

Declaration

of the 3rd ASEM Meeting for Governors and Mayors in Bangkok in 2015 “ASEM Goes Local: Innovation and Regeneration”

The Asia – Europe Meeting for Governors and Mayors (ASEM-MGM) has been recognized as an important venue for leaders of major cities in ASEM member countries to foster mutual understanding and deepen their cooperative partnership in dealing with urban challenges, in order to bring about the sustainable development of their cities in the age of globalization and rapid urbanization. In the two previous ASEM-MGM Meetings respectively hosted by Jakarta and Berlin, the Governors, Mayors and city representatives agreed to continue their cooperative exchange and to hold regular meetings in order to address all issues of mutual interest.

The 3rd ASEM-MGM was held on 11-13 March 2015 in Bangkok, where Governors and Mayors from Asia and Europe met and discussed policies and strategies addressing the challenges of urban regeneration, as well as shared best-practices and innovative approaches for urban management with a focus on the following topics:

- Response to the Impact of Environmental Issues;
- Traffic and Transportation Management;
- Tourism Management and Cultural Diversity.

The Governors and Mayors of ASEM firmly believe that:

- ASEM-MGM provides a crucial opportunity for cooperative exchange and networking among major cities in Asia and Europe, with an aim of achieving sustainable development of their cities, as well as economic prosperity and social cohesion.
- Innovative approaches in dealing with dynamic challenges in the age of globalization are essentially needed.
- The sharing of best practices, experiences and transfer of technology and knowledge with regard to urban regeneration and overall management of cities in Asia and Europe will significantly benefit the citizens of both continents and lead to a better future together.
- Concrete cooperation between ASEM cities in such areas as high level meetings, discussions among experts, study visits, or data pooling on both bilateral and multilateral basis, is very much encouraged. Such cooperation would substantially add value to the ASEM MGM platform, as well as shape the cooperative network among member cities.

The Governors and Mayors have agreed and reached understanding on the following statements:

I: Response to Impact of Environmental Issues

Human activities, such as greenhouse gas emissions, increase of vehicle population, deforestation, a tremendous increase in waste generation, an excessive consumption of resources, and urban expansion have direct impacts on the environment, resulting in changes of climate patterns and the ecosystem.

- It is a responsibility of cities and all stakeholders to make sustainable environmental quality and security among their top priorities.
- Strong leadership, technological innovations, thoughtful economic and urban management policies, and public involvement, including efforts to promote the concept of green growth in the cities, help lessen the impacts of environmental issues induced by human activities.
- Cities are committed to the promotion of both technological and social innovation and regeneration through research and development in order to provide creative and effective solutions to environmental problems.
- Various pro-environmental actions, such as using renewable energy, green technology, recycling, and providing information on environmental attributes of products and services are most encouraged among all stakeholders.

- City laws and regulations concerning environmental protection must be properly designed and enforced to maximize their effects and minimize the negative impact on the development in other areas.

II: Traffic and Transportation Management

Effective traffic and transportation policy and management are much needed today for most of the world's major urban areas, particularly when cities' development and competitive edge heavily rely upon convenient accessibility and mobility.

- As demand for urban transportation grows, cities are faced with various challenges such as congestion, pollution, road safety, and equitable accessibility that must be dealt with in a timely and effective manner.
- Cities have an obligation to provide practical solutions to traffic problems, such as a comprehensive and affordable mass transit network, including effective Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), reliable public transport, real-time traffic information, and strictly enforced traffic laws and regulations.
- In traffic and transportation policy formulation and management, all sectors of society must be taken into account, including the disadvantaged and future generations.
- Research and Development are necessary to the delivery of viable planning and sustainable traffic and transportation management of cities.
- Sustainable urban planning must be done in consideration of such aspects as equity, land-use, community livability, sustainable transport solutions, energy efficiency, health, environment, and economic and social welfare.

III: Tourism Management and Cultural Diversity

Tourism has been an important source of income, employment and entrepreneurship generation for most cities for many years. As tourism industry grows, cities have a responsibility to ensure that tourism related activities, including visitor impact management and preservation of cultural identity are undertaken in a sustainable way.

- Sustainable tourism management requires enhanced cooperation and concrete partnerships among tourism operators, governments at all levels, local communities, and tourists.
- Cultural diversity is an essential element of tourism that adds value to a meaningful tourism experience and offers competitive advantage to tourism destinations.
- Preserving the environmental quality and cultural identity of tourist destinations is an indispensable means of creating economic benefit and sustaining people's quality of life in tourism areas.
- Innovative tourism ideas and technology can provide solutions in addressing the growing demands of tourism, as well as increasing quality of products and services.
- Cities must have a clear vision and careful plan for tourism management that takes into account the context of the long-term social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts.

The Governors and Mayors have agreed that the ASEM Meeting for Governors and Mayors is an important forum for dialogue and cooperation for major cities in Asia and Europe that provides a valuable opportunity for them to gather and build a strong cooperative partnership and bridges of understanding between the people of Asia and Europe. The Governors and Mayors of ASEM have also agreed to continue this dialogue in the future.

The Governors and Mayors recommended that the conclusions of the 3rd ASEM Meeting for Governors and Mayors be submitted to the 11th ASEM Summit to be held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in July 2016.

The Governors and Mayors agreed to hold their next meeting in Lisbon in 2017.