

5th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME5)

Riga, 27-28 April 2015

ASEM Education Collaboration for Results

Conclusions by the Chair

1. The 5th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME5) took place in Riga, Latvia on 27 and 28 April 2015 and brought together 196 participants from 46 ASEM members and 11 stakeholders. The Meeting was chaired by Ms Mārīte Seile, Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia.
2. The Meeting warmly welcomed representatives from the new ASEM members, Croatia and Kazakhstan who joined the ASEM Process during the 10th ASEM Summit (ASEM10) held in Milan, Italy on 16-17 October 2014.
3. The Meeting conveyed its appreciation to Latvia for their hospitality and excellent organisation of the 2nd Senior Officials' Meeting and the ASEMME5 as well as for the contribution of Latvia to the further development of the ASEM Education Process, especially for fostering dialogue between the ASEM members and stakeholders and involving them in the joint consultation process in order to identify priorities for the post-ASEMME5 period and for encouraging discussions and exchange of practice on the issues of common interest.
4. The purpose of the Meeting under the theme *ASEM Education Collaboration for Results* was to ensure forward-looking dialogue, exchange of good practice and to encourage tangible and more result-oriented activities that would serve the interests of both regions. The role of the ASEM Education Process for ASEM dialogue and cooperation was explained during the Meeting and also highlighted. The Meeting also considered the current global developments and their impact on education policies in ASEM countries. The plenary sessions addressed issues such as the contribution of ASEM education cooperation to the development of skills for better employability, as well as the current rapid technological changes and new learning technologies in education. Their impact on strengthening the ASEM education cooperation was also discussed. The Meeting also discussed the future prospects for ASEM education cooperation, the main challenges, opportunities and expected outcomes from a political point of view.

In their Meeting, the Ministers:

5. Reconfirmed the strategic role of education as an enabling factor in promoting sustainable and inclusive development, innovation as well as poverty and unemployment reduction, thus contributing to overall connectivity (including the seamless movement of people, information, knowledge and ideas, and greater institutional linkages), dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe, as highlighted by the ASEM Leaders at ASEM10 held in Milan, Italy on 16-17 October 2014.
6. Highlighted the importance of tangible activities and cooperation and encouraged the achievements of the results in the areas of Tangible Cooperation in the field of education

as mentioned in the ANNEX 3 of the Chair's Statement of the ASEM10 – "List of Interested ASEM members for Tangible Cooperation Areas". In this regard the Ministers called for effective coordination between the Ministries of Education and Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The Ministers also encouraged other ASEM members and stakeholders interested in tangible activities in the field of education to implement definite joint initiatives, activities and projects in the coming years and so contributing to the achievement of the common goals of the ASEM Education Process.

7. Reaffirmed the relevance of achieving more transparency and improving understanding of the different education systems within and between both regions and making education systems more comparable, facilitating mobility and enhancing collaboration. The Ministers supported the firm ambition to build a cross-border and cross-regional area for cooperation at a policy level as well as institutional level. They also emphasised the need for an area where mobility of students, teachers, researchers, ideas and knowledge would be the core common goal. The Ministers were convinced that it would be possible to ensure that people would be equipped to operate successfully in an international and global environment by reinforcing the collaboration and mobility.
8. Reiterated the importance of keeping the ASEM Education Process as a multifaceted, multipurpose process, open to various topics and interacting with other education organizations. The Ministers recognized the need and value to take into the consideration the educational goal of the post-2015 Agenda in ASEM education cooperation to ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all. They anticipated further promotion of this initiative at the UNESCO World Education Forum, to be held in the Republic of Korea in May 2015, among the ASEM countries and beyond. They also recognized that the issues of acquiring values, skills and competences for sustainable development need to be placed high on the education agenda as noted in the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) launched at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD held in Japan in November 2014. At the same time the Ministers recommended focusing on the tasks that can be tackled only within the ASEM Education Process to avoid unnecessary repetitions of work done by other organizations.
9. Confirmed their commitment to the further development and strengthening of the cooperation in the four key policy areas introduced during the 3rd Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME3), to ensure continuity of the ASEM Education Process: (1) quality assurance and recognition of qualifications; (2) engaging business and industry in education; (3) balanced mobility and (4) lifelong learning, including technical and vocational education and training. The Ministers stressed that the continuity and future of the ASEM Education Process need to be based on the progress made in these four key policy areas and in close cooperation and consultation between ASEM members and stakeholders.
10. Acknowledged that the ASEM Education Process is a forum for informal dialogue among the ASEM members and partners. The Ministers also expressed their willingness to build the ASEM education cooperation on a two-pillar system. The first pillar would represent the dialogue-oriented cooperation, providing a platform for mutual learning and exchange of experiences strengthening mutual understanding and providing incentives for education policy and strategy developments at institutional, national and regional level. The second pillar would represent the result-oriented cooperation composed of tangible activities and measures. The Ministers supported the commitment of ASEM member countries to specific themes or result-oriented activities depending on different national targets and interests.

The Ministers approved the future ASEM education initiatives (ANNEX 1) and called for commitment and responsibility when implementing them.

11. Acknowledged the different needs and priorities of ASEM members at institutional, national and regional level and appreciated the increased existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the ASEM members and stakeholders in the framework of various agreements, initiatives, programs and projects. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation is an important complementary element to the ASEM Education Process.
12. Noted with satisfaction the contribution of Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting (ISOM) which raised the momentum of the ASEM education cooperation activities and launched discussions on the future ASEM education priorities. The Ministers thanked China for hosting the ISOM on 7-9 May 2014 in Hangzhou with the participation of more than 70 representatives from 22 delegations.
13. Expressed their appreciation to the ASEM Education Secretariat (AES) hosted by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia since 2013, for its excellent work in assisting the ASEM member countries to implement various ASEM educational activities, preparing the Stocktaking Report, initiating the idea to gather ideas from ASEM members and stakeholders for developing a vision document, and for launching the new *ASEM Education Gazette*, an official publication for the ASEM Education Process and a channel of communication with the ministries of education in ASEM member countries, with stakeholders and partners.
14. Expressed gratitude to Australia, Latvia, and Malaysia for appointing their seconded national experts to the ASEM Education Secretariat and the commitment to consider the possibilities at continuing the secondment of their national experts to contribute to the work of the ASEM Education Secretariat.
15. Underlined the importance of enhancing the visibility of the ASEM Education Process at all levels, including political, stakeholder, expert, institutional and an individual level for increasing awareness and greater understanding of the ASEM Education Process and its contribution to mutual learning and exchanges as well as individual contacts. Improved visibility can be achieved among others through better online communication in particular through the website of the ASEM Education Secretariat (<http://asem-education-secretariat.kemdikbud.go.id/>) and the ASEM InfoBoard (www.aseminfoboard.org) maintained by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).
16. Commended the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) for its added value to the ASEM Education Process. ASEF's education projects contribute to education policy dialogue, facilitate youth networks and involve education institutions and young people in the ASEM Education Process and ASEM Leaders' Meetings.

A. Quality Assurance and Recognition

Cooperation between the bodies in charge of quality assurance in higher education serves as a ground for trust between Europe and Asia. In addition, fair and transparent recognition of qualifications facilitates mobility for both study and professional purposes. Quality assurance and recognition are seen as crucial and interlinked elements for enhancing the attractiveness, transparency, comparability and permeability of higher education qualifications. ASEM education cooperation should aim for and build upon already existing regional structures.

The Ministers:

17. Appreciated China's efforts towards establishing a Working Group for implementing the ASEM Recognition Bridging Declaration (known as Beijing Declaration), through the three action plans: building the Asian National Information Centers Coordinating Website (ANICCW); drafting the Handbook of Guidelines, Principles and Good Practices on Recognition in the ASEM Region; and establishing the Cross-border Quality Assurance Network (CBQAN). The Ministers noted with appreciation the concrete results achieved

by the Working Group, and in particular, underlined the official launch of the ANICCW. The Ministers welcomed the continuation of the Working Group coordinated by China and supported by Austria, Belgium (French Community), Brunei Darussalam, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania and the United Kingdom to implement this declaration in cooperation with other ASEM member countries and invited the Working Group to reinforce the coherence of their initiatives with other activities, projects, initiatives as well as already existing tools in both regions. The Ministers thanked China for holding the first and third Working Group Meetings, and Latvia the second Working Group Meeting. Romania and Philippines expressed their interest to join the Working Group.

18. Noted Malaysia's efforts to facilitate the dialogue in the field of quality assurance and recognition by organizing seminar on 25-26 August 2014 in Kuala Lumpur, focusing on the following topics: the issues of Regional Quality Assurance Frameworks and Qualifications Framework; cross-border Higher Education and evolution of Transnational Education (TNE) in ASEAN and European and the Cross Border Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (CBQAN); strengthening partnership and cooperation in implementing initiatives towards facilitating recognition. The dialogue further enhanced information sharing and networking between ASEM member countries on quality assurance and recognition best practices.
19. Appreciated Japan's contributions towards establishing a higher education quality assurance centre for Asia. The Ministers also welcomed Japan's initiative and the collaboration efforts made by other participating countries to organize the "Working Group on Mobility of Higher Education and Ensuring Quality Assurance of Higher Education among ASEAN Plus Three Countries" from 2013 to 2017 to promote student exchanges with quality assurance and harmonization of the different systems in higher education in ASEAN Plus Three countries. It aims to (1) draft the Guidelines for the promotion of Student Exchange with quality assurance and (2) hold regular meetings of quality assurance agencies. The Ministers thanked Japan and Indonesia for hosting the first and second meetings of the Working Group and noted the third Working Group would be held on 11 June 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand, where the Draft of the ASEAN Plus Three Guidelines on Student Exchange is to be agreed on.
20. Emphasized the need for a dialogue among ASEM quality assurance bodies and stakeholders as well as for a mutual understanding in the field of quality assurance. The Ministers took note of the results of Peer Learning Activity (PLA) organised by Belgium (French and Flemish Communities) on 19-20 February 2015 and invited the ASEM countries to organise follow-up activities based on the conclusions of the PLA final report. It is recommended that the follow-up activities are focused on further structuring and systematising the exchange of information through various activities such as PLAs, seminars and conference; exploring the potentials of the CBQAN in supporting the common understanding of quality assurance in both regions; linking more closely the developments of quality assurance and qualifications frameworks.
21. Invited the countries (Australia, Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Brunei Darussalam, China, Estonia, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Portugal, Romania and Thailand) which have expressed an interest to establish an expert group discussing interregional credit transfer mechanisms and learning outcome systems among ASEM member countries to develop this initiative and agree on the aims and activities of the expert group. The Ministers appreciated the ASEM Education Secretariat's efforts to collect the updated reports on credits and learning outcomes from ASEM member countries.
22. Took note of the European Union's initiative "Higher Education in ASEAN Region" (EU SHARE – 2015-2018) conducted in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat and a

