

# ASEM Summit: Europe and Asia – Global Partners for Global Challenges

Jean-Claude **Juncker**, President of the European Commission and Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, represented the European Union at the Summit. Heads of State or Government of the 28 EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway, in addition to 21 Heads of State or Government from Asian countries, as well as the Secretary General of ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), were also invited. The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica **Mogherini**, and the Vice-President of the European Commission for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, Jyrki **Katainen**, also participated at the Summit.

*"We want to give our relationship with Asia, which is already very dynamic – as illustrated by the numerous trade and cooperation agreements we have, fresh impetus", [said](#) President Jean-Claude **Juncker** at the Summit's plenary session this morning. "Only a multilateral approach will enable us to confront global challenges. This is why I reiterate our commitment to support multilateral organisations in all their efforts, including the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation – a World Trade Organisation that we have to reform together, so that its rules correspond better to the new realities. It is by acting together that we will be able to preserve our planet [...], contribute to resolving conflicts, eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities, [...] and that we can better manage migration flows and develop free and fair trade."*

The full remarks of President **Juncker** at the plenary session of the ASEM Summit are available [online](#).

*"What Europe and Asia agree together matters not only for the two of us, but for the entire world. Together we represent 55% of global trade, 60% of global population, 65% of global economy and 75% of global tourism; together we represent a real global power", said the High Representative/Vice-President, Federica **Mogherini** at the Summit's press conference. "We come out of this two-day Summit with a reinforced global partnership between Europe and Asia. It has allowed us to translate our global weight into concrete policy initiatives – on regional and international security, foreign policy issues, climate change action, free and fair trade, and the digital agenda to name a few. Together, we can make a real difference for the world."*

High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini**'s remarks at the press conference are available [online](#).

A [Chair's Statement](#), covering the wide range of areas discussed and focussing on ASEM's three pillars – namely political, economic and financial, and social and cultural – has also been issued.

## Sustainable connectivity between Europe and Asia

In his [address](#) at the Summit's plenary session, President **Juncker** highlighted the importance of investing in more sustainable connectivity between the European Union and Asia. The European Union has this week adopted a [new strategy on connecting Europe and Asia](#), building on the [proposal](#) of the European Commission and the High Representative in September. With financial, environmental, and social sustainability at the core of the EU's approach to connectivity, the EU's objective is to develop sustainable connectivity networks across the digital, transport, energy and human dimensions, as well as to strengthen partnerships at the bilateral, regional and international levels, in particular to ensure a rules-based approach and interoperability of standards.

As a contribution to enhancing Euro-Asian connectivity, as well as to demonstrate the huge potential of the relationship, the European Commission has this week launched the [ASEM Sustainable Connectivity Portal](#), offering policymakers, researchers, businesses and other stakeholders alike a wealth of data on the political, economic and societal relationships between the two continents. A [full press release](#) and [factsheet](#) are available online. In parallel to the Summit, a number of events to bring Europeans and Asians together are taking place in Belgium, such as the [ASEM Cultural Festival](#), the [Young Leaders' Summit](#), the [Business Forum](#), the [People's Forum](#) for civil society, the [Labour Forum](#) and the [Parliamentary Partnership Meeting](#).

## Strengthening EU-Asia bilateral ties

In the margins of the ASEM Summit, the European Union signed a number of bilateral agreements to deepen and expand its relations with Singapore and Vietnam respectively.

President **Juncker**, President Tusk and Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz signed, together with the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Long, the EU-Singapore **Free Trade Agreement**. In the presence of the leaders, EU High Representative/Vice-President, Federica **Mogherini** and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, Vivian Balakrishnan signed the EU-Singapore **Framework Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation** and Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmström and Mr S Iswaran, Minister for Communications and Information, and Trade Relations of Singapore signed the EU-Singapore **Investment Protection Agreement**. These agreements represent a significant step forward for a more comprehensive and mutually-beneficial relationship between the EU and Singapore, opening new opportunities for European producers, farmers, service providers and investments, as well as strengthening political and sectoral cooperation through more formal and intensive exchanges for example in environment, climate change and counter-terrorism. More information is available in a [dedicated press release](#) and on the [website](#).

The European Union is also stepping up its relations with **Vietnam**. Earlier this week, the European Commission [adopted the EU-Vietnam trade and investment agreements](#), paving the way for their signature and conclusion. The trade agreement will eliminate virtually all tariffs on goods traded between the two sides. The agreement also includes a strong, legally binding

commitment to sustainable development, including the respect of human rights, labour rights, environmental protection and the fight against climate change, with an explicit reference to the Paris Agreement. Today, the EU and Vietnam signed a **Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement**. The Agreement will help improve forest governance, address illegal logging and promote trade in verified legal timber products from Vietnam to the EU, and other markets. In addition to the variety of social, economic and environmental benefits associated with better management of the forestry sector in Vietnam, the licensing will simplify business for timber traders. More information is available [online](#).

## **EU-ASEAN Leaders' Meeting**

Following the ASEM Summit, a Leaders' Meeting between the European Union and ASEAN took place. President Jean-Claude **Juncker** and President Donald Tusk, accompanied by EU High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** represented the European Union, whilst the Association of Southeast Asian Nations was represented by the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Loong, as the country holding the ASEAN Chairmanship for 2018, the Prime Minister of Thailand, Prayut Chan-o-cha, as the country which will hold the Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2019, and the ASEAN Secretary General, Lim Jock Hoi.

*"The EU's partnership with ASEAN is founded on common interests across many areas. We share common values – in the European Union and in the founding charter of ASEAN – which need to be respected by all", said President Juncker at the [opening of the Leaders' Meeting](#). "Proof of our intense cooperation is the number of agreements with Singapore that we have just signed. These, I hope, will be the first in a long series of such agreements with ASEAN countries, and will eventually result in a region-to-region agreement."*

At the Leaders' Meeting, alongside matters of trade, connectivity and transport, leaders addressed global peace and security challenges, including climate change, non-proliferation, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – the Iran nuclear deal, counter-terrorism, maritime security and migration. They agreed to strengthen the EU-ASEAN relationship, in particular to address global challenges and to work together to reinforce the rules-based international order and multilateralism. A factsheet on EU-ASEAN relations is available [online](#).

## **Further Information**

[12<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit website](#)

[12<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit: Chair's Statement](#)

[Speech by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the plenary session of the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit](#)

[Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the press conference following the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit](#)

[ASEM Factsheet](#)

[ASEM Brochure](#)

[Connecting Europe and Asia – the EU’s Strategy Factsheet](#)

[EU steps up its strategy for connecting Europe and Asia](#)

[Memo explaining the EU’s approach to connecting Europe and Asia](#)

[Council Conclusions on “Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU Strategy”](#)

[Press release: EU and Singapore forge closer economic and political ties](#)

[Website on the EU-Singapore Free Trade and Investment Protection Agreements](#)

[Press release: Commission launches online tool to measure how well Europe and Asia are connected](#)

[Remarks by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the opening of the EU-ASEAN Leaders’ Meeting](#)

[Factsheet on EU-ASEAN relations](#)