

ASEM and the democratization of inter- and trans-regional dialogues: The role of civil society, NGO and Parliaments

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1. Introduction

Since the end of the systemic bipolarity, non-State actors have become objects of interest for theorists who deal with international affairs. Conceptualising 'Governance without Government' Rosenau and Czempiel were among the first to stress the "growing importance of societies and the degree of interdependence between them" (Czempiel 1992: 270). Former United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, stated that civil society organisations are "a basic form of popular representation in the present-day world. Their participation in international relations is, in a way, a guarantee of the political legitimacy of those international organisations" (cited in Baker 2002: 122). Recently, the Cardoso report, named after Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Chair of the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relations, analysed the growing capacity and influence of non-State actors in international relations and the deficits of democracy in global governance (Cardoso 2004).

International dialogue fora are thus increasingly seen as mutating into arcane circles of experts who are remote from the aspirations and concerns of ordinary people at the grassroots level. To what extent do Asia-Europe relations fit this state of affairs and what has been done to give a greater voice to civil society? Who in Asia-Europe relations speaks for civil society?

What can be said about the legitimacy of these representatives of civil society?

Whereas the reading of civil society in democratisation theory concentrates on the national level (Gill 2000; Croissant 2003), new normative approaches by theorists construct models in which global civil society represents the outline of a future world political order, in which the importance of nation states as actors in global politics ceases. Theorists seek to understand whether global civil society "can serve as a constituent part of, even a means to, a democratized world order" (Baker 2002: 116). In that context, the role of civil society and Parliaments in the system of Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) governance will be analysed. Do non-State actors facilitate the democratization of inter-regional relations (even if some of the national political systems involved are not democracies)?

Shaw identifies three types of institutions in which an emergent global civil society is comprised: 1. formal organisations, 2. link of informal networks and movements and 3. global organisations “which are established with a specifically global orientation, global membership and activity of global scope” (Shaw 1994: 650). As will be demonstrated, inter-regional regimes, such as the ASEM process, are part of global civil society engagement as well. The scope of civil society in the Asia-Europe dialogue is - though global in focus - an interregional one.

Civil society is “no homogeneous actor” (Merkel/Lauth 1998: 7) and definitions of the term vary. Below, civil society actors will be defined as voluntary unions outside the realm of the state and the economy.ⁱⁱ Parliaments do not belong to civil societyⁱⁱⁱ but to the realm of the State. However, since they do take part in the Asia-Europe dialogue, their role for the democratisation of inter-regional relations will also be discussed.

In this chapter, I will differentiate between the two categories of, firstly, a political and, secondly, a pre-political civil society. The latter has no specific function for civil society but exercises different functions in relation to societal sub-systems including the arts, music, education, sports and religion (Pollack 2003: 54). The political civil society has a mediation and communication function between citizen and State. This function is formulated by Habermas. For Habermas, civil society has the function to identify and interpret societal problems: “Civil society consists of those more or less spontaneously created associations, organisations and movements which pick up, condense and pass on [in] amplified [form] the resonance that public problems find in the private sphere to the political public” (Habermas 1994: 443). The mediation and communication function of civil society for democracy can thus be an indicator to analyse civil societies’ role for the democratisation of the Asia-Europe dialogue.^{iv} This function of civil society correlates well with the democratisation of the Asia-Europe dialogue. The democratisation of an inter-regional dialogue will be defined as a process that allows civil society to participate in the Politics of Inter-regional Relations (see Bersick 2004a). This participation is a process in itself since, before the beginning of the inter-regional dialogues between State actors, no civil society community existed between Asia and Europe, that is, on the inter-regional level of the international system. Thus, through the fulfilment of civil societies’ functions in an inter-regional context, the dialogue itself becomes democratised.

2. The formation of civil society structures in the Asia-Europe dialogue

The ASEM process has been conceptualized by Asian and European governments as a topdown process. It has been called an “elitist project” (Yeo Lay Hwee 2002: 108). Since its inauguration, ASEM actors have disagreed on the question whether civil society should be part of the ASEM process. The participation of civil society actors within the sphere of ASEM affairs is an issue of concern. The necessity to have a meeting between Asian and European leaders was an important driving force and stimulus that motivated the governments of the ASEAN member countries to start a new cooperation dialogue with Europe - outside the confines of the ASEAN-EU dialogue. According to Ong Keng Yong, the former Press Secretary of the Singaporean Prime Minister and ASEAN Secretary General since 2003, the opportunity to discuss common issues at the level of the leaders was seen as the most important difference between the ASEM and the ASEAN-EU dialogue.^v Consequently, civil society actors were not conceptualized as ASEM actors in the first ASEM summit in Bangkok in 1996. A parallel (non-official) meeting of Asian and European NGOs^{vi} and trade unions in Bangkok attempting to mirror the ASEM process was threatened with closure by the Thai

government.

Having been established as the so-called missing link between the regions of Europe and Asia, the official ASEM process is confronted with civil society forces that demand active participation. Thereby a seemingly paradoxical development is taking place. While the topdown ASEM process attempts to bridge the gap between the two regions, civil society is demanding that a further missing link be rectified that of filling the gap between governments and civil society at the inter-regional level.

It is only because of the activities of some European governments and civil society forces that the elite ASEM process has opened up for civil society actors. Even before the first ASEM Summit in Bangkok in 1996, a conflict of interest existed among its participants concerning the role of civil society in the ASEM process. According to a Danish diplomat it was the European side who emphasized the importance of people-to-people relations and of the role of NGOs - against the forceful resistance of Asian participants.vii As a consequence of this opposition, the Asian side successfully blocked the use of the term 'civil society' in paragraph 19 of the Chairman's Statement of the second ASEM Summit in London in 1998. Though the Europeans had used the term in a draft version of the Chairman's Statement it was finally changed into the formulation "all sectors of society"viii. In this context, China was a major agent. While elaborating on the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework (AECF) in 1998, Beijing again tried to hinder the use of the term 'civil society' in the document, replacing it by the formulation "relevant sectors of society". But here the Chinese government failed. The Asia-Europe Vision Group (AEVG) in 1999 had recommended the engagement of NGOs especially with regard to the promotion of political and security cooperation between Asia and Europe, emphasizing the need for "good governance and human rights" (AEVGR 1999: 37).