consortium consisting of British Council, DAAD, Nuffic, Campus France, ENQA and EUA. The programme will support the development and enhancement of regional higher education frameworks for quality assurance, recognition of credit and qualifications, and mobility among Asian and European countries. It will contribute to the further development and implementation of the ASEAN Credit Transfer System and the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), and also provide grants for supporting student mobility among Asian countries and with Europe.

23. Welcomed the initiative of Belgium (French and Flemish Communities) to organize in cooperation with France, Romania, Finland, Portugal and other interested ASEM member countries a Peer Learning Activity in 2016 on qualifications frameworks for higher education in relation to quality assurance and recognition.
24. Welcomed the proposal of Belgium (French and Flemish Communities) to organize in cooperation with other ASEM members in 2016-2017 a joint ASEM-EHEA conference about the impact of all reforms and challenges higher education has to address, will have on the academic work, since the quality of teaching, research and community engagement depends on the engagement of the faculty and the staff as well as a supportive and inspiring working environment.

B. Engaging Business and Industry in Education

Intensifying the dialogue and collaboration between education institutions (mainly higher education institutions (HEIs)), business, and industry within and between the two regions remains an essential task. The collaboration between HEIs and the business sector is vital to socio-economic development. Various emerging challenges to sustainable development require innovation in the HEIs - Business relationship. HEIs and entrepreneurs need to collaborate closely at different levels and formats in order to improve employability of graduates, to cultivate entrepreneurship, and to innovate learning environments through information and communication technologies. There is a need to improve the employability of students through work placements and work-based learning and to embed those instruments in the curriculum.

The Ministers:

25. Appreciated the efforts made by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and China in organizing the 4th ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC4) and Students' Forum on the topic "University-Business Partnerships: Asia and Europe Seeking 21st Century Solutions" on 23-27 March 2015 in China. The Ministers recognised ARC as "Official Dialogue Partner" and reaffirmed the importance of engaging HEIs and students as valuable active partners in the ASEM Education Process. The Ministers asked ASEF to continue its work in this regard.
26. Emphasized the outcomes of the 4th ASEM University Business Forum held in Brussels on 4 March 2015 focusing on the education side of the University-Business cooperation. The Ministers noted that it is important to explore ways of: 1) how higher education can better contribute to social, economic and technological innovation, 2) to what extent trans-regional university-enterprise cooperation can enhance innovation and its spread, 3) what more needs to be done to ensure that graduates can operate effectively in international environments. To achieve these objectives the Ministers called for involving enterprises in curriculum design and providing quality workplacements. The Ministers emphasized the role of higher education giving students the intellectual foundation - being critical, analytical, and empathetic – that will enable them to do the future jobs. The Ministers thanked Belgium (Flemish Community and French Community) for organizing the 4th ASEM University Business Forum. In order to continue the dialogue on University-Business Cooperation, the Ministers welcomed Vietnam's offer to host the 5th ASEM University Business Forum in 2015.

27. Noted with interest and approved the future activities of the ASEM Work Placement Pilot Programme. The Ministers supported the 3-years pilot programme starting in 2015/2016 with a first balanced student exchange and creating the programme's website serving as the communication platform among coordinators, students and work places, as agreed by Brunei Darussalam, Belgium (Flemish Community), Germany, Indonesia and Thailand. The Ministers thanked Thailand for hosting the 1st Meeting on 29-30 January 2015 in Bangkok of the participating countries in the ASEM Work Placement Pilot Programme. The next meeting of the participating countries will be conducted together with the first alumni of the programme in 2016. The Ministers invited also further ASEM member countries to join the programme.
28. Welcomed Brunei Darussalam's initiative in fostering entrepreneurship in higher education through a workshop that is organized for undergraduates from ASEM countries from 18th to 26th May 2015 at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam. This platform is a commitment to improve life-long learning and to increase self-sustainability amongst the populace of higher learnings in ASEM countries as well as to encourage collaborations and networking to create a cohesive entrepreneurial ecosystem. The seven-day workshop themed "Entrepreneurship in Higher Education" is designed to ignite, discuss and develop further recommendations and entrepreneurial strategies amongst the higher education populations that would create viability and productivity in marching the ASEM economy to a more formidable position.
29. Welcomed the initiative of Belgium (Flemish and French Communities) to organize in 2016 in cooperation with other ASEM members a Peer Learning Activity on Employability and on the contribution of higher education to innovation.
30. Encouraged the initiative of the Russian Federation to develop a project "Students' teambuilding as an instrument of engaging business in education" aimed at the direct collaboration between Asian and European universities, business and industries through the students' international teambuilding thus promoting the creation of a common labour space.
31. Welcomed the Republic of Korea's effort to open up new and wider opportunities for countries to share example cases, experiences and know-how on industry-university cooperative research programs by holding the Global Industry-University Cooperation Forum in October 2015 and in 2016, building upon the outcomes of ASEM University-Business Fora. The Republic of Korea expected that it will set another steppingstone to advance discussions on developing effective and productive modes of industry-university partnership, and asked for active participation of ASEM countries in the Forum.

