

## [CHINA]

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# **Assessment of 10 Years of ASEM Chinese perspective**

## **Evaluation Report on the Asia-Europe Meeting**

The year 2006 is the tenth anniversary of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). The purpose of ASEM is to help build a new partnership based on equality between Asia and Europe, to promote the democratization of international relations and to accelerate the development of multilateralism. Being involved in the process from the very beginning, China has played an active role in all of the Asia-Europe Meetings.

In order to effectively evaluate the attitudes and perception of Chinese elites, the general public and policymakers toward the ASEM process, understand its influence in China, and explore effective ways of promoting the development of the process, the Asia-Europe Meeting Research Team of the European Studies Center of CFAU<sup>1</sup> organized a series of data-gathering activities including questionnaires, seminars, and interviews. The group has compiled this report on the basis of these activities. The report includes three parts: 1. Public's perception of ASEM; 2. Media coverage and elites and policymakers' perceptions; 3. Conclusions and suggestions on the future development of ASEM.

### **I. Public Perception of ASEM**

We handed out 1000 questionnaires and took a random sample in four universities, namely, Tsinghua University, Peking University, Renmin University of China and China Foreign Affairs University. This survey, intended to reveal what students know about ASEM, includes questions in two aspects: perception of facts and attitudes and comments.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The research, commissioned and supported by the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE), is under the direct leadership of Ambassador Wu Jianmin, President of CFAU. The research team, headed by Prof. Zhu Liquan, Director of European Studies Center of CFAU, consisted of Zhu Jiejun, Hui Gengtian, Lin Minwang and Sun Junhua.

<sup>2</sup> The sample size is 1000, among which 970 are valid with a validity rate of 97%. The sample distribution conforms to the principle that the sample size is in proportion to the total number of students studying at the university: we handed out 300 questionnaires in Tsinghua University, 300 in Peking University, 300 in Renmin University of China and 100 in China Foreign Affairs University. After retrieving the questionnaires, the research group

Among the valid samples, there are 602 males, accounting for 62.13% of the total, and 367 females, accounting for 37.87% of the total. The following chart shows the distribution of the samples' education background, university majors, and age.

Table 1 Basic information in survey

<b>Basic information</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Valid sample</b>	<b>Percent ( % )</b>
Gender	Male	602	62.06
	Female	367	37.84
Education background	Undergraduate	795	81.96
	Graduate	146	15.05
	Others	27	2.78
Major	Science	386	39.79
	Arts	355	36.60
	IR	88	9.07
	Others	138	14.23
Age	19—22	664	68.45
	23—30	268	27.63
	Above 30	35	3.61

Based on the survey, we made the following conclusions about the respondents' knowledge of the Asia-Europe Meeting.

### 1. Students have limited knowledge of ASEM

The survey suggests that students know little about ASEM and have poor knowledge about the basic facts of ASEM. When asked: "Do you know ASEM?," 68.6% of the respondents answered, "Heard of it. But do not know it well." Only 7.64% of the respondents said, "Know it well," and 1.34% said, "Know it very well."

We asked six questions about basic facts of ASEM to investigate the respondents' knowledge of the process. The survey shows that each respondent answered only 1.3 questions correctly on average.

The following table shows the six questions asked to test the respondents' knowledge about ASEM.

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organized persons with professional skills to check and examine them, removing invalid ones. Epidata was used for data input to ensure the quality of statistics. Afterwards, we checked and sorted out the data using statistical software. The statistical analysis of the data was conducted using SPSS 11.5. The whole process was conducted under the effective management and quality control of the research team.

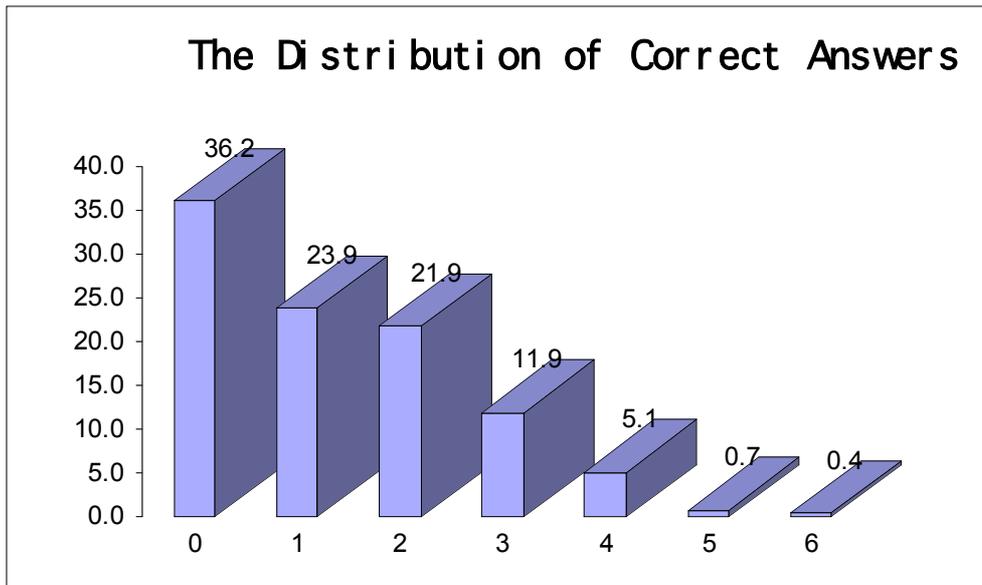
Table 2 The six questions asked to test the respondents' knowledge

Q 2、 The first ASEM was held in ____ (place).
Q 3、 So far ASEM has been held ____ times.
Q 4、 There are__ states participating in ASEM today.
Q 5、 Asia-Europe Summit is held ____ (time).
Q 6、 “Asia” in “Asia-Europe Meeting” refers to ____.
Q 7、 “Europe” in “Asia-Europe Meeting” refers to ____.