Finally - and counter to Chinese interestsix - the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework (AECF 2000) mentioned civil society, together with the government and the business sectors as the "prime actors" of the ASEM process (AECF 2000: paragraph 25). Furthermore, ASEM leaders agreed that the ASEM process "should go beyond governments in order to promote dialogue and cooperation between the business/private sectors of the two regions and, no less important, between the peoples of the two regions. ASEM should also encourage the cooperative activities of think tanks and research groups of both regions" (AECF 2000: paragraph 8). In July 2003, ASEM Foreign Ministers during their meeting in Bali stated that "in the margins of ASEM events, host countries may, at their discretion, organise activities with businessx, think tanks, the academe and other sectors of society" (Chair's Statement 2003: paragraph 5).

This development triggered a process that has gradually led - as I will describe below - to the inclusion of civil society actors and of Parliaments into the mainstream of ASEM affairs.

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

The ASEF was founded in February 1997. ASEM documents call ASEF the only institution of the ASEM process, since it is "incorporated under Singaporean domestic law as a not for profit corporation with tax exempt status"xi. ASEF promotes (1) intellectual, (2) cultural and (3) people-to-people exchanges between the two regions and serves as a coordinator and host of seminars, conferences and fora in the three issue-areas (Bersick 1998: 83). Since ASEF is supposed to be responsible for cooperation between the "civil societies of Europe and Asia" (AEVGR 1999: 34), it is an aim of ASEF that the participation and integration of all civil society actors that do not belong to the business sector is managed by the Foundation. Criticism by NGO representatives that ASEF's approach towards the participation of civil

society actors is not pluralistic enough has been countered by both former and by the current ASEF Executive Directors who emphasize that NGO participation is at the centre of ASEF's work. Nevertheless, those NGOs who organize the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF) have heated debates about ASEF's function and role as a facilitating actor for civil society's engagement in the ASEM process. The NGO report of a meeting of civil societies' representatives in June 2004 in Barcelona states: "Many people expressed their frustration that ASEF only caters to the elite section of civil society. Some participants complained that they were not involved in past activities where synergies could have been formed between their initiatives and ASEF initiatives; for example, post- World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) discussions. Some raised questions about the legitimacy of ASEF as a facilitating actor if its network is not broad enough to represent the various voices, sectors and perspectives of civil society. Some asked about the access of marginalised people such as indigenous peoples, peasants and grass-root people. There is still a general view that, since 1997, the NGO voices have not been heard and their concerns not addressed compared to the interests of the business sector in the ASEM process."xii The international trade union movement has also voiced its criticism about ASEF's work and demands that the Foundation establishes a "large-scale policy work programme within ASEF and with the involvement of trade unions"xiii.

On the basis of this assessment by NGO representatives it can be said that ASEF has not met the function of establishing a political civil society within the Asia-Europe dialogue, because the normative integration of civil society into an Asia-Europe dialogue has not taken place. Nevertheless, ASEF is successfully establishing a pre-political civil society within the Asia-Europe dialogue. This success stems from its many initiatives and programmesxiv in the fields of cultural exchange, intellectual exchange, people-to-people and public affairs that ASEF has successfully initiated including dialogues between European and Asian non-State actors including, for example, religion, the arts and music.

NGOs

Non-Governmental Organisations had not been conceptualized as ASEM actors by the diplomats who deliberated on the creation of the Asia-Europe Meeting. NGOs, including Amnesty International for instance, demand an institutionalised link between the NGOs that are engaged in the ASEM process and the governments. Arising out of such demands, several NGOs - Focus on the Global South (Bangkok) and Transnational Institute (Amsterdam) being two important examples - organized a meeting for those civil society actors who were interested in Asian-European cooperation but who were not allowed to participate in the first ASEM Summit. The interest of those actors who are organized in the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF) (as the NGO grouping has called itself since its second Forum in London in 1998) is "to work for an accountable, transparent and accessible ASEM process, open to the participation and inter-action of citizens in both regions."xv The AEPF defines its role threefold: a) Strengthen networking building within and across Asia and Europe; b) Analyze common interests, for example, the neo-liberal globalisation and the consequences for the peoples in each region, security and militarization threats in Asia and Europe; c) Provide a channel for critical engagement with the official ASEM process.

These functions were performed during the last AEPF in Hanoi in 2004. The critics of globalization used the Forum to discuss the so-called "neo-liberal ideology" of ASEM countries accusing the governments of leaving the people to the "mercy of the market".xvi

NGOs discussed strategies to counter this, emphasizing instead the needs of developing countries and promised to strengthen their own capacity to have an impact on global power

relations. In that context, cooperation between the civil societies of Asia and Europe and also within each region is expected to lead to the implementation of a strategic vision: the building of “alternative regionalisms”. This new system would challenge the current global economic system. The objective of this vision is to “create a world of cooperating nations within regions, negotiating their specific policies as well as cooperating with other regions on matters of shared global concern” (Brennan 2004: 3).

According to Walden Bello, the Executive Director of the Bangkok-based research, analysis and advocacy institute - Focus on the Global South - and a leading theorist of the antiglobalization movement, South-East Asian nations will not “survive as national economies” if they do not become part of a larger economic bloc. This is because of increasing global competition from China, the EU and the USA. Bello points out that the process of regionalization in South-East Asia can only be achieved through a combination of political will and the democratization of the process of regional integration. In that context, it is argued that the planned economic integration between ASEAN and China and between ASEAN and India, through the establishment of FTAs, poses the possibility of an “powerful Asian ‘regional’ economic response to the global dominance of the EU” or the potential dominance of Asia by China and/or India “as the emerging regional super powers” (Keet 2004: 7). Within this broad conceptual framework, Asian and European NGOs strive for the “‘deglobalization’ of the world” through the building of so-called alternative regionalisms.xvii

NGOs have identified the ASEM process as a mechanism and instrument for the implementation of this macro-objective. By proposing alternatives in the policy areas of trade, investment and socio-economic development, security and peace, sustainable environment and water and energy privatisation, the members of the AEPF aim at influencing regional governance in Asia and in Europe and impacting upon inter-regional governance between Asia and Europe.