C. Balanced Mobility

Interregional exchange of students and staff results in increase in internationally trained and experienced labour force and lays foundations for new partnerships in Asia and Europe. The imbalanced flows of mobile students and teachers between Asia and Europe is a major issue for the ASEM education cooperation. Measures should still be taken to better balance mobility flows. There are also several obstacles encountered by the students both from Asia and Europe preventing mobility.

The Ministers:

32. Recognized the contribution of the current mobility schemes existing in various formats, including scholarships offered within the framework of bilateral educational agreements between countries, to the promotion of educational exchanges of students and teaching staff.
33. Acknowledged the results of the ASEM International Seminar on Balanced Mobility held on 25-26 August 2014 in Kuala Lumpur and supported the proposal of Malaysia and the

Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) to organize AEI-ASEM Summer Camps (AEI-ASC). The Ministers encouraged the delegates of ASEM member countries to nominate and sponsor their national participants to the AEI-ASC pilot project, to be held on 2 - 16 August 2015 in Malaysia, aimed to foster better balanced mobility of students, academicians and researchers between Asia and Europe.

34. As a successor of the online platform DEEP (Database on Education Exchange Programmes), welcomed ASEF's initiative to set up a page on its website providing links to various education mobility opportunities and scholarships, run or endorsed by ASEM members' governments, the ASEAN Secretariat and the European Commission. The initiative supports students in their search for suitable study opportunities across all ASEM member countries.
35. Welcomed the European Commission's initiative to organize an Information Day on "Erasmus+" programme on 29 April 2015 in Riga with the aim of giving practical guidance on opportunities for international cooperation which will strengthen Asia-Europe links in higher education and increase mobility of students, researchers, academic staff and other experts. The Ministers called on ASEM higher education authorities, institutions and other stakeholders to develop action plans and relevant projects to promote the programme, specifically with a view to increasing mobility for all ASEM partners and developing inter-regional cooperation and capacity building, as supported by the programme. Capacity building can particularly help improve quality assurance systems and recognition mechanisms and increase attractiveness, transparency and comparability of education systems. The European Commission undertook to keep ASEM partners informed of developments, such as the launch of Calls for Proposals, including through higher education fairs where possible.
36. Acknowledged the ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programme has served as a practical and tangible cooperation project, which contributed to the enhancement of mutual understanding of both Asia and Europe by promoting education cooperation and balanced exchanges of university students. Welcomed the ASEM member countries (Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Sweden, Belgium/Flemish Community and Belgium/French Community) for joining the ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programme and encouraged more ASEM member countries to join the programme in the 4th phase until 2020.
37. Underlined the importance of the ASEM Joint Curriculum Development Project and viewed it as an instrument to enhance international collaboration among ASEM universities. The Ministers appreciated Indonesia's contribution to host the 1st meeting of ASEM member countries (Belgium (Flemish Community), Brunei Darussalam, Germany, Lithuania and Indonesia) willing to develop a Joint Curriculum Development Programme in Tourism and Hospitality at bachelor and master level resulting in real life based curricula. The Ministers thanked Germany for hosting the 2nd meeting on 12 and 13 March 2015 in Bonn in order to discuss further steps. Romania expressed its willingness to join the project and the Ministers invited also further ASEM member countries to join the programmes.
38. Welcomed the initiative from Germany to develop an ASEM Studies' Curriculum Module with the objective to make Master level students, studying in the field of Asian or European studies, familiar with the goals and instruments of the ASEM process as well as its political, social and economic framework. The module should promote understanding in the ASEM region and enable the respective university graduates to act as promoters of the ASEM spirit in their future careers. The Ministers attached high importance to the development of joint modules as an instrument to further international collaboration among universities worldwide. In the long run it could be envisaged to widen the module to a comprehensive ASEM Study Programme.

39. Welcomed ASEF's flagship youth projects, the "ASEF Summer University", "Model ASEM" and the "ASEF Young Leaders Summit" which contribute to balanced mobility between Asia and Europe, as well as the "ASEF Classroom Network (ASEF ClassNet)" project which promotes balanced mobility also among the secondary education students. The Ministers encouraged ASEF to further develop these projects which serve as sustainable platforms of dialogue and exchange among young people as well as include the youth perspective into the ASEM process.
40. Welcomed Indonesia's proposal to explore a new ASEM Research Collaboration Scheme, to encourage Asian and European higher education institutions, research institutions and industries to cooperate on the research fields of common interest and high priority. Indonesia, Australia, Finland, Romania will join this pilot scheme and set up a working group for ASEM research cooperation. The first Working Group Meeting will be organised after ASEMME5 in order to discuss the research areas, outputs and methods to move forward the project taking into consideration the existing platforms and avoiding overlaps with similar frameworks.