**Table 3** and **Chart 1** show the results of the survey:

Table 3 The Distribution of Correct Answers to Questions about the Basic Facts of ASEM

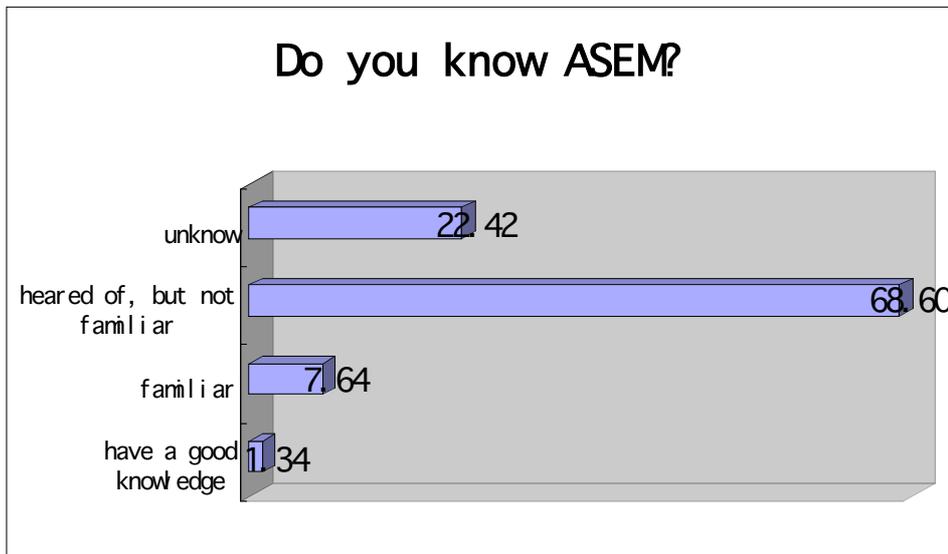
<b>Number of Correct Answers</b>	<b>Valid Sample</b>	<b>Valid Percent ( % )</b>
0	351	36.2
1	232	23.9
2	212	21.9
3	115	11.9
4	49	5.1
5	7	0.7
6	4	0.4
total	970	100



(Chart 1)

From **Chart 1**, we concluded that students in China know little about ASEM. Moreover, only four students—0.4% of the total respondents— could correctly answer all the questions on the basic facts of ASEM.

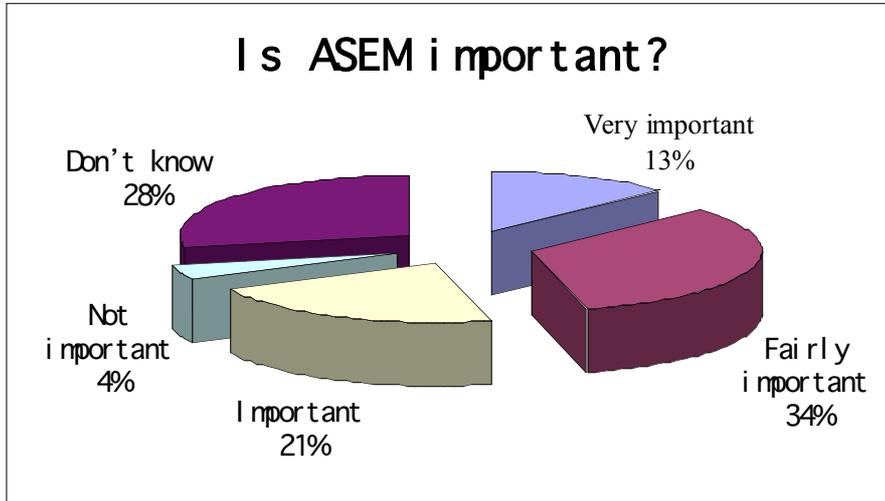
When asked “Do you know about the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)?” and “Do you know about the ASEM Trust Fund?” most respondents answered “No.” As Chart 2 shows, the rate of students who actually know about them is very low.



(Chart 2)

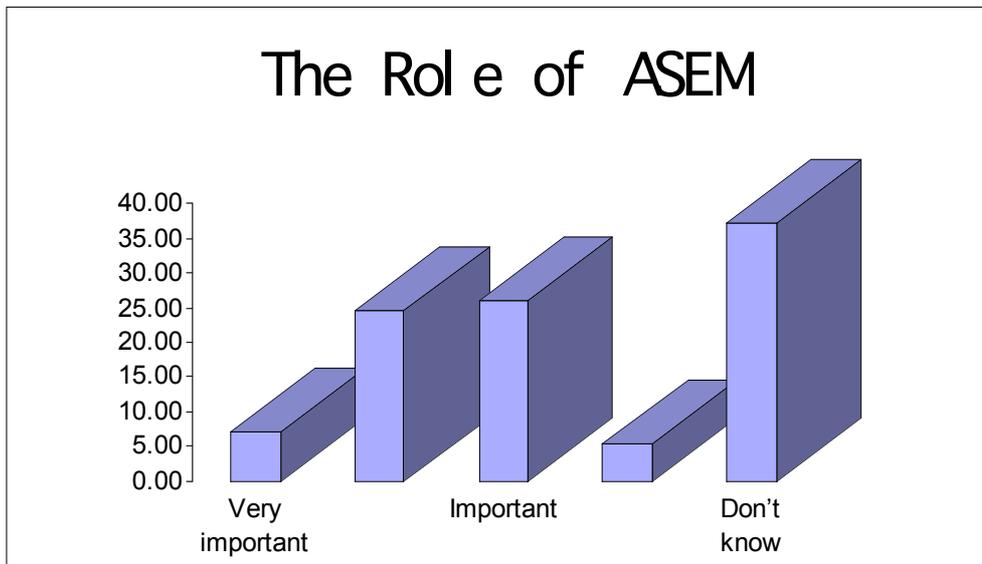
## 2. Students have generally positive views towards the role of ASEM