However, the ASEM process does not deal with social issues. For instance, the social responsibilities of governance (be it on the domestic, intra- or inter-regional level) or social security systems are not addressed.xviii Asian countries in particular argue that the discussion of social issues within ASEM solely serves the interests of industrialized countries who seek to minimize the comparative advantage of developing countries. The former’s production costs would rise relatively to the latter’s. This has meant that ASEM member countries have not allowed the AEPF to become an institutional link between NGOs and the governments. The State-level actors do not want NGOs to “interfere” in their ability to govern.

As a result of this performance dysfunction apparent in the AEPF, its members have developed the idea of a ‘social pillar’ for the ASEM process. Several different suggestions have been made theorizing what a social dimension within the ASEM process could look like, what its content should be and how it could be implemented. The most prominent suggestion relates to the institutionalization of an ‘Asia-Europe Social Forum’ (or ‘ASEM Social Forum’).

This initiative would add a social pillar to the existing three pillars in ASEM including the political, economic and cultural pillars. It would be the function of the new Forum to analyse the social implications of ASEM initiatives in all ASEM pillars and to amend them if necessary.

On the sidelines of the ASEM Summit in Seoul in 2000, NGOs and trade unions demanded that an ‘Asia-Europe Social Forum’ be established. Although the AEPF lobbied hard, ASEM leaders did not agree on its founding during their Summit in Copenhagen in 2002. Nor did they agree on it during the following Summit in Hanoi in October 2004. Against this

background, a decisive question for civil society actors dealing with the ASEM process emerges as follows: "What is the extent to which civil society groups can influence the agenda and become co-opted by ASEM?" In the eyes of these civil society actors, their work has reached a crossroad. To quote an outspoken assessment by one leading NGO activist: "I do not think the official ASEM process has opened up for civil society nor that any of our arguments have come across in a serious way. ASEM 4 in Copenhagen was a shame in that sense. The Asia-Europe Business Forum was well received by the officials and yet we [the NGOs] were hardly given any space for dialogue."xix

Asian NGOs in particular emphasize that it is still difficult for them to raise issues that are regarded as sensitive by their governments. As they pointed out during the Barcelona meeting, European and Asian governments do not share the same understanding about the role of NGOs in society. There is still strong suspicion among Asian governments that NGOs are a threat and a challenge to their power. This is why Asian NGOs hope to gain influence on the ASEM process through inter-regional dialogue with their European peers. Nevertheless, there is a general feeling among NGOs dealing with Asia-Europe relations that NGOs are still not viewed as equal dialogue partners within the ASEM context "but rather as groups that could be either co-opted or ignored".xx This criticism was proven right in the autumn of 2004. The Vietnamese government, the host of the fifth ASEM Summit, vigorously tried to hinder the AEPF from taking place. Until then, AEPF meetings were held more or less in parallel to the ASEM Summits. In the end, the Vietnamese government succumbed to diplomatic pressure from its peers and allowed the AEPF to take place but only granted permission one month prior to the ASEM Summit. According to one participant, the thrust of the AEPF had changed "as the Vietnamese government, rather than the people, influenced proceedings even though the meeting was [meant to be] a people's forum"xxi.

As a result of AEPF's activities, horizontal networking between European and Asian NGOs increased due to the Forum's and ASEM's inter-regional approach. The AEPF enables Asian and European civil society actors to coordinate and propagate their common objectives. NGO fora produced, for instance, Peoples' Visions which were handed over to the official ASEM process and emphasised the importance of Human Rights issue at a time when it was left out deliberately by the ASEM leaders (Brennan et al. 1996). Furthermore, in light of NGOs input in the policy areas of environment and human trafficking some argue that "NGOs have become an important stake holder in the ASEM process" (Richards 2004: 8).

Notwithstanding those developments, the influence of NGOs on the overall ASEM process has been limited. The AEPF is barred from any meaningful participation in the decisionmaking processes of ASEM. The actual influence of Asian and European civil society actors on policy making and governance in ASEM affairs can, at best, be described as limited as NGOs are excluded from formal agenda setting and decision making processes. At the moment, there are no regular meetings and consultations between the AEPF with ASEM senior officials.

Parliaments

When ASEM was launched, parliamentarians were not thought of as potential ASEM participants. Nevertheless, and referring to the need to democratize the dialogue between Asia and Europe, deputies from the European Parliament started to ask for a "wider and creative role" for the elected representatives of the people (Hindley 1999: 31).

Over time, it has become a characteristic of the ASEM process that Parliaments are

increasingly engaged in the inter-regional dialogue - though their role is low-key. An interview with a German Parliamentarian for instance, who is a member of the Bundestag Foreign Affairs Committee and its ASEAN subgroup, revealed the fact that the ASEM process is not part of German parliamentarians' agenda. At EU level, the European Parliament is engaged progressively. Politicians discuss working papers on the ASEM process, which the European Commission prepares, and scrutinize the results of the various ASEM Summits.

With respect to the ASEM process, the European Parliament's importance derives from its holding debates in plenary sessions, passing Resolutions, making recommendations, tendering questions and writing reports. The Parliament makes particular use of the few instruments available to it in order to emphasize the need for human rights commitments within Asian-European relations and the ASEM process specifically^{xxii}. The Parliament, for instance, opposed Burma/Union of Myanmar's application to become an ASEM member, "deplores"^{xxiii} that it has happened and "condemns the total disregard of the Burma junta for the welfare of the people in Burma"^{xxiv}. Through Resolutions, the Parliament seeks to influence the European Commission's ASEM policy demanding that the EU should consider that "clear commitments on human rights, democracy, good governance, and the rule of law"^{xxv} should be included in ASEM official documents. Yet, the "paucity of a human rights dimension" within ASEM (Wiessala 2004: 9) indicates the clear limits of the European Parliament's ability to influence the process.

