

[EU charts new ground in global connectivity – looks to boost strategic ties with Asia](#)

On Friday 27 September 2019, the European Commission will launch its **Europa Connectivity Forum** – an innovative multi-stakeholder international conference aimed at fostering dialogue and strengthening ties between governments, financial institutions, and private sector actors in Europe and beyond. Building on the already close cooperation between the EU and its Asia-Pacific partners, this first edition of the Forum will be held under the theme [EU-Asia Connectivity: Building Bridges for a Sustainable Future](#).

The President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker**, who will deliver a [keynote speech](#) in the opening plenary session, said: *“What we do politically must respond to the expectations and worries of our citizens. Increased connectivity is part of this response, because it benefits our people and our economies. Because it creates stability and prosperity for all.”* He added: *“Our European approach to connectivity is at the heart of our partnership with Asia, and we have a clear message: the European Union wants to engage more and to reinforce the connections between Europe and Asia in a mutually-beneficial way.”*

The EU and Japan: taking the lead on sustainable connectivity

At the invitation of President Juncker, **Shinzō Abe**, Prime Minister of Japan, will be the Forum’s special guest and will deliver a keynote speech at the opening plenary. President Juncker and Prime Minister Abe will conclude a **Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure between the European Union and Japan**, underlining further the strategic importance of the EU-Japan partnership that both parties have been committed to strengthen over the last years.

This new Partnership is the first of its kind, highlighting connectivity as a key priority in the European Union’s work as a global actor. It confirms Europe’s ambition to work together with like-minded partners in promoting connectivity that is sustainable across the board – fiscally, economically, socially and environmentally.

Generating global debate on the European approach to connectivity

The Europa Connectivity Forum is politically underpinned by the Joint Communication ‘[Connecting Europe and Asia – Building Blocks for an EU Strategy](#)’, launched by the European Commission and the High Representative in September 2018. In the Strategy, the EU sets out its approach to connectivity, which has been at the very heart of successful European integration.

The Forum, which will be [live streamed](#), will highlight the **major**

opportunities of stronger connectivity, as well as explore the many challenges. These range from multilateral governance aspects and the vast financing needs – making it essential to partner up with the private sector and mobilise private investments – to the importance of developing mutually agreed, interoperable standards and norms to underpin 21st century transport, energy, digital and human connectivity.

In order to generate widespread debate, panellists from Europe and beyond will discuss the geopolitics, the economics, the standards and norms, and the finance of connectivity. To kick-start the debate, Parag Khanna, author of *Connectography: Mapping the Future of Global Civilization* and *The Future is Asian: Commerce, Conflict, and Culture in the 21st Century*, will deliver remarks on connectivity as a global trend.

High-level political leaders and dignitaries, including the President Emeritus of the European Council, the Prime Ministers of Finland and Croatia, and Ministers from, *inter alia*, the Republic of North Macedonia, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, and the Republic of Korea will take part in the Forum. In addition, the **Presidents of European and international financial institutions**, including Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank, Suma Chakrabarti, President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and Takehiko Nakao, President of the Asian Development Bank, as well as **leading business and finance executives from Europe and Asia**, will also participate. More information on confirmed speakers can be found [here](#).

For More Information

[Europa Connectivity Forum: EU-Asia Connectivity – Building Bridges for a Sustainable Future website](#)

[Joint Communication: Connecting Europe and Asia – building blocks for an EU Strategy](#)