The survey shows 46.2% of the respondents think ASEM is important or very important. Only 4.3% do not think so. See **Chart 3**:



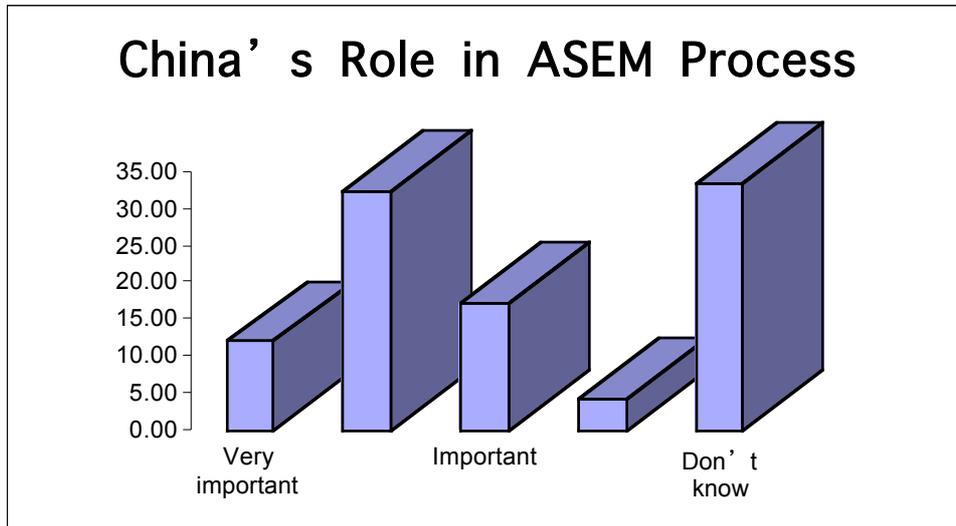
(Chart 3)

When asked about the role of ASEM in promoting the democratization of international relations, 31.57% of the respondents said it was very important or important. Only 5.28% thought it was not important. This shows that students are quite positive about ASEM. See **Chart 4**.



(Chart 4)

When asked whether ASEM was strategically important to China, 66.94% of the respondents answered, “Yes.” When asked about China’s role in the ASEM process, 44.56% of the respondents answered, “Very important” or “Important,” and only 4.25% answered “Not important.” See **Chart 5**:



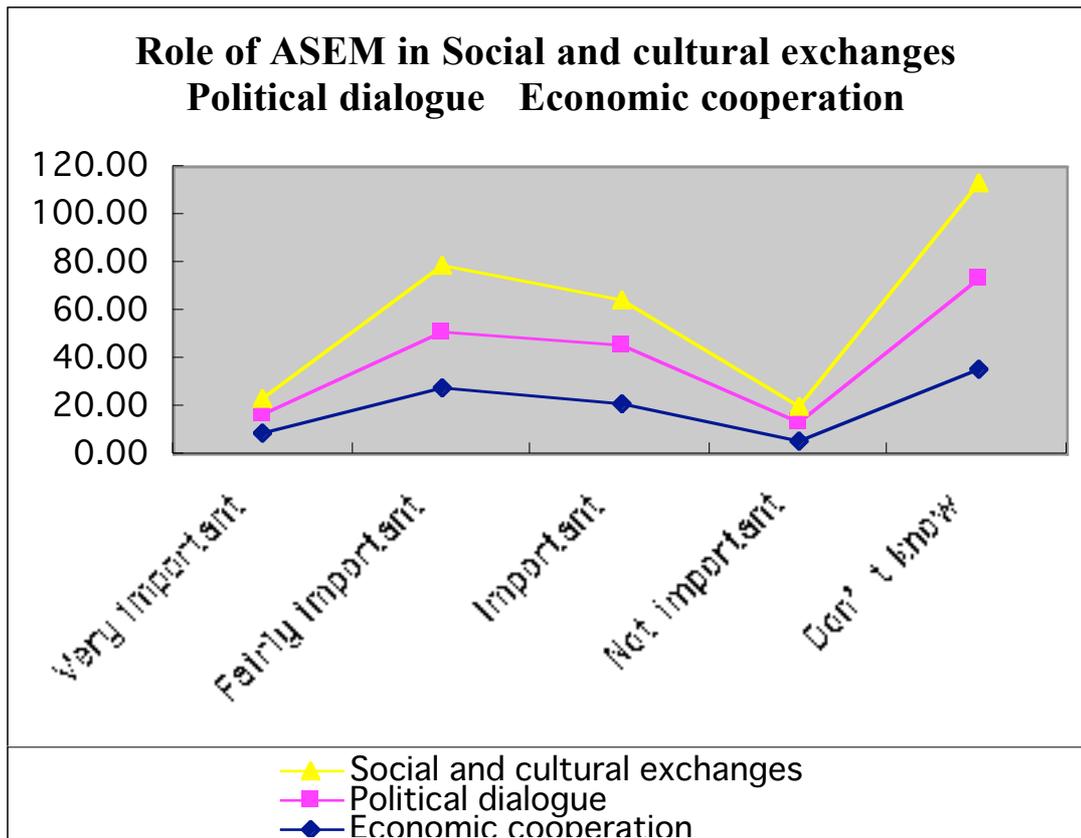
(Chart 5)

When asked whether the role of ASEM has been strengthened or weakened in recent years, 8.07% of the respondents answered “Greatly strengthened,” 34.64% said “Slightly strengthened,” and 4.24% of the respondents replied “Weakened.” See **Table 4**.