Apart from the above mentioned instruments inter-parliamentary meetings are further instruments of parliaments' engagement in the ASEM process. National and European legislators meet in the framework of the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP) and the Asia-Europe Young Parliamentarians' Meeting. The first ASEP meeting was held in Strasbourg in 1996, the second in Manila in 2002 and the third in 2004 in Hue, Vietnam. The latest meeting dealt with international security and the role of the international law, the need for fairer and more equal global trade, the importance of cultural identity and diversity and the role of parliamentarians in Asian-European relations. In contrast to earlier meetings, the delegates decided to continue the institutionalization of the ASEP, thereby facilitating a process of horizontal networking between ASEP members and their guests^{xxvi}. ASEP meetings will be conducted on a regular bi-annual basis before ASEM Summits, alternately in Asia and Europe. Furthermore, a study group on the procedural framework for future ASEP meetings will be set up and the delegates agreed to establish information channels that further the promotion and sharing of experience in making laws on economic and institutional reform, economic integration, poverty reduction and environmental protection. It will be an interesting research question for a future analysis of the role of parliaments on the democratization of inter-regional relations whether the cooperation of the legislatures will transcend the traditional decision making processes of ASEM and in how far the institutionalization of ideational linkages will have an input on the normative concepts of the participants. So far, it has not. Otherwise, the new ASEP agenda is mainly focussed on economic issues and does not consider the role of NGOs. Though it hints at the formal participation of parliamentarians in the Asia-Europe Business Forum, the participation of civil society actors in the ASEM process is not mentioned.

Whereas ASEP is organized under the auspices of the European Parliament, the Asia-Europe Young Parliamentarians' Meeting (AEYPM) is organized by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). The AEYPM has been held five times: the first meeting was held in Cebu, the Philippines, in November 1998, and subsequently in Lisbon in April 2000, in Bali in November 2001, and in Venice in October 2002. The fifth meeting, in October 2003 in Guilin, China, was co-organised by ASEF and the National People's Congress of the People's

Republic of China. Forty-one parliamentarians from 14 ASEM countries and the European Parliament exchanged views and perspectives on the theme, "Promoting mutual growth and development in Asia and Europe through strengthened inter-parliamentary dialogue". According to ASEF, the AEYPM provides: (1) a platform for young parliamentarians to develop a greater awareness and understanding of external issues that affect political, social and economic development in their countries; (2) legislators with the opportunity to obtain an in-depth understanding of outlooks and experiences from the perspective of their counterparts from other countries through inter-cultural exchanges; and (3) a network of friends of the same professional interest within the ASEM community through dialogue and frequent contact in all the aspects of the programme xxvii.

Arising out of the AEYPM, the Asia-Europe Foundation developed the Asia-Europe Inter-Parliamentary Dialogue (AEIPD). The AEIPD is an online internet forum in which only former participants of the Young Parliamentarians' Meetings are allowed to take part with the aim of furthering the dialogue among members of parliaments of the ASEM countries (www.asef.org/aeipd). In that context, a former head of the ASEM desk of the European Commission points out that a new "consultative assembly of representatives of national parliaments and the European Parliament" could be institutionalised. Such an assembly would increase the democratic legitimisation of the ASEM process by promoting a "socialisation process between officials and representatives of all sectors of society". This is why he favours the setting up of a Social Forum which would help improve "engagement and dialogue" (Reiterer 2002: 116).

The argument that the legitimacy of a given institution is also a function of the type of actors (State/non-State) that are members of the institution has been recently put forward by the Cardoso report. The Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations argues that the engagement with civil society and parliaments helps the United Nations in its agenda setting processes by way of identifying global priorities. Furthermore, the "support base" of the organization is strengthened by becoming more responsive and accountable. The report concludes that participatory democracy is becoming more important alongside representative democracy and deduces that the legitimacy in policy shaping "does not derive solely from the ballot box". That is why, "inter-governmental organizations should become more accountable, transparent and responsible to citizens globally" (Cardoso 2004: 28). Though it has been demonstrated in the above analysis of the AEPF that ASEM members - at least until now - do not intend to provide the ASEM process with a democratic legitimization that is based on the concept of participatory democracy, recent developments indicate that participatory democracy is entering the ASEM process. The following two examples will serve to illustrate that development.

Example I: The Barcelona meeting of civil society

In June 2004, members of civil society met for two days in the city of Barcelona for an informal consultation on "Connecting Civil Society of Asia and Europe". The meeting, which was organized by the Asia-Europe Foundation in conjunction with Casa Asia, the International Institute of Asian Studies and the Japan Centre for International Exchange brought together 187 individuals from 27 countries. It was the biggest event - in terms of finances, logistics and delegates - that the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) has initiated and managed to date.

According to the organizers, one of the objectives of the meeting in Barcelona was "to consolidate" the engagement of civil society actors that are interested in Asia-Europe affairs.

A further objective was to provide a platform for a dialogue on “how ASEM can promote civil societies in both regions” and “how better to integrate civil society actors into ASEF programmes and on how to facilitate greater participation, closer integration and better access of civil society and its representatives into the ASEM process”. As the objectives indicate, the meeting was a reaction of ASEF - and in particular of its Executive Director - to criticism by civil society that ASEF was being too élite. In order to counter this image and the inherent dysfunction of ASEF, those civil society representatives were “directly involved who are most concerned and effected by the outcomes of policy making and decisions on the ASEM level” (Barcelona Report 2004: 3) and the participation was open to all civil society actors who are interested in the Asia-Europe dialogue.