D. Lifelong Learning (LLL) Including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Promoting lifelong learning is essential to cope with the undesirable side effects of globalization, demographic transformation, and rapid technological developments, which are posing new challenges to societies and knowledge-based economies across the world. This area aims at developing policies that create learning opportunities for all citizens throughout their lives in order to participate in continuing professional development and enhance their skills and competences for working life, personal fulfilment, active citizenship, and social inclusion.

The Ministers:

41. Emphasized the importance of establishing networks between the Higher Education Sector and TVET to integrate theoretical and practical learning. The Ministers thanked Germany for organizing an expert seminar on dual study programmes entitled "A Strategy to Expand Opportunities for ASEM Youth" on 31 March – 1 April 2014 in Nuremberg with the aim to make the audience familiar with different higher education study programmes integrating working periods by focusing on the dual study programmes. During the seminar, it was discussed whether and how this model might be transferred to other countries.
42. Appreciated Malaysia's initiative in organizing the International ASEM Seminar on Lifelong Learning on 25-26 August 2014 in Kuala Lumpur with the theme "Strategizing Collaboration, Leveraging Resources: Charting The Way Forward for Lifelong Learning". The main objective of the Seminar was to bring together all relevant stakeholders including subject matter experts to share their ideas, experiences and findings to chart the strategies, future trends, and the way forward for lifelong learning. The Ministers noted that implementation of LLL needs to be transformed with greater collaboration among all key stakeholders including industries in research and development activities in order to promote LLL as well as leveraging on the resources optimally in creating a learning community. The Ministers acknowledged the contributions from the ASEM LLL Hub researchers who shared their research results and disseminated knowledge in the post-event report.
43. Underlined the contribution of the Working Group on Innovative Competences and Entrepreneurship education, which has organized meetings in Denmark (2013), Singapore (2014), Vietnam (2014), Norway (2014) and Latvia (2015). The Ministers recommended to address the following areas: 1) Further research, analysis, evaluation into innovation and entrepreneurship (assessment of current programs, implementation, needs analysis,

revision on analysis made, implementation of new practice); 2) Exchange of best practices (Peer Learning Activities (PLA), dissemination of best practice, capacity building for teachers and school leaders based on exchange of best practices). Romania and Indonesia expressed their interest to join the Working Group.

44. Acknowledged the importance of effective TVET systems and mobility of TVET learners and trainers for the development of skills for better employability. The Ministers supported future collaboration in both regions thus creating new education partnerships between ASEM countries. Ministers welcomed further discussions on work-based learning, TVET institutions and industry partnerships, new learning approaches, quality assurance mechanisms and mobility in TVET area to make education systems in both regions more comparable, and encouraged Latvia's initiative to promote a dialogue on sharing best practices and future perspectives in TVET.
45. Highlighted the results of the ASEM Forum on Lifelong Learning – “Renewing the Agenda for Lifelong Learning” on 9-11 March 2015 in Bali and efforts towards knowledge dissemination by publishing two issues of *ASEM Magazine for lifelong learning*. The Ministers supported the ASEM LLL Hub's initiative to strengthen the link between research, education and policy making for better lifelong learning policies. The Ministers thanked the ASEM LLL Hub for organizing, and Denmark and Indonesia for co-organising, the ASEM Forum on Lifelong Learning “Renewing the Agenda for Lifelong Learning” on 9-11 March 2015 in Bali.
46. Noted with interest the ASEM LLL Hub's initiative to promote the lifelong learning in ASEM member countries. The Ministers welcomed the intention of the ASEM LLL Hub to produce the first two ASEM Reviews of National Policies for Lifelong Learning. The Ministers appreciated the joint and comparative studies carried out by researchers from Asia and Europe and encouraged efforts to partnering with the ASEM LLL Hub, including to ensure sponsoring specific studies within its research networks.
47. Welcomed the completion of the 2015 Global Inventory of national and regional qualifications frameworks compiled by the European Training Foundation (ETF), Cedefop, and UNESCO, including the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). The Ministers acknowledged the Inventory as an important reference document to guide global monitoring, policy development and peer learning and invited the inter-agency group to ensure the effective dissemination of the findings contained in the Global Inventory. The Ministers emphasised that qualifications frameworks are instrumental for recognizing all forms of learning formal, non-formal and informal, building lifelong learning systems and facilitating recognition of qualifications. The Ministers welcomed the UNESCO led process to foster cooperation in developing and implementing world reference levels (WRLs), based on learning outcomes to facilitate the international comparison and recognition of qualifications. The Ministers welcomed the willingness of the interagency group to assist ASEM to develop mechanisms for validation to recognise learning outcomes and competences from formal, non-formal and informal contexts, and for cross-referencing, qualifications frameworks in Asia and Europe, in consultation with the ASEM members. The Ministers called upon inter-agency group to continue the Global Inventory of national and regional qualification frameworks and to come back to the 6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME6).