Table 4 Role of ASEM in recent years

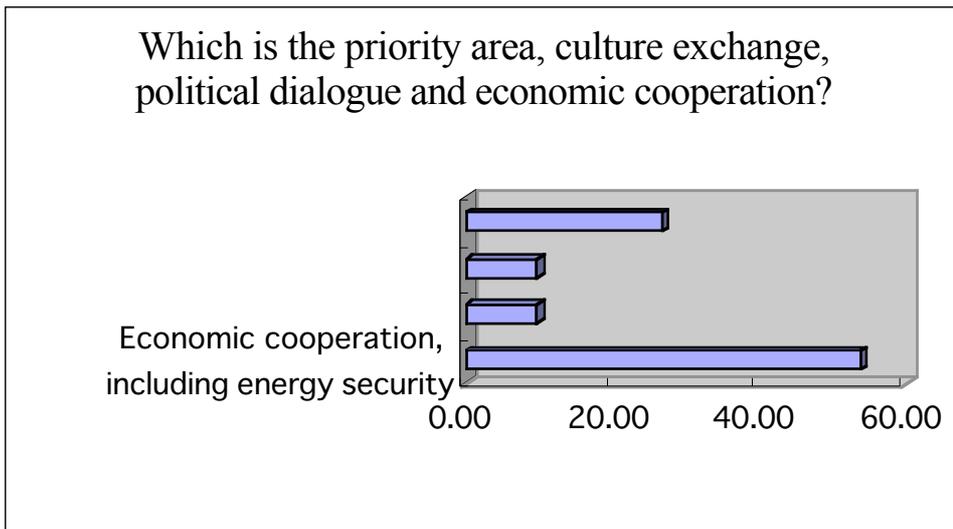
Attitudes of Respondents	Valid sample	Valid percent
Greatly strengthened	78.00	8.07
Slightly strengthened	335.00	34.64
Not strengthened	101.00	10.44
Weakened	41.00	4.24
Don't know	412.00	42.61
Total	967.00	100.00

There were three questions in this questionnaire, which asks about respondents’ views on the role of ASEM in promoting economic cooperation, political dialogue and social and cultural exchanges. The survey shows that respondents thought that among the three areas, ASEM’s most important role was in social and cultural exchange, and the least important role was in economic cooperation. See **Chart 6**.



(Chart 6)

The survey shows that 53.74% of respondents suggested that ASEM should give priority to economic cooperation in the future, including energy security cooperation and scientific and technological cooperation, and that political dialogue and cultural exchange should come later. See **Chart 7**.



(Chart 7)

In general, students have very limited knowledge about ASEM. This is clearly demonstrated by their low scores for the six questions about the basics of ASEM. In sharp contrast with the low level of perception, students have a positive view about the role of ASEM and its influence. Meanwhile the statistics show that most respondents tend to think China has played an active role in the ASEM process. These two points are the major conclusions of the survey.

Within Chinese society, young people in higher education are most the capable of receiving information and making analyses. If they do not understand much about ASEM, then it is safe to deduce that the general public in China knows even less about ASEM than students.

Why do only a small percentage of students know about ASEM? This question can be partly explained by the questionnaire. An analysis of the data indicates that those who know about ASEM major mostly in international relations. This is shown in **Table 5**.

**Correlation between majors and ASEM knowledge**

			Do you know about ASEM?				Total
			Know it very well	Know it well	don't know it well	Don't know	
Types of major	technology	Count % within Types of major:	2 .5%	15 3.9%	262 68.1%	106 27.5%	385 100.0%
	arts	Count % within Types of major:	5 1.4%	35 9.9%	249 70.3%	65 18.4%	354 100.0%
	international studies	Count % within Types of major:	4 4.5%	14 15.9%	56 63.6%	14 15.9%	88 100.0%
	others	Count % within Types of major:	2 1.4%	9 6.5%	96 69.6%	31 22.5%	138 100.0%
Total		Count % within Types of major:	13 1.3%	73 7.6%	663 68.7%	216 22.4%	965 100.0%

$(\chi^2 = 35.605 , P=0.001)$

From the table above we can see that the percentages of respondents knowing ASEM very well and well are high if they international studies majors. Therefore, knowledge about ASEM has much to do with academic major. The value is 35.605. This indicates that people know about ASEM only because they major in international studies. In other words, only insiders in international studies know about ASEM and outsiders know little about it.

Then why do students think highly of ASEM despite having little knowledge of it? One explanation for this illogical phenomena might be that young students generally have a positive perception about Europe and that they expect better Asia-Europe relations. Developing cooperation between Asia and Europe, pushing forward multilateralism, promoting the democratization of international relations, and China's important role in the ASEM process are all their wishes.

This survey alone cannot satisfactorily explain this question, though. Analysis of media coverage of ASEM in the second section may offer further explanations.