The meeting was intended to encourage the formulation of civil societies’ suggestions and recommendations^{xxxviii} thereby “increasing public access to the policy level”. Six thematic clusters were discussed in workshops: governance, human rights, gender issues and labour relations; environment and urbanisation; education, academic co-operation, science and technology; dialogue of civilisation, inter-faith dialogue and cultures; trade, development cooperation, social issues and migration; international relations, regionalisation processes and security issues. In addition, the participants met in six sectorial working groups. According to their area of expertise, the participants took part in the working groups of: research institutes, think tanks and academics; NGOs; trade unions; cultural institutions; media; and civil society resource organisations^{xxxix}. Every workshop and working group produced a report on the outcome of their discussions. The final ‘Barcelona Report’ was conveyed to the ASEM leaders, through their Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

In the case of the NGOs’ working group, which was hosted by the Asia-Europe People’s Forum (AEPF), the *quo vadis*-status of NGOs’ current engagement in the ASEM process became evident. The participants reflected, *inter alia*, on the following issues: “Why do we establish networks?”, “What are we networking for?” and “Who are we?” and finally on the general questions: “What do we want from ASEM?”, “What can ASEM do for us?”, “What can the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) do for us?”. In the end, the participants produced a series of recommendations and ideas that went into the report. One example is the recommendation that ASEF should support the participation of NGOs in the AEPF and should “foster Civil Society Organizations’ capacity building”^{xxx}. The Barcelona Report formulates three key messages: (1) The creation of a social pillar within the ASEM process is necessary; (2) ASEM needs to improve its transparency. Civil society can act as an “independent monitor to enhance ASEM’s accountability; (3) The Burma/Myanmar issue should be resolved by a common policy approach.

Nevertheless, some of the NGOs left Barcelona with the uneasy feeling that they had been used by ASEF for legitimising the role of the Foundation as the true representative and institution of civil societies’ engagement in the Asia-Europe dialogue. Some NGO activists were particularly concerned about the fact that their projects often suffer from funding constraints whereas, in contrast, ASEF has “abundant resources” as one activist claimed with regard to the EUR 22,726,817 that ASEF had received between February 1997 and March 2004 from both the European Commission and national governments ^{xxxi}.

Whether this highly critical assessment of ASEF’s work with respect to the activities of NGOs has to be revised will soon be seen. In order to demonstrate the willingness and interest of ASEF to cooperate with civil society, ASEF’s then Executive Director Delfin Colomé promised at the end of the conference that ASEF will contribute 50% to the costs of every initiative that is taken forward to ASEF by civil society. The outcome of the Barcelona

meeting therefore is a clear demonstration of civil societies' demand to participate in the official ASEM process. At the same time, the Barcelona Report signals ASEM's interests in the development of structures of participatory democracy within the ASEM process. The Barcelona Report is thus an example of citizens' political acting through direct participation in a civil society mechanism that deals with issues which interests them.

Example II: The roles of the international trade union movement and of political foundations

The quest for a social dimension within the ASEM process is an example of the role of civil society in the ASEM process. Trade unions have been engaged in the Asia-Europe dialogue since they presented their first statement at the time of the Bangkok ASEM Summit in 1996. Since May 1997, when the German Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES) organized a workshop for Asian and European trade unions, the Asia-Europe Trade Union Forum (AETUF) has met on a regular basis and has issued statements for the ASEM Summits in London, Seoul, Copenhagen and the last Summit in Hanoi. The AETUF criticises the official ASEM process, inter alia, for the promotion of unregulated markets, thereby maximising the "profits for business and political elites". In the aftermath of the Hanoi Summit, trade unions demanded that the ASEM leaders strengthen the social dimension of the ASEM process and the integration of "a wider range of ASEM's stakeholders, including workers and their trade unions into the ASEM process". xxxii

In that context, the active co-operation of the Chinese and Vietnamese government with the international trade union movement and the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES) indicates a change. During the ASEM Summit in Copenhagen in 2002 the leaders agreed on a 'Workshop on Employment'. Following this agreement, a preparatory meeting took place in November 2003 in Beijing and another in April 2004 in Hanoi. The 'Informal ASEM brainstorming on the Future of Employment and the Quality of Work' in Beijing was cosponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour, the FES and the Chinese Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Apart from State-level actors and the European Commission, non-State actors, including the Asian Employers Confederation, the European Trade Union Federation, the Denmark Trade Union Federation, the All-China Confederation of Trade Unions and the China Employment Confederation, took part in the meeting. The second informal seminar (the 'Informal ASEM brainstorming on the Future of Employment and the Quality of Work: The decent work agenda in a globalised economy') was jointly organised by the Vietnamese Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour and the FES. Representatives of governments, trade unions and business discussed the issue of inter-regional labour and employment policies with a view to the fifth ASEM Summit. Both seminars would not have been possible without the active engagement of the FES. According to one involved actor of the Foundation, the FES "invested a lot of time" and had to convince the German Ministry as well as the Chinese and the Vietnamese side to hold the seminars. According to a representative of the German Federation of Trade Unions "without the input of the FES, the employment issue would not be an issue in the official ASEM process"xxxiv. On the occasion of the 'ASEM Employment Conference' in Berlin (see Bersick: 2004b) in June 2004, the Chinese Vice Minister of Labour and Social Security stated:

"The gap between labour demand and labour supply and the structural unemployment, and the increasing urban unemployment pressure due to labour migration from rural areas to urban cities, and new labour market entrance and the need of re-employment of the unemployed are the major issues to be addressed in China. With China's entry into the WTO, the mismatch of labour quality and job demands also becomes more and more outstanding (...) We are pleased to work

with other countries and actively promote Asia-Europe exchange and cooperation in the field of employment and social security, which is of great significance, as major activities of ASEM". xxxv

Participants of the conference in Berlin also included representatives from the social partners, NGOs, the academe and business representatives. For the first time, governments and civil society met back-to-back. While the government delegations were meeting on the first day, civil society actors participated in the conference on the second day. This new ASEM format demonstrates that the Chinese government - whose delegation substantially outnumbered even the German delegation - is starting to cooperate with civil society actors in order to fight some of the problems that threaten the stability of the political system of the People's Republic of China. At the same time, the fact that Vice Minister Wang left after the first day and thus did not participate in the conference with civil society during the second day, demonstrates the general concern that the Chinese government still has with regard to civil society. Nevertheless, the gradual inclusion of civil society actors is only possible because the government in Beijing changed its ASEM policy with regard to civil societies' role in an inter-regional dialogue. The government in Beijing has started to tolerate civil societies' participation in the official ASEM process even though this is only in an "informal" setting.

