

ASEP10 gives priority to climate change

The 10th Asia-Europe Parliamentary Meeting (ASEP10) will take place at the European Parliament in Brussels on 27 and 28 September 2018. The meeting will focus on climate change and environmental challenges. The final declaration will be transmitted to the 12th ASEM Summit, to be held in Brussels on 18 and 19 October 2018.

ASEM

The first Asia-Europe Meeting ([ASEM](#)) summit was held in Bangkok, Thailand, in 1996. At that time it involved 26 partners. Since then, summits have been held every two years, alternately in the EU and Asia. After several rounds of enlargement, ASEM today consists of [53 members](#), including: 30 European countries (28 EU Member States, plus Norway and Switzerland); 18 Asian countries (the 10 members of [ASEAN](#) plus Bangladesh, China, Japan, India, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Mongolia and Pakistan); as well as Australia,



Russia and New Zealand, together with the ASEAN secretariat and the EU. ASEM partners represent 60 % of the global population, 65 % of the global economy, 55 % of global trade and 75 % of global tourism.

ASEM is an informal and flexible inter-regional process of dialogue and cooperation that is based on equal partnership and aimed at enhancing mutual understanding. ASEM represents a forum for sharing information, and building confidence, rather than a tool for negotiation and problem-solving. Because of its informality, no formal or structured agenda is set out. The Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework ([AECF](#)), which ASEM established in 2000, defines its working methods. ASEM has no secretariat, and the Singapore-based Asia-Europe Foundation ([ASEF](#)) is its only institution, set up with the aim to promote mutual understanding through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. The ASEM dialogue addresses issues of mutual interest, divided into [three pillars](#): political; economic and financial; and social, cultural and educational. Besides the ASEM summits, [numerous meetings](#) take place among ministers and senior officials, as well as regular dialogues.

From ASEM to ASEP

The Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership ([ASEP](#)) meeting gives a democratic input to this process. It is the parliamentary dimension of the Asia-Europe Meeting and assembles parliamentarians from the ASEM countries and the European Parliament (EP). It is normally convened on a regular [bi-annual basis](#) alternately in Asia and in Europe [before](#) ASEM summits (it did not take place in 1998 and 2000). [ASEP 10](#) is scheduled for 27-28 September 2018, when, for the first time, it will take place at the [European Parliament](#) in Brussels. ASEP10 is to focus on climate change and environmental challenges as a priority for the planet, and on multilateralism as a fair methodology to shape advanced and equitable international relationships. The [programme](#) includes three discussion panels on climate change and the environment's impact on economy, migration and security. The final [declaration](#) will be transmitted to the 12th ASEM summit, scheduled to take place in Brussels on 18-19 October 2018, which should also discuss the Commission and the Vice President/High Representative's joint communication on '[Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU Strategy](#)' adopted on 19 September 2018.

Climate change: a challenge for Europe, Asia and the world

In the summer of 2018, both Asia and Europe experienced the consequences of extreme weather, in countries such as [Greece](#), [India](#), [Japan](#) and [Sweden](#). Cooperation between the EU and Asia on addressing climate change challenges is of increasing importance, especially after the [US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement](#). Asia's rapid economic expansion is expected to increase its contribution to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, projected to rise from 40 % in 2016 to 48 % in 2030. A [6°C temperature rise](#) above pre-industrial levels is projected for the Asian landmass by the end of the century, which may even pose an existential threat to some countries. Asia is [the most disaster-prone region in the world](#) and 10 Asian countries are among the top 20 in the [Global Climate Risk Index](#). Climate change impacts may slash up to [9 % off south Asia's economy](#) every year by the end of this century.

The European Union is committed to climate action and has been in the front line of setting ambitious climate and energy targets, with a view to assisting the shift towards a low-carbon economy. The EU is working towards cutting domestic GHG emissions by at least 40 % by 2030, compared to 1990 levels, with a medium-term goal of achieving a 20 % reduction by 2020. The long-term objective for 2050 is a reduction of GHG emissions of 80-95% compared to 1990. To meet the 20% target for 2020, the EU has set up an [Emissions Trading System \(ETS\)](#), the world's biggest scheme for trading greenhouse gas emissions allowances. It has been [reviewed in line with the EU's 2030 climate and energy targets](#). EU climate legislation includes the ETS (reformed with the introduction of a future [market stability reserve](#)), [eco-design and energy labelling](#), the [Effort-Sharing Decision/Regulation](#), the [Renewable Energy Directive](#), the [Energy Efficiency Directive](#), CO₂ limits for [cars](#) and [vans](#), and legislation on [fluorinated greenhouse gases](#).

The EU is also actively engaged in the international efforts to reduce GHG emissions under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)), the [Kyoto Protocol](#) and the [Paris Agreement](#). The EU is the [world's largest contributor](#) of climate finance to developing countries: together with its Member States and the European Investment Bank, it contributed [€20.2 billion](#) in public climate finance to developing countries in 2016. The EU's flagship initiative is the [Global Climate Change Alliance Plus \(GCCA+\)](#). It also works closely with other countries and regions to advance dialogue and [cooperation on climate change](#), for instance during the annual [climate diplomacy weeks](#) – in June and September 2018 – where EU delegations around the world reach out to communities and partner organisations.

European Parliament's position

ASEM and ASEP

Since 2002, the EP has been represented through *ad hoc* delegations at ASEP meetings. In 2018, the Parliament's delegation is composed of up to 11 MEPs, including the president, the vice-president in charge of relations with Asia and the chairs of the ASEP-related delegations. In a [resolution](#) of 15 January 2014 on the future of EU-ASEAN relations, the EP stressed that 'the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP), as the existing channels for dialogue between the EU and ASEAN, should be upgraded at governmental and parliamentary level and further extended'. In a [resolution](#) of 15 February 2017, MEPs welcomed the proposal from Mongolia (host of [ASEP9](#) in 2016) to set up an ASEM centre, including a virtual/online facility. The Parliament also urged the Commission and the Vice President/High Representative to use ASEM summits or meetings to raise issues such as the [situation of the Rohingya people](#), the [freedom of expression in Vietnam](#) and the [situation of human rights in Laos](#).

Climate change

The EP advocates an [ambitious EU climate policy](#) with ambitious binding targets on climate and energy: a reduction by at least 40 % in domestic GHG emissions from 1990 levels; a 30 % share for renewable energy sources in energy consumption; and a 40 % increase in energy efficiency. Before the 23rd UNFCCC climate change conference ([COP23](#)), the [Parliament voiced disappointment](#) that, when introducing [CORSIA](#), ICAO did not agree on emissions reductions in international aviation, but instead focused mainly on offsets. MEPs regretted that the quality of the offsets is not guaranteed, that the application of CORSIA is only legally binding from 2027 onward, and that there is a lack of commitment by major ICAO members. The EP voiced support for broad-based carbon pricing and the allocation of emissions-trading revenues to climate-related investments. It asked to phase out all fossil fuel subsidies by 2020. MEPs backed environmentally and socially sustainable biofuel production that does not lead to deforestation and rising food prices.

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