Ministers invited Senior Officials:

48. To meet at the Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting (ISOM) in 2016 to be hosted by the Russian Federation with support of the ASEM Education Secretariat and to exchange information on the results of the ASEM education activities, analyse the achieved results from a policy perspective, identify barriers to the implementation of the agreed activities

and propose definite measures to overcome them, further developing and submitting proposals to the Ministers.

49. To ensure setting of the main goal, objectives and tasks and definition of expected outcomes and implementation plans for the activities of the second pillar (included in ANNEX 1) in order to successfully implement them and enhance their coherence.
50. To explore how the Policy Recommendations developed by the Rectors and the Students during the 4th ASEM Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC4) could be integrated into the deliberations and work of the two pillars of the ASEM Education Process (ANNEX 2).
51. To examine the options to create a user-friendly platform for exchanging information on the results of the ASEM activities, educational systems and best practices and experience for mutual learning linked with the current website of the ASEM Education Secretariat.

Ministers invited the ASEM Education Secretariat:

52. To assist the ASEM members in implementing the agreed ASEM initiatives and in cooperation with the ASEM members and stakeholders to intensify the follow-up and enhance the coherence of all the activities, projects and initiatives taken.
53. To collect information and provide analysis on the results achieved by the ASEM members implementing the ASEM initiatives agreed and to inform Ministers on the progress achieved by preparing descriptive and analytical Stocktaking Report for the next Ministerial Meeting.
54. To develop a communication plan in close cooperation with the ASEM members and stakeholders to facilitate exchange of information among the ASEM members and stakeholders and provide public access to the results of the ASEM education cooperation.
55. To make better use of the website of the ASEM Education Secretariat as a main channel of communication (this can reflect the ongoing ASEM education activities and their results, uploading the documents related to the ASEM education etc.) and to encourage regular e-mail updates among the ASEM members and stakeholders.

Ministers thanked:

56. The Republic of Korea for its commitment to host the 6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME6) in 2017.
57. Belgium (Flemish Community and French Community) for its offer to host the ASEM Education Secretariat as of October 2017.
58. The Russian Federation for its offer to host the ISOM in 2016.
59. Austria for its offer to host the 1st Senior Officials' Meeting and Romania for its offer to host the 2nd Senior Officials' Meeting and the 7th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting in 2019.
60. Latvia for successfully hosting the ASEMME5, moving forward the ASEM Education Process and giving impetus to the overall cooperation between Asia and Europe.

Future ASEM Education Initiatives

A. Quality Assurance and Recognition Pillar 1

No	Initiative	Date and venue	Names of ASEM members/stakeholders
1.	Peer Learning Activity on qualifications frameworks for higher education in relation to quality assurance and recognition	2016	Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), France, Romania, Finland, Portugal
2.	A joint ASEM-EHEA conference about the impact of all reforms and challenges higher education has to address, will have on the academic work ¹	2016-2017	Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Romania, (tbc)

A. Quality Assurance and Recognition Pillar 2

No	Initiative	Date and venue	Names of ASEM members/stakeholders
1.	3 rd Working Group on Mobility of Higher Education and Ensuring Quality Assurance of Higher Education among ASEAN Plus Three Countries	11 June 2015, Thailand	ASEAN Plus Three Countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam)
2.	The 4 th Working Group Meeting for Implementing the ASEM Recognition Bridging Declaration	2016, Estonia	China, Austria, Belgium (French Community), Brunei Darussalam, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Philippines, Romania, the United Kingdom
3.	An Expert Group of Interregional Credit Transfer Mechanisms and Learning Outcome System	tbc	Australia, Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Brunei Darussalam, China, Estonia, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Romania, Portugal, Thailand

¹ if enough support from ASEM members and stakeholders

B. Engaging Business and Industry in Education *Pillar 1*

No	Initiative	Date and venue	Names of ASEM members/stakeholders
1.	Workshop “Entrepreneurship in Higher Education” for undergraduates from ASEM countries	18 -26 May 2015, Brunei Darussalam	Brunei Darussalam
2.	The 5 th ASEM University Business Forum	2015, Vietnam	Vietnam
3.	Peer Learning Activity on Employability and on the contribution of higher education to innovation	2016	Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Portugal, (tbc)
4.	5 th ASEM Rectors’ Conference and Students’ Forum (ARC5)	2016	Europe (tbc)
5.	Global Industry-University Cooperation Forum	October 2015, 2016	The Republic of Korea

B. Engaging Business and Industry in Education *Pillar 2*

No	Initiative	Date and venue	Names of ASEM members/stakeholders
1.	ASEM Work Placement 3-years pilot programme	2015/2016	Brunei, Belgium (Flemish Community), Germany, Indonesia and Thailand
2.	Project “Students’ teambuilding as an instrument of engaging business in education”	2016/2017	Russian Federation

C. Balanced Mobility *Pillar 2*

No	Initiative	Date and venue	Names of ASEM members/stakeholders
1.	Asia-Europe Institute (AEI)-ASEM Summer Camps (AEI-ASC) pilot project	2-16 August 2015, Malaysia	Malaysia, AEI
2.	ASEM Studies’ Curriculum Module	2015	German Higher Education Institutions and Partner Countries’ Institutions
3.	ASEM Joint Curriculum Development Project at bachelor and master level resulting in real life based curricula	2016	Belgium (Flemish Community), Brunei Darussalam, Germany, Lithuania and Indonesia, Romania
4.	ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programme	2016-2020	The Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Sweden, Belgium