This policy change - in turn - is the result of the European actors' ASEM policy of engaging civil society. A parallel development had taken place in Hanoi. Although Viet Nam has not been a so-called co-sponsor^{xxxvi} of the ASEM initiative to hold a 'Workshop on Employment', the government of Viet Nam agreed to host the preparatory meeting. Thus, Hanoi started to cooperate with civil society actors within an inter-regional dialogue. As Henkel et al. point out, the inclusion of a social dimension in the ASEM process might result in the solution to the question of how "to engage civil society in the official process" (Henkel et al. 2004: 5). Whether this marks the start of a new process in which Viet Nam, whose government until recently did not use the term 'civil society' in official statements, accepts civil society as part of the official ASEM process remains to be seen. The holding of the AEPF in Hanoi and the way in which the ASEM State actors dealt with the 'Barcelona Report' in Hanoi during the fifth ASEM Summit have been indicators of such a development.

3. Towards the democratization of inter-regional relations?

As the ASEM initiative of a workshop on 'The Future of Employment and the Quality of Labour' indicates, the ASEM process has opened up to the lobbying of trade unions and the work of political foundations. The gradual inclusion of national parliamentarians and the European Parliament takes place although it is clear that elected representatives themselves need to be engaged more systematically with ASEM issues. At the same time, it is a specific feature of ASEM that the European Commission functions as an active facilitator of the democratisation of the ASEM process both through the engagement of civil society activities and by their funding. First examples of this policy have been the Forum of Venice in 1996, followed by the Manila Forum in 1997. The European Commission also organised an Asia-Europe Consultative Seminar with Civil Society in November 2003 in Brussels.^{xxxvii} In the same year, the Commission contributed funds - for the first time - to an ASEM-related NGO seminar in Berlin.

The two case studies described above indicate that a socialisation process between State and non-State actors is developing. At the same time, it is necessary to integrate civil society further into ASEM affairs in order to counter the danger of losing civil society actors'

engagement in the ASEM process. Otherwise, NGOs might want to de-link their input into Asia-Europe affairs from that of their respective governments. An opportunity for cooperation would then be lost. Therefore, in order to capitalize on civil society actors' engagement in the ASEM process, governments who do not favour or still oppose the growing capacity and influence of non-State actors (especially the PR China and Viet Nam) need to be convinced that it is in their own national interest to form a strategic partnership between governmental and non-governmental interests in Asia-Europe relations. Time is pressing because the window of opportunity for integrating non-State actors - and especially NGOs who have so far contributed peacefully to the Asia-Europe inter-regional dialogue - may soon close. This is mainly because the interested civil society actors have reached, after nearly 10 years of lobbying, a point of uncertainty (see also Bersick 2003). They know that they "need to determine why and how [they] should continue to lobby ASEM itself and what weight [they should] give to this in comparison to lobbying on issues and campaigns of common concerns."xxxviii

As a consequence, the question arises whether non-State actors should be part of the official ASEM process or "get on with the process of assuring [their] own identity (...)" (Fouquet 2004: 7). This *quo vadis*-status was apparent in Barcelona, where one NGO activist questioned "the legitimacy of the ASEM process for speaking for civil society". For such a scenario, Asian and European trade unions are writing on ASEM's wall that the process "can lose public support and will become the target of growing popular concern at the negative aspects of globalisation"xxxix. The verdict that the political pluralism of civil society hinders consensus building and "prevents the AEPF from acting either as a coherent policy community capable of shaping interests and choices or as a knowledge-based epistemic community capable of shaping interests and choices" (Richards 2004: 8) was tested and given explanatory power. But at the same time the Barcelona meeting marks an important change in the relationship between the official ASEM process - represented by the ASEF - and civil society: Some NGOs started to cooperate with ASEF for the first time. The Barcelona meeting of civil society shows that the role of the ASEF is evolving. A process of a gradual opening up of the Asia-Europe Foundation to the engagement of civil society actors, which are interested in Asia-Europe dialogue, is taking place. Therefore, a new trend is slowly becoming apparent: The Asia-Europe civil society that is formed through the official ASEM process (via ASEF) is changing its character from a pre-political to a political civil society.

During the Barcelona meeting, civil society actors acquired a mediation and communication function between the citizen and the State.

This trend is an important indicator of the rising legitimacy of civil society in the ASEM process. This development, in turn, furthers the democratisation of ASEM and its activities. Thereby, the legitimacy of civil society in the Asia-Europe dialogue increases. This important process has been recently underlined by the initiative of an Asian NGO. In November 2004, the Institute for Popular Democracy (IPD), which is based in Manila, in cooperation with the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, organized a Philippine Forum on the ASEM process. The Forum was a capability-building seminar and workshop for Philippine civil society actors. It was a response to the feedback of Philippine participants to the AEPF in Hanoi and their perceived knowledge-gap both on the ASEM system and on Asia-Europe relations. For the first time in the history of the ASEM process, Asian civil society actors of one Asian ASEM member country met with the objective to enhance their ASEM-related capacity. The seminar and workshop enabled the participants to identify their own research and advocacy agenda with regard to their Asia and Europe related work, to upgrade the quality of their involvement in the AEPF and to prepare them for lobby to and critical engagement with national, regional

and inter-regional institutions. In this context, the more than 50 civil society actors also met with government officials. In this way, the current presidential advisor and former Philippine Foreign Secretary, Delia Albert, and the Executive Director of IPD, Joel Rocamora, underscored the inter-dependence of State and non-State actors in intra- and inter-regional relations.xl

