



Welcome Remarks by Ambassador Wonil Cho
Executive Director, Asia-Europe Foundation

Book Launch:

“The EU through the Eyes of Asia:

*Media, Public and Elite Perceptions in China, Japan, Korea, Singapore
and Thailand”*

Seoul, Korea | 26 May 2008

Ambassador Brian McDonald, Head of the European Commission Delegation to Korea; **Dr. Wook Chae**, President, Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP); **Prof. Changrok Soh**, Dean, Graduate School of International Studies, Korea University; **Prof. Sunghoon Park**, Director, EU Research Center, Korea University; and **Prof. Heungchong Kim**, Head of Europe Team, Korea Institute for International Economic Policy.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

1. It is an honour for me to be here with you today to deliver the welcome remarks for “The EU through the Eyes of Asia” book launch. On behalf of the Asia-Europe Foundation, I would like to firstly express our sincere appreciation to our co-hosts and organisers of this important event: SNU-KIEP EU Centre; the EU Research Center, Korea University; and the Graduate School of International Studies, Korea University.
2. Korea University is one of the six prominent universities in Asia that have participated in the “EU through the Eyes of Asia” study, a major academic collaboration initiated by ASEF to scientifically measure perceptions of the European Union in Asia. The book we are launching today, “The EU through the Eyes of Asia: Media, Public and Elite Perceptions in China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Thailand” is the result of this two-year undertaking in six locations in Asia. Prof. Sunghoon Park, Director of the EU Research Center at Korea University, together with Dr. Heungchong Kim, Head of the Europe Team at the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, have been highly-instrumental in leading the research team in Korea to great success. We are truly appreciative of the contribution of both gentlemen to this endeavour.

3. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Brian McDonald, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Korea; Dr. Wook Chae, President, Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP); and Prof. Changrok Soh, Dean, Graduate School of International Studies, Korea University; for gracing this event with their presence.
4. The growing links between the EU and Asia are among the most important strategic relationships in the world. However, the considerable differences between the two regions in terms of culture, opinions, politics as well as the misperceptions and ill-informed views of each other's role in the international arena have unfortunately constituted a real challenge for a comprehensive co-operation between the two. The 1st Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit in 1996 should be seen as a very important first attempt to bridge the two regions in a meaningful way. To date, the expansion of the ASEM partnership to 45 (including EC and ASEAN Secretariat) is strong evidence of the increasing importance of ASEM in this process.
5. As the sole physical institution of ASEM process, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) has committed itself to the noble mission of bridging civil societies of the two regions through the implementation of more than 400 projects over the past 12 years of its existence, bringing together more than 14,000 participants in both Asia and Europe. A number of flagship programmes include the dialogue of cultures and civilisations; cultural policy; youth; good governance, democracy and human rights; environment and sustainable development; and programmes dealing with international relations issues such as conflict management and processes of regional integration.
6. In the field of education and academic co-operation, in 2005 ASEF initiated the European Studies in Asia (ESiA) network that has stimulated and promoted European studies in the Asian region by creating a platform for Asian academics and institutions specialising in European studies to exchange ideas, network and engage in academic collaborations and partnerships not only among themselves in Asia but also with their counterparts in Europe.

7. The “EU through the Eyes of Asia” is ESiA’s inaugural project to measure media, public and elite perceptions of the EU in the Asian region. The first wave of countries monitored in this project are China (including Hong Kong), Japan, Korea, Singapore and Thailand. The publication we are launching today represents an unprecedented mobilisation of six prominent Asian universities in the field of European studies: Fudan University, Hong Kong Baptist University, Keio University, Korea University, Chulalongkorn University and the National University of Singapore. The recent expansion of the project to Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines, with the aim to be able to include the remaining Asian ASEM countries by 2010, will certainly give the findings an even wider Asian focus. I cannot stress enough the crucial role of the Prof. Martin Holland, and his team at the National Centre for Research on Europe, University of Canterbury, in the endeavour. The project would have also not been possible without the kind support of the European Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France.
8. We first presented this book to European Commission President Jose Manuel Barosso in soft launch in Singapore in November last year. We have also launched the publication in Manila last December and have organised a series of lectures in twelve cities in Europe. This event in Seoul is the third of a series of book launches we will organise this year in seven cities across Asia. The next book launch will be held in Bangkok in August, in partnership with Chulalongkorn University.
9. The findings of “The EU through the Eyes of Asia” study are not only meant to be an example of European studies academic excellence and academic collaboration in Asia, but also for the benefit of policy makers in Asia and Europe. I am confident that the study will continue to attract attention and engage stakeholders of Asia-Europe relations in meaningful dialogue.
10. This concludes my welcome remarks for today’s important event. I wish all of you good health, happiness and success. Thank you.