			(French and Flemish Communities)
5.	A new ASEM Research Collaboration Scheme to encourage Asian and European higher education institutions, research institutions and industries to cooperate on the research fields of common interest and high priority. A Working group for ASEM research cooperation.	2016	Indonesia, Australia, Finland, Romania

D. Lifelong Learning (LLL) Including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Pillar 1

No	Initiative	Date and venue	Names of ASEM members/stakeholders
1.	Latvia's initiative to promote a dialogue on sharing best practices and future perspectives in TVET	tbc	Latvia, Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Belgium (Flemish Community), Germany, Indonesia, the Russian Federation

D. Lifelong Learning (LLL) Including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Pillar 2

No	Initiative	Date and venue	Names of ASEM members/stakeholders
1.	Producing the first two ASEM Reviews of National Policies for Lifelong Learning	2015	ASEM LLL Hub
2.	Working Group on Innovative Competences and Entrepreneurship education	tbc	Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Malaysia, Norway, Philippines, Romania, Singapore, Vietnam
3.	Update global inventory on regional and national qualifications frameworks, including mechanisms for validation and for cross-referencing of regional qualification frameworks	2017	UNESCO, ETF, Cedefop, UIL

For ASEF's projects in the field of education, please refer to www.asef.org.

Policy Recommendations developed by the Rectors and the Students during the 4th ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC4) and Students' Forum

ARC4 Students' Forum

**Policy Recommendations for the
5th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME5)
27-28 April 2015, Riga, Latvia**

The ARC4 Students' Forum on "*University-Business Partnerships: Asia and Europe Seeking 21st Century Solutions*" took place on 23-24 March 2015 at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China. On this occasion, 51 students from all ASEM member countries developed Policy Recommendations on how universities and the business sector can better cooperate to equip students with employability skills, to cultivate entrepreneurship, and to innovate learning environments through information and communication technologies. The students convey the following Recommendations for consideration of the ASEM Ministers for Education at the upcoming 5th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting on 27-28 April 2015 in Riga, Latvia. Four Student Representatives personally handed over these Policy Recommendations on 27 March 2015 to the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, Ms Mārīte SEILE, at the Closing Ceremony of the 4th ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC4). The students also address these Recommendations to their university and business leaders and relevant institutions amongst other stakeholders in ASEM countries.

The participants of the ARC4 Students' Forum have identified the following issues as priorities and commit themselves to promoting and finding ways of applying them. They call upon the ASEM members to engage them in working towards delivering tangible outcomes for the 6th ASEM Education Minister Meeting (ASEM ME6).

University-Business Partnerships for Employability Skills

- Curriculum design processes should take a student-centred approach and be developed in partnership with students to provide flexible learning pathways and opportunities for soft skill development. This should be done in consultation with businesses and external stakeholders when deemed useful, without jeopardising academic integrity. Opportunities to develop soft skills outside of the classroom, including student-led activities, need to be actively supported technically and financially, promoted, and the learning completely recognised by relevant stakeholders.
- Transparent, independent and updated programme information for all Higher Education Institutions must be made accessible on centralised public platforms and available nationally and internationally to students, potential students, parents, teachers and employers. Career guidance services must also be available at all levels and adequately resourced. ASEM members should implement measures and provide resources to strengthen the role that universities and businesses take in supporting such services.
- University-Business Partnerships which deliver quality work-placed learning opportunities must ensure decent working conditions, be incentivised, practically supported by long-term national strategies, and designed by relevant stakeholders. Partnerships must ensure that expected learning outcomes are achieved, recognised academically, and that students are compensated for the completed work.

University-Business Partnerships for Entrepreneurship

- The institutionalisation of entrepreneurship within university curricula, in partnership with businesses (SMEs and MNCs), is a must. This should include teaching material enriched with actual business cases, inter-disciplinary courses, and the creation of start-up incubators in universities that provide mentorship and advisory services.
- Universities, businesses and communities should work together to explicitly promote social entrepreneurship and develop business models that create shared value. This addresses problems in societies, encourages sustainable development and the notion that entrepreneurship is not exclusively for profit-making, but has a social role to play ultimately for the benefit of everyone.
- An improved funding system for university start-ups and entrepreneurial activities is needed. This includes tax incentives for investors, a system of preferential loans for entrepreneurs, and improved seed-funding channels, which allow universities to access more external funding and provide venture capital funding for entrepreneurial activities.

University-Business Partnerships for New Learning Environments through Technology

- Universities should have a policy framework that emphasises access to technology and training of faculty and students. This should include the establishment of strategic centres at universities to continuously improve technology use on campuses. Such activity should be supported by an international network to share good practices and close interaction with businesses.
- Flexible approaches to institutionalise recognition of online learning as a complement to traditional education in universities, such as through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) or other Open Educational Resources (OERs) are needed. For instance, these should be accredited and/or used as a supplement for admission applications to university.
- Universities and businesses should support national and international student initiatives in leveraging on technology to create opportunities aimed at acquiring additional experiences and skills. Examples include administrative support and funding for online workshops, cross-university forums, networking meetings and other innovative projects.

