

Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) 1997/2281(COS)	Procedure completed
Perspectives and priorities for the ASEM processus, Asia-Europe	
Subject 6.40.08 Relations with Asian countries	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	NI TATARELLA Salvatore	22/01/1998
Council of the European Union	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	RELA External Economic Relations	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Key events			
26/06/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	SEC(1997)1239	Summary
19/12/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/04/1999	Vote in committee		
19/04/1999	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0197/1999	
04/05/1999	Decision by Parliament	T4-0365/1999	Summary
04/05/1999	End of procedure in Parliament		
01/10/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2281(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/4/09527

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		SEC(1997)1239	26/06/1997	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0197/1999 OJ C 279 01.10.1999, p. 0005	19/04/1999	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0365/1999 OJ C 279 01.10.1999, p. 0023-0069	04/05/1999	EP	Summary

Perspectives and priorities for the ASEM processus, Asia-Europe

OBJECTIVE: to take stock of the ASEM process (cooperation and rapprochement between Asia and Europe) on the eve of the ASEM II meeting due to take place in London in April 1998 and to make a Community contribution to the decision on priorities for the future Euro-Asian summit. CONTENT: the ASEM process is a new intergovernmental instrument of mutual understanding and consensus which was instituted at the first Euro-Asian summit in Bangkok (March 1996). This political catalyst intended to stimulate dialogue is unique by virtue of its informal nature and versatility and the level of people involved (heads of state and government). It is designed to facilitate cooperation in all fields of concerted action and is an ideal instrument for promoting the interests of the two regions. Developments since the inaugural meeting in Bangkok have been extremely beneficial for the parties in all fields affected by the ASEM process (political, economic or social and cultural). The priorities and the procedures for the official follow-up activities provided for by the process now need to be set on the eve of the second ASEM meeting due to take place in London on 3-4 April 1998 in order to breathe new life into the ASEM. The main need is for a programme which lays down the strategic priorities for the 2 years and a simple mechanism for assessing and adopting the measures proposed. The priorities proposed by the Commission in its contribution to the ASEM process are as follows: 1) political priorities: - to intensify the high-level dialogue (in particular at the next meeting due to take place in Luxembourg in October 1998); - to advance the dialogue on the reform of the United Nations; - to open an informal political dialogue on regional and international questions (economic, environmental and non-military aspects of security, disarmament, anti-personnel mines, joint approach to discussions in international fora etc.); 2) economic priorities: - to discuss the promotion by Asia and Europe of the liberalization of world trade within the framework of the WTO and the meetings of high-level officials (SOMTI); - to implement a trade facilitation plan (TFAP) and an investment promotion action plan (IPAP); - to consolidate dialogue in the private sector (by strengthening the AEBF or Asia-Europe Businessmen's Forum); - to intensify the customs sector; 3) social and cultural priorities: - to create a network of students, academics, scientists and personalities from the world of culture; - to improve public information on the ASEM process; - to provide active and continuous support for the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). At the same time, the Commission emphasized the interest aroused by the ASEM both in the region and in eastern Europe. The ASEM currently numbers the 15 Member States of the European Union as such and 11 Asian countries. Discussions should therefore be started with a view to its gradual and moderate enlargement (giving priority to Asian countries so that the balance of the ASEM does not tilt towards Europe).?

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Without debate, the European Parliament adopted the resolution by Salvatore Tatarella (NI,IT) on the Commission working document on Perspectives and Priorities for the ASEM Process. The report calls on the EU and its Member States and on the Asian partners to give high priority to taking the ASEM process forward and strengthening it, be taking the first steps towards the constitution of an organisation capable of acting collectively. It also calls on the ASEM Member States to extend membership at least to the South Asian countries. The Parliament supports the Council decision not to accept the participation of Burma at EU-ASEAN and ASEM meetings until there are significant improvements in human rights and democracy in Burma. It also stresses the need to limit obstacles to trade, but does not go as far as to recommend a free trade area, as proposed by the rapporteur. The report emphasises that the EU should put much more emphasis in its dialogue with Asian partners on the necessity to guarantee basic social rights for all workers, in particular with regard to the use of child labour. It calls for support for Asia-Europe cooperation at civil society level to be developed and NGOs to be associated to the ASEM process. The Parliament stresses that step by step institutionalisation of the relationship between the EU and the ASEM partners would pave the way for the achievement of more concrete results. The report notes the multi-faceted and in some cases deep-rooted character of the barriers that exporters to East Asia are still confronted with. In the Parliament's view, real progress may not be made until exporters experience clear improvements. It calls for a comprehensive and balanced WTO round of negotiations, resulting in further progressive liberalisation across all sectors. The report emphasises that the EU should continue to press for integration of environmental provisions in global trade rules and elaborate on its proposals on how this should be done. It invites the Commission and the Member States to exploit fully the possibilities to conduct a dialogue on this issue offered by the ASEM process. At the same time, the Parliament invites the Council and the Commission to study how the EU can support the development of viable political, economic and social structures in East Timor, and thereby facilitate a peaceful ending of the Indonesian occupation. It also wishes to see support for the ASEAN Regional Forum in order to contribute to reducing existing tensions and provide safeguards against the emergence and escalation of conflicts in the future. Finally, the Parliament urges the EU and its Member States to step up their efforts at achieving consensus on the inclusion of clear commitments to human rights to be included in key ASEM documents and to persist in raising concrete human rights issues in plenary ASEM meetings.?