Yet, the participation of non-State actors in international organizations or regimes, such as the ASEM process, raises the question about the legitimacy of non-State actors being able “to speak for the people”. Whereas this legitimacy problem does not exist with reference to the participation of parliamentarians within the ASEM process, several Asian and European officials question, for instance, the legitimacy of the Asia-Europe People’s Forum (AEPF). Within the theoretical discourse on democracy and the cosmopolitan democracy school of thought it is argued that non-State actors increasingly influence inter-State decision-making processes (see Archibugi *et al.* 1998). Furthermore, the growing transfer of important political decisions from the national to the regional and global level of governance can lead to a reduction in citizens’ participation in those processes. Instead of democratically legitimized governments, new transnational elites may control the agenda-setting and decision making processes and abuse their new powers.xli In this context, Rittberger points to two alternative forms of political participation and of public control of governance and government on the global level; the participation and control through “public science” and the participation and control through a “government-independent public” (Rittberger 2003: 219). Rittberger argues that the opening of political decision-making networks (on the global level) to the „government-independent public“ functions as a power control. Therefore, the government-independent public should be regarded as a “fundamental public good” (Rittberger 2003: 220).

ASEP and a possible social pillar of the ASEM process are thus examples of citizens’ political acting through direct participation in a civil society mechanism that deals with issues which interest them. The quest of NGOs to participate in the agenda setting processes of ASEM therefore constitutes a form of participatory democracy which receives legitimacy from its power-controlling function.xlii The question of the legitimacy of civil society fora also featured in the Barcelona conference. As Rueland notes “many advocates of people’s interests, such as the ASEM People’s Forum, are self-styled representatives of civil society with no legitimately established mandate” (Rüland 2001: 68).xliii On this point, the Barcelona conference made a difference as the recommendations that it produced have a strong basis of legitimacy. The civil society actors belonged to more sectors of society than in any other event that ASEP had previously organized. Only 2.7% of the participants belonged to non-ASEM countries - compared to almost 14% during the second AEPF (see Rüland 2001: 68).

Furthermore, the participants countries-of-origin were quite evenly distributed. No major power, for instance, was over- or under-represented.

Table

Participants from Civil Society at the Informal Consultation “Connecting Civil Society of Asia & Europe” convened 16th-18th June 2004 in Barcelona, Spain*

ASEM Member Countries	No. Of participants	Non-ASEM Countries	No. of participants
Austria	1	Australia	1
Belgium	1	Canada	2
China	10	Ethiopia	[1]
Denmark	3	USA	1
Finland	9+[1]	.	.
France	11+[1]	.	.
Germany	13	.	.
Indonesia	10	.	.
Ireland	1	.	.
Italy	4	.	.
Japan	8+[1]	.	.
Korea	7+[1]	.	.
Lithuania**	1	.	.
Luxembourg	1	.	.
Malaysia	5	.	.
Netherlands	8	.	.
Philippines	16+[1]	.	.
Portugal	11	.	.
Singapore	8	.	.
Spain	14+[1]	.	.
Thailand	10	.	.
United Kingdom	13	.	.
Vietnam	11	.	.
Total:	182	.	5

* The Consultation participants are classified as coming from various sectors of Civil Society defined as Research Institutions, Think Tanks, University Departments, Non-Governmental Organizations, Trade Unions, Consumer Organisations, Business Associations, Cultural Houses, the Media, Civil Society Resource Organizations and Foundations. Participants representing Government Ministries and International Organizations, such as the United Nations, are highlighted in brackets [].

**Not classified as an ASEM member at the time of the Consultation. Lithuania was admitted to ASEM, along with the 9 other new EU members and Cambodia, Laos and Burma/Union of Myanmar, at the 5th ASEM Summit in Hanoi, 7-9 October, 2004.

Source: Handbbok for Participants, ,Connecting Civil Society of Asia and Europe. An Informal Consultation', 16 to 18 June 2004, Barcelona, Spain.

The trend of ASEF functioning as a facilitator for the democratization of the Asian-European dialogue may well continue. The new Executive Director of ASEF, Ambassador Cho Won-il has recently pointed out that he regards the participation of civil society actors as a priority objective for ASEF's work. xliv

If ASEF continues to enhance civil society capacity and integrate civil society actors into the Asia-Europe dialogue, as it did in Barcelona, the Foundation may well facilitate further the democratisation of inter-regional relations between Asia and Europe. For that to happen it will be necessary that ASEF continues its transformation from a pre-political to a political actor for civil society. Whether this development will continue and open up new link for NGOs, in order to influence ASEM policies, needs further careful evaluation. A first opportunity was the fifth ASEM Summit in Hanoi in October 2004. Leaders were to be presented with the Report of the Barcelona meeting. If the leaders had agreed to a meeting of the Social and Labour Ministers within the ASEM context, NGOs and trade unions would have made a real impact on the ASEM process. If the leaders had made use of 'The Barcelona Report' and, for example, contributed further resources towards enhancing civil society capacity-building, or agreed to build policy and operational partnerships within the inter-regional context of ASEM affairs, then civil society actors' policy recommendations could have had a direct and peaceful impact on the official ASEM process. Yet, neither the first nor the second happened.