## II. Media Coverage, Elites’ and Policymakers’ Perceptions

### 1. Media Coverage

We searched news coverage and commentary about ASEM from Xinhua News Agency<sup>3</sup> since 1996. And we have done the same for APEC in order to make a comparison and get a more objective view on the frequency and density of coverage on ASEM.

We found 778 documents<sup>4</sup> about ASEM after searching all published Chinese news scripts with words or phrases including ASEM from Xinhua News Agency from the beginning of 1996 to July 2005. Among the 778 documents, there are 355 with words such as “ASEM” and “Cooperation between Asia and Europe” in their headlines. Among the 355, there are 333 factual reports and 22 commentaries. Most commentaries are positive about ASEM, as is shown in their headlines. The headlines of the commentaries are listed in Table 6.

<b>Published date</b>	<b>Headlines of commentaries</b>
02/28/1996	Commentary: Creating a New Situation of Asia-Europe Cooperation
03/02/1996	News Report: Initiating a New Epoch in Asia-Europe Relations
03/03/1996	<i>People’s Daily</i> Editorial: New Starting Point for Asia-Europe Relations
03/18/1996	ASEM, a Historic Meeting
10/16/1996	Summary Report: New Steps in Asia-Europe Cooperation
02/16/1997	Summary Report: Positive Results Achieved at ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting
03/31/1998	Summary Report: An Important Topic for ASEM
04/02/1998	Summary Report: Asia-Europe Cooperation toward the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
04/03/1998	Feature Article: Asia and Europe Joining Hands in Creating the Future
04/05/1998	Summary Report: A New Chapter in Asia-Europe Cooperation
10/19/2000	Summary Report: Strengthening Cooperation between Asian and European Countries for Common Development
10/21/2000	Summary Report: Asia and Europe Entering the New Century Hand in Hand
05/26/2001	Summary Report: Strengthening Asia-Europe Cooperation in the New Century
09/25/2002	Summary Report: Asia-Europe Cooperation Gets on a New Stage

<sup>3</sup> Xinhua News Agency has been designated as the national news agency since the foundation of People’s Republic of China. <http://www.xinhua.org>.

<sup>4</sup> Thanks are extended to the departments concerned in Xinhua News Agency for their help with our research.

07/22/2003	Summary Report: Asia and Europe Attach Importance to Economic Cooperation for Common Development
07/23/2003	Summary Report: The 5 <sup>th</sup> ASEM Economic Minister's Meeting Highlighted
07/24/2003	Summary Report: China Playing an Important Role in Asia-Europe Cooperation
07/24/2003	Commentary: An Important Dialogue between Asia and Europe
07/25/2003	Summary Report: ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting Prompting Consultation and Cooperation
10/06/2004	International Watch: Asia-Europe Cooperation Maturing
10/09/2004	Commentary: A New Chapter in Asia-Europe Dialogue and Cooperation
06/09/2005	Asian and European Countries Seeking Universality among Cultural Diversity

In the same period there are 2690 documents with the phrase “APEC” in the news coverage of Xinhua News Agency, among which 945 documents have “APEC” or “Asia-Pacific Cooperation” in their headlines. There are 26 commentaries among the 945 documents. Table 7 compares the quantities of news coverage about ASEM and APEC.

	Number of articles with relevant key phrases	number of articles with relevant key phrases in the headlines	number of commentaries about relevant topics	orientation of comments
ASEM	778	333	22	positive
APEC	2690	945	26	generally positive

The reports on APEC by Xinhua News Agency number about 3 times as many as ASEM reports and APEC commentaries outnumber ASEM commentaries by a small margin. That is to say, news coverage on ASEM by Xinhua News Agency appears only 35.5 times per year on average, compared to as many as 269 per year for APEC. Reasons for this might be that the APEC meetings are held much more frequently than ASEM and that APEC has a yearly informal summit meeting.

## 2. Elite Perception<sup>5</sup>

Although the news reports are positive on the whole, scholars of international relations, especially Asia-Europe relations, have both positive and negative perceptions. On the one hand, they think ASEM has made impressive progress in the last decade. On the other hand, they also contend that ASEM faces a lot of challenges because of the multitude of issues that it has to deal with.

For the positive part, the scholars think ASEM has made achievements in three ways. First, it serves as a platform and channel through which consultation and cooperation between Asia and Europe in international affairs are enhanced. The ASEM Summit and Foreign Ministers' Meetings have held dialogues on major international and regional issues of common concern including global issues, Asian and European politics, security situations and hot regional issues, among others. Therefore, ASEM has played a role in building up mutual trust and promoting political dialogue among Asian and European countries. The "ASEM Declaration on Multilateralism," released by the 6th Asia-Europe Foreign Ministers' Meeting in April 2004, reflects the consensus Asia and Europe share in broad areas of international order, politics, security, development, and dialogues of civilizations. Asia and Europe expand their influence in each other's spheres through ASEM, which is undoubtedly conducive to the democratization of international relations and to the development of multilateralism.

Second, ASEM has made efforts to promote dialogue on sustainable development on the two continents and in the world economy. Talks on macroeconomic and fiscal policy coordination are carried out through programs like TFAP and IPAP to advance bidirectional investment flow. ASEM also contributes to the financial stability of Asia through the ASEM Trust Fund.

