

Dear ASEM partners,

Welcome to the ASEM 6 Summit, 10 and 11 September 2006.

Finland will have the honour of hosting the sixth ASEM Summit in Helsinki on 10 and 11 September 2006. The Summit will engage the leaders of 38 Asian and European countries and the European Commission in an open and genuine dialogue under the overarching theme: Global Challenges - Joint Responses.

The Helsinki Summit will mark a special milestone in Asia-Europe relations as it celebrates the 10th anniversary of the ASEM cooperation process. It will be an ideal opportunity to reflect on what ASEM has achieved during its first ten years, and to look ahead to the future. The tenth anniversary is indeed the perfect time to consider how the countries of Asia and Europe can more effectively respond to the challenges of globalisation.

Leaders' deliberations will proceed along the following lines:

In the afternoon of Sunday 10 September, the first plenary session is dedicated to political dialogue, allowing Leaders to have an in-depth exchange of views on topical issues of the global agenda. The discussions will stress the need to strengthen multilateralism with the UN at its core, and address broad security issues such as the prevention of terrorism, organised crime, and global health threats. Leaders may also touch upon multilateral and regional security cooperation. Leaders are to continue the discussion over a working dinner and address, *inter alia*, recent regional developments.

The second plenary session in the morning of Monday 11 September is devoted to the broad theme of "Dialogue among Cultures and Civilisations", highlighting the importance of promoting mutual awareness and understanding through dialogue and cooperation. During the session Leaders will elaborate on issues such as intercultural and interfaith dialogue, cooperation in education, and the promotion of cultural diversity.

Thereafter, Leaders will convene for a working luncheon to discuss "Sustainable Development, including Environment and Energy Security". The discussion is expected to focus on the diverse aspects of enhancing energy security, and its synergies with addressing environmental concerns. Moreover, Leaders will address the issue of climate change. In order to express their firm commitment to international dialogue and cooperation on climate change, Leaders will have the opportunity to adopt a joint declaration in the last session of the Summit.

The theme of the third plenary session on Monday afternoon is "Globalisation and Competitiveness", setting the stage for Leaders to explore ways to address structural changes in the global economy in order to benefit from and tackle the challenges posed by globalisation. Furthermore, Leaders will exchange views on the importance of resuming the WTO Doha Development Agenda negotiations as well as on the results of the First ASEM Labour Ministers Conference. They will also discuss the role of innovation, science, and technology as ways to promote competitiveness and well-being of societies.

The Summit will conclude on Monday evening with a session devoted to "The Future of ASEM", during which Leaders are expected to adopt a Helsinki Declaration on the Future of ASEM to set the guiding principles for cooperation in the coming decade. The final session will be followed by a Closing Ceremony.

This website gives an overview of the ASEM 6 Summit and the process in general. Summit news, speeches and conclusions will form the core content of the site, but it will also contain information on media events relating to the Summit and on previous summit meetings.

Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen