



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Statement of President Van Rompuy  
at the press conference  
following the closing ceremony of the 9th ASEM Summit**

Good afternoon and welcome to this press conference.

Let me agree with the Lao PDR Prime Minister that this was a very good Summit. And let me add that we all have appreciated his leadership in chairing the summit and the perfect organization and hospitality of Laos.

The EU is very satisfied:

- with the high level of participation on Asian and European side,
- with the quality of discussions over the last two days;
- And, with the substance of the documents we just approved.

I believe these are testimony to our common effort to make ASEM – a partnership that gathers half of the world GDP, and 60% of world's trade and population – a strong and unique driver in the euro Asian relations.

Over two intense days we discussed in depth the three pillars of ASEM: economy, political and socio-cultural fields.

You have probably listened to my conclusive remarks at the closing ceremony. So I will not repeat them, but let me underline some points I retain from this important meeting.

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Economy and trade was clearly the key of our debate. There was no blame game. Rather a clear sense that – in Asia as well as in Europe – we are on the same boat, as the global economy keeps us tightly interlinked. Myself and many European Leaders explained:

- The substantial reforms undertaken by the EU and by its MS;
- The Euro is on the right track and
- The Euro is an irreversible project;
- The many significant Free Trade negotiations undertaken by the EU with Asian partners and our commitment to promote trade and resist protectionism. President Barroso will go into details, but let me stress that I welcome the very recent accession by Lao to the WTO: it exemplifies the strong commitment of us all to the multilateral trade system.

Many Asian countries reaffirmed their commitment to address the imbalances in their economies, and to keep working together with us bilaterally and in the G20 to restore financial stability and to create structural economic growth and jobs.

From this debate emerged that in the modern world we all should row in the same direction. Growth and development are inextricably linked. We need each other.

The same sense of common destiny was reflected also in our discussions on political and security developments in our respective regions. Instability in one country or region will inevitably have negative consequences for all of us. Security is no longer a concept that can be constrained to national borders. Terrorism, piracy at sea, the terrible consequences of armed conflict or the destabilizing effects of internal strife expand far away from the places of origin. In some cases, particularly as regards terrorism and organized crime, it is even difficult to find one single point of origin. The risks of proliferation of nuclear weapons are a threat to all of us and we must join forces to address such threats regardless of the region where they develop. The exchanges that we had revealed convergence of views and, once again, the usefulness of discussions in broader fora and of increased mutual understanding.

The importance of regional integration processes was also highlighted. ASEAN's role in the building of pan-regional security architecture in Asia was broadly welcomed. EU-ASEAN relations have become indeed an important element in the EU-Asia relation, complementing usefully EU bilateral relations with ASEAN members and offering multilayered fora for the exchange of views on Asian strategic questions beyond ASEAN borders. The EU is happy to support ASEAN development through its 35 years long partnership and looks forward to further deepening this relationship.

Finally, we have agreed to expand further the people to people, cultural and social links. With 60% of the world population ASEM is a unique platform to increase mutual trust and understanding in an unprecedented scale, not only for Leaders, but, also, for our citizens. ASEM initiatives on human and social rights, its parliamentary dialogues, the promotion of a closer interfaith dialogue, our cultural and social exchanges, all represent extraordinary tools to bring our societies closer together.

In concluding, let me say that this ASEM 9 represents the culmination of a weeklong tour that brought me to several Asian countries.

Wherever I went I found the same sense of friendship, openness and commitment to make Europe and Asia closer partners for a better future.

I believe that the theme of the Summit – Peace and Partnership – reflects this sense of friendship. At the end of ASEM 9 there is certainly an improved partnership.

The EU – as the next host of the 2014 Summit in Brussels - will take this commitment and responsibility onward.

Thank you.

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