Third, under ASEM, active cooperation has been conducted and progress has been made in areas of education, science and technology, the environment, social security, health care, immigration, and the fight against transnational crime. Such cooperation

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<sup>5</sup> About the perception of the elite: this report reflects the main points of view generated by specialists in international studies and Asia-Europe relations at the "Seminar of Evaluation of Asia-Europe Relations and the 10-Year Process of ASEM," which was held by European Studies Centre of China Foreign Affairs University on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Besides the conclusion reached at the seminar, the reference information also includes some articles and literature on ASEM, including Pan Guang & Yu Jianhua, *From Silk Road to Asia-Europe Meeting*, CCPS Publishing House, 2004; Pan Guang & Wang Zheng, "Brief Analysis of the Institutionalization of the Asia-Europe Meeting," *Contemporary International Relations*, No. 7, 2004; Fu Xuming, "How to Handle the "Mess" of the Asia-Europe Meeting," *China Economic Times*, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002.

also initiated the process of building a new concept of Asia-Europe relations is characterized by equal partnership and multilateral cooperation. The common goal of Asia and Europe is to accelerate building a world of peace, cooperation, and harmony without hegemony.

In spite of the positive points, most of the scholars also see the problems and challenges ASEM is facing, which can be summed up as follows.

First, ASEM is not the priority concern of either party's foreign policies. European countries' priority list includes the eastward expansion of the European Union and issues of neighboring areas and the Middle East. East Asian issues are just one of its many policy concerns. Even though the European Union puts emphasis on participating in Asian affairs, ASEM is only one of the channels for its participation. The European Union pays greater attention to the bilateral mechanisms with ASEAN, China and Japan than to the multilateral mechanism of ASEM. Europe would like ASEM to be a tool that facilitates the convergence of the policies of Asia and Europe since the EU underscores political dialogue and the direction of the future development of political cooperation with Asia.

As for East Asia, countries in the region have never become an integrated whole in dealing with the EU in the ASEM process. They share neither a clear overall objective nor the same degree of attention to ASEM. Most East Asian countries are more interested in economic and technological cooperation with Europe than other issues. Under such circumstances, the major challenge ASEM faces is how to change its function as "a forum" and make practical progress.

Second, the non-institutionalization of ASEM results in the looseness of cooperation and slowness of development. ASEM holds that all countries, big or small, are equal, and adopts the principle of consensus. Although it has set up a regular meeting mechanism, it has neither official treaties nor institutionalized arrangements, and papers signed during the meetings have no binding power to its members at all. This non-institutionalized and unbinding arrangement may help build a flexible and comfortable cooperation environment and enhance mutual trust and cooperative will. But it also blocks information exchange, wastes resources and causes inefficiency. Decision-making by consensus has resulted in many valuable proposals not being adopted because of individual countries' opposition, which has seriously paralyzed ASEM's

functioning. In addition, documents adopted by ASEM have no legal power. In this case, ASEM could become merely a place for chatting, wasting both time and resources for the expressions of the wills of parties.

Some scholars argue that the lack of formalization and institutionalization are major features of ASEM, and that these features should be maintained for the current stage of development of ASEM. To these scholars, what matters is not formal institutions or binding forces, but shared norms. Due to the asymmetric power distribution, differences in culture, tradition, values, and interests between Asia and Europe, and a variety of internal interests on both sides, “the institutionalization of ASEM, if it were to be realized in the future, should be flexible and suitable for the diversity of actors in regional cooperation.”<sup>6</sup>

Third, there has been inequality in the process of Asia-Europe cooperation although ASEM seeks to set up equal partnership. Differing from the United States, which imposes policy pressure on Asian countries on issues like human rights and democracy, European countries admit to the diversity of civilizations in Asia-Europe cooperation and hope to solve human rights problems through political dialogue. But actually they sometimes also adopt “double standards.” “Eurocentrism” and a European superiority complex has convinced many in Europe that anything that benefits them will benefit the rest of the world. Consequently, European countries have hoped that Asian countries will develop in accordance with the European mode, completely accepting western values like democracy, freedom and human rights.

Fourth, the “American factor” is an important aspect that affects Asia-Europe cooperation. Both Europe and Asia attach great importance to relations with the United States, since it obviously enjoys an advantageous position in the handling of Asian affairs, especially security issues. The expansion of European influence in Asia through ASEM has aroused the concern of the United States. Further Asia-Europe cooperation will shake US dominance in Asia and incite reactions. China-Europe negotiations on the lifting of the EU arms embargo on China was met with pressure from the United States. Since both Asia and Europe place their relations with the US as the number one issue in diplomacy, the process of Asia-Europe cooperation is of course influenced and

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<sup>6</sup> Pan Guang & Wang Zheng, “Brief Analysis on Institutionalization of the Asia-Europe Meeting,” *Contemporary International Relations*, issue No. 7, 2004.

restrained by American policies and goals.

### 3. Perception of Decision-makers<sup>7</sup>

#### *(1). The driving force for the development of ASEM*

The ASEM process was initiated and developed against a background of economic globalization and political multipolarization. Guided by its foreign strategy with effective multilateralism at its core, the European Union seeks to exert active influence on the world. At the same time, the influence of East Asian countries continues to grow owing to their rapid economic development. But the linkage between Asia and Europe at present is much weaker than that of the United States and East Asia or that of the United States and Europe. Thus, it is a strategic necessity to develop close cooperative relations between the two continents who have a lot in common in promoting multilateralism and safeguarding global security and prosperity. Economic globalization is another driving force in closer Asia-Europe cooperation. To build a cooperative and win-win situation is in the economic interests of both parties. Currently, the total population of ASEM members amounts to 2.4 billion, or 40% of the world's total; ASEM members' total GDP reaches two billion dollars, which accounts for half of the world's GDP; and the trade volume among its members is approximately 60% of the world's total. These numbers indicate that Asia-Europe cooperation will have a great impact on global patterns and economic development. China's promotion of ASEM is also driven by China's domestic demands for economic development and a harmonious society. Conducting economic and technological cooperation with Europe and learning from its governing experiences are of great significance for China's goals for a harmonious and prosperous society.