The 4th ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC4)

Policy Recommendations for the

5th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME5)

27-28 April 2015, Riga, Latvia

The 4th ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC4) on “*University-Business Partnerships: Asia and Europe Seeking 21st Century Solutions*” took place on 26-27 March 2015 at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China. More than 100 university leaders and representatives from 43 ASEM member countries jointly developed Policy Recommendations in 3 parallel working groups on how universities and the business sector can better cooperate to equip students with employability skills, to cultivate entrepreneurship, and to innovate learning environments through information and communication technologies. The Policy Recommendations were handed over to the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, Ms Mārīte SEILE, at the Closing Ceremony as a contribution to the deliberations at the 5th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME5) on 27-28 April 2015 in Riga, Latvia.

The participants of the 4th ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC4) identified the issues below as priorities for ASEM policy-making with regard to university-business collaboration. They

committed themselves to promoting 21st century-oriented university-business partnerships and to seeking solutions to possible challenges to cooperation. They called upon the ASEM members to engage them in working towards delivering tangible outcomes for the 6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME6).

University-Business Partnerships for Employability Skills

In order to promote the development of employability skills among graduates, the state plays a dual role.

- In their legislative and administrative capacities, the ASEM members should
 - 1) remove barriers to international mobility for study and internship purposes, including those linked to visa matters and payment regulations for students;
 - 2) encourage initiatives to enhance Ph.D. students' employability in diverse careers; and
 - 3) promote student-centred and problem-based learning and practical training through internships, entrepreneurial courses, and inclusion of soft-skills as well as transversal competencies in all programmes.

To better address the above issues, ASEM members shall establish and/or enhance various platforms for dialogue between universities, businesses, government institutions and communities.

- In their financial and service roles, the ASEM members should
 - 1) provide tax benefits, subsidies, insurance schemes and/or other incentives to encourage the provision of internships and practical training for students in businesses, community organizations and in the public sector;
 - 2) enable the development of open-access databases on Higher Education programmes to facilitate informed decisions by students; and
 - 3) better recognise the value of and investment in extra-curricular activities, and support these by facilitating an infrastructure of career-guidance centres, business incubators, innovation hubs, technology parks and student-led start-ups..

University-Business Partnerships for Entrepreneurship

A university-wide entrepreneurial culture is vital to address the dynamic transformations societies are undergoing. While continuing to ensure academic excellence, fostering entrepreneurship has to be positioned as a core mission of universities. ASEM education policies should be formulated to support this endeavour.

- ASEM members should support universities to develop ecosystems to enable entrepreneurship. Universities should be empowered to develop policies and measures, within respective national contexts, to transform the university environment accordingly through
 - 1) broadening the curriculum to include entrepreneurship education;
 - 2) strengthening applied research and technology transfer;
 - 3) facilitating faculty development to embrace a new innovative mindset;
 - 4) supporting cross-cultural student mobility and leadership development; and
 - 5) introducing enhanced technologies and facilities, as well as incentives to drive innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Partnerships with governments, businesses and communities need be strengthened to foster the development of “engaged universities” for social betterment, for example through a “triple-helix plus one” partnership model. ASEM members should also provide incentives to encourage the business sector to provide mentorship, internship and research opportunities, and funding support for entrepreneurial student initiatives.
- ASEM members shall incorporate innovation and entrepreneurship as part of their national policies and strategies. This includes the facilitation of their infrastructures, which support entrepreneurship, such as the introduction of tax incentives, creation of

knowledge transfer and innovation funds, local and regional incubators, entrepreneurship resource centres and platforms, development of finance instruments to support start-ups, and efforts to help them find new market opportunities locally and internationally.

University-Business Partnerships for New Learning Environments through Technology

- ASEM members should facilitate and support universities to develop and execute clear policies that foster an environment and culture conducive to university-business partnerships, including the transfer of technology and knowledge. These policies should draw from evidence-based practices of existing effective university-business partnerships across Asia and Europe. The practices may include new metrics for evaluating faculty, such as
 - 1) recognition and reward for effective engagement with businesses;
 - 2) utilization of technology-based collaborative platforms to share information/resources and encourage cross-sector and cross-disciplinary dialogue; and
 - 3) funding models that allow universities, businesses, and/or governments to support the development and sustainability of university-business partnerships.
- ASEM members should encourage universities to provide flexible and innovative learning environments for students. Such learning environments should include, amongst others, external curricular options, such as online courses/platforms in MOOCs and possible credit recognition for students.
- ASEM members should support universities in developing strategies for evaluating university-business partnerships to assure the sustainability of high quality and effective partnerships. Based on policies, existing frameworks, and specific ecosystems within countries, these evaluation strategies may include
 - 1) the facilitation of technological platforms for communication to assure efficient networking across sectors as well as across countries;
 - 2) professional development for faculty and students to better understand the affordances of technology and effectively use technology in a learning environment; and
 - 3) continuous quality assurance indicators that include the students' voice.