam, where approximately 150 representatives from academia, government and religious communities attended, including four Thai academics and religious practitioners who participated actively as panellists in all the Working Groups – thus reaffirming Thailand’s commitment to the ASEM IFD and its objectives.

Additionally, Thailand hosted a successful ASEM Interfaith Cultural Youth Camp during 6-12 February 2009. 48 youth representatives from 22 ASEM member countries joined the Camp where the participants had a chance to visit different cultural and religious sites in Bangkok and Ayudhya as well as to attend seminars where they had a lively exchange of views on the IFD. The friendships formed during the Camp have continued to date.

Objective/Methodology

The past ASEM IFDs have encouraged the youths to build a strong foundation towards the promotion of IFD, tolerance and harmonious co-existence amongst the diverse groups. At ASEM IFD 5 recently held in Seoul, participants noted that activities should be encouraged to reach the widest audience possible in all circles and levels.

In this regard, Thailand believes that the ASEM Interfaith Cultural Photography Contest under the theme of “Yes, We Believe in the Interfaith Dialogue” will help to advance the IFD by using photographs as a means to communicate interfaith dialogue.

In order to ensure widespread dissemination, photographs submitted by nominated participants will be displayed at an Exhibition at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre for about one month. The photographs submitted to the Contest by the participants will also be put on display on the official exhibition website, www.we-ifd.org, for wider accessibility. The opportunity for social networking will also be available through online community websites such as Facebook.

Criteria for Submission

A panel of experts in the IFD, professional photographers and representatives from ASEM member countries will consider, adjudge, and cast their votes for five winners. Successful entries will show creativity and photography techniques based on the Contest's theme of "*Yes, We Believe in the Interfaith Dialogue*". Photographs could depict, for example:

- People of different faiths interacting in their daily lives in harmony within the same society.
- Festivals related to different faiths attended by everyone, regardless of their faiths.
- Religious sites located in areas where the religion's followers are a minority, but with their followers enjoying their rights to practice their religion freely.

Please note that these examples are tentative guidelines and photographers are encouraged to freely interpret the theme so that the contest receives the widest possible range of photographs.

However, photographs cannot display any nudity or graphic violence.

Submission Specifications

Photographs must be submitted in JPEG format with a resolution of at least 300 DPI to the official website, www.we-ifd.org, by midnight of 11 December 2009 (Bangkok local time). The organizers will ensure that standard high quality photo printing equipment is used to create prints for the judging committee, but please note that the organizers cannot be held responsible if the final print does not match the contestant's expectations.

Submission Conditions

- The ASEM Interfaith Cultural Photography Contest organizers will invite each ASEM member country to nominate up to ten participants to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. Each nominated participant may submit only one entry via the official website, www.we-ifd.org.
- Photographs must not have been featured or printed in previous publications, promotional materials or websites.
- Entries must be submitted with the permission of the photographer.
- The photographer retains copyright. Any photograph used by the organisers will bear the photographer's name and country.
- By submitting an entry, the participant agrees to the condition that any image submitted for the contest may be used by the organisers for not-for-profit advocacy

and promotional materials, including but not limited to: photo exhibition related to this contest, publications, websites, documents, presentations, and videos.

- Please note that participants must ensure, prior to participation at the contest, that they will be able to travel and remain in Thailand during 1-4 February 2010 in the event that they are selected as the five winners.

Awards

The winners of the first, second and third prizes will receive 1000 Euros, 500 Euros and 250 Euros, respectively. Two complimentary prizes will also be awarded. All five winners will be awarded with travel to Thailand for the Award Ceremony and the Opening Ceremony of the Exhibition. They will visit and photograph religious and cultural sites in Bangkok and in Ayudhaya during 1-4 February 2010. The photographs taken during the trips will be displayed on the official website.

International airfare, domestic accommodation, meals and transportation will be provided to the winners by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

Tentative Schedule

2009

1 – 13 November - The Contest is publicised through the ASEM contact points, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ASEM member countries and the ASEM Embassies in Bangkok.

14 November – 11 December - Each ASEM member country selects ten participants and officially notifies the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. The 10 nominated participants are required to submit one photograph each (please see submission specifications) to the official website, www.we-ifd.org.

18 December - Winners are announced on the website. Official letters are sent to each winner. Due to the large volume of submissions expected, only winners will be officially notified.

2010

1 – 4 February - Winners visit Thailand for the Award Ceremony and the Opening Ceremony of the Exhibition and to photograph cultural and religious sites in Bangkok and Ayudhaya.

1 – 28 February - The Exhibition of the Contest at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre and other prominent public locations.

Organisers

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education of Thailand.

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