#### *(2). The Content and Features of the ASEM Process*

Cooperation conducted under the framework of ASEM covers political dialogue, economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchange. The current ASEM is characterized by dialogue and weak cooperation. The dialogue often focuses on policies

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<sup>7</sup> This part of the report is based on interviews with officials from International Department, Policy Research

and strategies and emphasizes on understanding and coordination of each other's positions. The institutionalized cooperation in economy and trade is rather weak with few significant achievements. Besides, the development of cooperation is unbalanced in areas of politics, trade and economy, and culture. There are many high-level political dialogues, but inadequate policy cooperation in economy and trade. The dialogues among cultures and civilizations appear to be very active.

The issues discussed in ASEM, which are closely related to the latest developments in the international situation, highlight the flexibility of the dialogue mechanism and the diversity of topics. Unlike APEC's focus on economy, trade and science and technology, a great variety of issues are discussed in ASEM. Political dialogues and cultural exchanges have helped demonstrate the soft power of member states. Despite the immature institutionalization of ASEM, Chairman's Statements on hot issues like global political security released at the Asia-Europe Summit Meeting convey a very powerful political message and express the political wills of Asian and European countries.

### *(3). Problems of and Prospects for ASEM*

We should not make negative assessments about ASEM simply because it has made few significant achievements. Instead, we should evaluate it from a long-term and strategic perspective. Though cooperation has been inadequate and few substantive results have been achieved up to now, dialogue, the main content of ASEM, helps facilitate mutual understanding and lays out foundations for further coordination. Therefore, dialogue is conducive to the development of cooperation. With the deepening of mutual understanding, cooperation will be a natural result. It takes time to go from dialogue to cooperation since such a step has to bridge the gap between the two continents in terms of cultures, traditions, and values. Therefore, the cumulative function of ASEM should not be underestimated.

However, the problems of ASEM should not be overlooked either. European and East Asian countries do have different political appeals in the process of ASEM. The former emphasize more the non-institutionalisation of the meetings and political and human rights dialogues, while the latter are greatly concerned with actual cooperation in

economy and trade and intend to turn dialogues into cooperation in this area. Thus, Asian countries have greater enthusiasm towards ASEM than their European counterparts. In sum, different political appeals have restrained the cooperation and prevented ASEM from reaching its full potential.

Because of different historical backgrounds and cultural values, there are also some in-depth problems that add complexity to the realization of an equal partnership between the European Union and Asia. Some members of the European Union did not participate in the ASEM Economic Ministers' and Finance Ministers' Meetings due to the Burma issue in 2004. Though the European Union differs from the United States in the ways of preaching the idea of human rights, they have a lot more in common in ideologies and values.

There are also outstanding technical problems. Ten Central and Eastern European countries acceded to the European Union in 2004 and became members of ASEM. The increase in numbers of the member states has caused many practical problems in the management of ASEM and effective dialogue and cooperation among member countries. Big differences among Asian countries also add to the difficulty in policy coordination of ASEM. Therefore Asian countries are often disadvantaged since they cannot coordinate and unify their positions.

#### *(4). China and ASEM*

The Chinese government pays great attention to the multilateral diplomatic mechanism of ASEM, holds that ASEM is in the interests of both Asia and Europe, the results of ASEM are of great importance to the development of cooperation. This is even more important when seen from a long-term and strategic perspective.

The importance the Chinese government has attached to ASEM is not merely in words. Among all the members, China has made the most proposals for convening ministers' meetings. China has taken some action to actively promote the ASEM process. Besides, China enjoys close and good cooperative relations with the members of European Union. EU countries have paid great attention to China's role in ASEM. The bilateral dialogue mechanism between China and the European Union has made remarkable achievements. China reckons that ASEM has been a good platform for

dialogue between leaders from the European Union and East Asia. The multilateral mechanism of ASEM complements the EU-China bilateral mechanism well.

## **Conclusions and Suggestions**

From the perspective of perception, the research team has analyzed and studied the achievements made and challenges faced by the Asia-Europe Meeting in the past ten years. The general conclusions and suggestions are as follows:

**General conclusions:** First, college students have rather poor knowledge about the Asia-Europe Meeting, but they think positively of its influence and role. The general public's consciousness of ASEM can be safely deduced from students' perceptions. The general public should know even less about ASEM, and their evaluation and attitudes should tend to be positive. Poor knowledge about ASEM correlates with little coverage by the media, while the positive evaluation and attitudes are consistent with the positive news reports and official perception. This reflects public support for the Chinese government's policy toward ASEM.

Second, elites have a relatively complex perception, and their evaluation, though both positive and negative, is mainly critical. For this part of the survey, the samples were experts and scholars who know and do research on ASEM. They have a comprehensive and systematic understanding of ASEM and are capable of making comparisons and analysis in connection with related developments. So they have more complex perceptions than the general public. While making a positive appraisal of ASEM, they all expressed their disappointment. Their evaluation of the status, role and influence of ASEM is far more negative than that of the general public and policymakers.

Third, the Chinese government has a developmental and more far-sighted perspective on ASEM. It places more emphasis on its potentials, the role of dialogues and communications, and shows more patience on the gradual process of its development. From the official perception, we found that China attaches great importance to Asia-Europe cooperation and the development of China-Europe relations, not only to meet the challenges related to economics and the process of globalization, but also to meet the demand of its own development. It is not intended to

counterbalance the United States.

The rapid development of globalization and profound changes of the international situation have posed new challenges to both Asia and Europe. Europe is confronted with huge pressures imposed by profound economic restructuring, while Asia, witnessing the deepening of regional cooperation, needs to learn from the European experiences. Europe's development needs Asia, and Asian development is indispensable in garnering the cooperation and support of Europe. Besides, there are still some misunderstandings in bilateral relations between Asia and Europe, and this calls for efforts to enhance confidence, remove mistrust and reinforce mutual communication. Therefore, it is essential to further strengthen Asia-European cooperation by fostering substantive results from the Asia-Europe Meeting. To this end, we put forward the following suggestions:

First, ASEM should be institutionalized. A small standing body such as a secretariat should be set up to replace the mechanism of four coordinators so as to ensure effective coordination and communication and avoid waste of human and material resources. Efforts should also be made to follow up and implement the meeting resolutions in order to make substantive achievements.

Second, new subjects and cutting-in points should be explored for the further development of ASEM such as cooperation in the areas of energy, finance, science and technology, and education. These new subjects should be concrete and practical, reflecting the common concerns of both Asia and Europe and serving common interests. The cooperation in functional fields promises more tangible results by avoiding politically and ideologically sensitive issues.

Third, extensive people-to-people exchanges should be enhanced. Various ways of communication can be adopted to strengthen ties, promote cultural understanding, and deepen friendship. We should also set up a mechanism for regular exchange of visits of young people and a regular contact and cooperation mechanism between institutions of higher learning. New ways of thinking should be cultivated through people-to-people exchanges and identity nurtured between the two continents by adopting a positive and constructive attitude towards the Asian-European political dialogue. Identity is going to be an important factor in directing the future development of Asia-Europe relations.

## Questionnaire for the Public Perceptions Survey

Good morning/afternoon/evening, I am from the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Research Team, which is organized by the European Studies Center of China Foreign Affairs University, and we are doing a survey about China's public perception of the ASEM process. Would you please give us several minutes to fill out the questionnaire according to your knowledge of ASEM?

### Part I: Your Personal Information

- 1, Gender: a, male b, female
- 2, Educational Background: a, undergraduate student b, graduate student c, others
- 3, Major: a, natural science b, arts c, IR d, others
- 4, Age: a, 19—22 b, 23—30, c, above 30
- 5, Political Background: a, member of CPC b, member of other parties c, league member d, the masses

### Part II: Your Familiarity with ASEM:

Question	Answer
Q1: Do you know ASEM?	a, Know very well b, Know Well c, Know a little d, Don't know
Q2: Where did the first ASEM summit take place?	a, Beijing b, Bangkok c, London d, Don't know
Q3, By now, how many ASEM summits have taken place?	a,4 b,5 c,6 d, Don't know
Q4, How many members are there in ASEM at present?	a,33 b,36 c,39 d, Don't know
Q5, How often does the ASEM summit take place?	a, once a year b, twice a year c, once every two

	years d, Don't know
Q6, What does "Asia" mean in "Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM)"?	a, East Asia b, Central Asia c, the whole "Asia" d, Don't know
Q7, What does "Europe" mean in "Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM)" ?	a, the European Union b, the European Union and its members c, members of the European Union d, Don't know
Q8, Do you know ASEM?	a, Know well b, Know a little c, Don't know
Q9, Do you know the ASEM Trust Fund?	a, Know well b, Know a little c, Don't know

### Part III: Your Attitude and Judgment about ASEM

**Q1** ,Compared with other international cooperation mechanisms, is ASEM important?

- A, Very important;
- B, Relatively important;
- C, Important;
- D, Don't know

**Q2**, How important is the part played by ASEM in promoting democratization and multi-polarization of international relations?

- A, Very important;
- B, Relatively important;
- C, Important;
- D, Don't know

**Q3** ,According to your impression, is the role of ASEM on the rise or on the decline?

- A, On a steep rise;
- B, On a mild rise;
- C, No rise;
- D, On the decline;
- E, Don't know

**Q4**,How large is the part played by China in the process of ASEM?

- A, Very large;
- B, Relatively large;
- C, Not large;
- D, Don't know

**Q5**,How large is the part played by ASEM in promoting economic cooperation between Asia and Europe?

- A, very large;
- B, relatively large;
- C, large;
- D, not large;
- E, Don't know

**Q6**,How large is the part played by ASEM in political dialogue between Asia and Europe?

- A, very large;
- B, relatively large;
- C, large;
- D, not large;
- E, not clear

**Q7**,How large is the part played by ASEM in promoting social and cultural communication between Asia and Europe these years?

- A, Very large;
- B, Relatively large;
- C, Large;
- D, Not large;
- E, Don't know

**Q8**, What is the priority for ASEM in the relationship between Asia and Europe?

- A, Economic field is the priority, including cooperation of energy and science and technology, the political field is of less importance, and the cultural field of least importance;
- B, Political field is the priority, including human rights dialogue and construction of civil society, the economic field of less importance
- C, Cultural communication is the priority, including personnel exchange, the economic field is of second importance and the political field of least importance
- D, All three fields should develop equally and harmoniously

**Q9**,Do you think that developing relations between Asia and Europe is strategically important for China?

- A, Yes;
- B, No;
- C, Don't know

So much for the interview, thank you very much for your time and cooperation.