A future meeting of the Social and Labour Ministers was not agreed nor do the three documents that were adopted by the ASEM leaders in Hanoi enhance the role of civil society actors in the official ASEM process. xlv

This inhibiting factor of a further democratization of inter-regional relations needs to be contextualized. Viet Nam certainly was one of the least pro-democratic host countries for an ASEM Summit out of all ASEM members. The democratic momentum that is building up on the side of State and non-State actors with regard to ASEM affairs had come a long way from Bangkok via London, Seoul, and Copenhagen to Hanoi. The next ASEM Summit will take place in Helsinki in 2006. An overall assessment of this development, therefore, has to figure in the process character of ASEM affairs and the results that the process has delivered so far. In that respect, the ASEM process is a case in point that inter-regional regimes have the potential to develop the structural and normative preconditions to be able to engage civil society actors of different regions, thereby reinforcing the democratisation of inter-regional relations. This context may explain why it was only during the recent Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Kyoto that the Ministers "welcomed a proposal to hold a ministerial meeting on labour and employment issues (...) as a follow up to the discussion at ASEM 5" xlvii.

Within the ASEAN context, non-State actors are having a decisive impact on the development of the normative and institutional basis of cooperation (see Caballero-Anthony 2005). Within the ASEM context the role of civil society, NGOs and Parliaments for the democratization of the process is indicating a similar trend, as the top-down structure of the process becomes porous. While the influence of NGOs on the overall ASEM process is small as they have been excluded from processes of agenda setting and decision making the ASEM regime is in a transition process that transforms its elite power structure to a more participatory one which allows for vertical dialogues and agenda setting as the example of the holding of a first ministerial meeting on labour and employment issues showcases. Yet, this is not to say that civil society has become one of the three "prime actors" of ASEM, as it is stated by the AECF

2000.

Since the first ASEM summit in 1996, a development has taken place which adds a further dimension to the empirical study of the role of civil society in international relations. As the ASEM process shows, the emergent global civil society is also an element in inter-regional regimes. This development has led to a transformation from a pre-political to a political civil society in the ASEM process. This development marks a change of civil society actors' role and function within the ASEM process. The ongoing transformation of civil societies' engagement in ASEM from a pre-political to a political adds an important participatory dimension to the Politics of Inter-regional Relations and thereby to global governance (see also HDR 2000: 56). Since the 2004 ASEM Summit in Hanoi did not endorse that development by taking advantage of the Barcelona Report as a term of reference for the democratization of ASEM affairs, the role of civil society is still in limbo. The *quo vadis* identity of NGOs in ASEM affairs has been perpetuated, at least until the next Summit. This will be the next opportunity for the governments to decide whether they want to facilitate democracy in global governance by empowering non-State actors within ASEM affairs. Until then, two different developments can be distinguished. On the one hand, the mediation and communication function of civil society has increased during the first 10 years of the ASEM process. Civil society actors have become progressively involved in the Politics of Interregional Relations. Thus, a democratization of the Asia-Europe dialogue has taken place. On the other hand, the ASEM Summit in Hanoi has shown that this trend is not self-sustaining.

Much will depend on the ability of ASEM to support the further peaceful transformation of civil society from a pre- to a political one. This, in turn, highlights the need for a vertical dialogue between State and non-State actors in Asian-European affairs.

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Notes

i Inter-regional cooperation is given when two collective actors cooperate even though they belong to different regions. Inter-regional cooperation is also given, when two collective actors and N more actors cooperate that belong to two different regions. See Sebastian Bersick 2004a.

ii A functional approach identifies five criteria that need to be fulfilled in order to decide whether a societal actor belongs to civil society or not: (1). He needs to be independent from the State; (2). His actions must be related to the community; (3). He must act in public, thereby (4). inducing societal interests into the political process while (5) not using force (Lauth 2003: 224). With the political and legal community concepts, civil society is a part of the State. For sociologists and philosophers, focussing on the State as government, civil society is separate from the State. For the definition used in this text see also Jürgen Habermas 1994: 443.

iii They are part of the 'strong public'. Habermas distinguishes between "weak publics", composed of the "informally organized public sphere ranging from private associations to the mass media located in 'civil society' - and 'strong publics' - parliamentary bodies and other formally organized institutions of the political

system" (Baynes 1995: 216-17).

iv Concerning the relationship of democracy and civil society, at least three more functions of civil society can be distinguished: the societal self defence, the political socialization and the normative integration (Lauth 2003: 225).

v The interview information used in the chapter has been gathered by the author on field studies in Asia and Europe during the last seven years.

vi Definitions of NGOs vary. See, for instance, the definition offered by ASEAN: An NGO is a "nonprofit making association of ASEAN persons, natural or juridical, organized to promote, strengthen and help realize the aims and objectives of ASEAN cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural, scientific, medical and technological fields." Guidelines for ASEAN relations with Non-Governmental Organizations., Manila, 16-18 June 1986. <http://www.aseansec.org/8138.htm> (downloaded 2nd October 2003). The Economic and Social Council statute of the UN's definition of an acceptable NGO embodies six principles. An NGO should support the aims and the work of the UN, be a representative body, be a non-profit making body. NGOs can not use or advocate violence, they must respect the norm of 'non-interference in the internal affairs of a State', and finally: an international NGO is one that is not established by inter-governmental agreement. See http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/Resolution_1996_31/index.htm (downloaded 3rd October 2003). With respect to their function, Jürgen Rüländ emphasizes that "though NGOs are often a mirror picture of the political culture of a society, they make an important contribution for the pluralization of society" (Rüländ 1996:63).

vii Interview in April 1998, London.

viii Draft Version of the Chairman's Statement of the Second Asia-Europe Meeting, London, 3-4 April 1998.

ix Since then, a change in China's attitude towards the role of civil society has taken place. One early indicator of that important development is the 'Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights', which took place in Beijing in 1999 with participation of civil society actors from all of the ASEM countries, that is NGOs and - mostly - the academe. In September 2004, the 6th ASEM Informal Seminar on Human Rights took place for the second time in the PR China (in Suzhou).

- x The annual meetings of the Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF) enable high ranking business representatives of Asia and Europe to meet regularly and to build close contacts with the political level. The Forum has developed its own agenda, dealing with a wide range of issues, for example, infrastructure investment, trade facilitation and Small and Medium Enterprises. In 1998 and 2002, the Fora took place back-to-back with the ASEM Summits, which promoted the personal networking between private and government sectors. The European Commission describes the AEBF as follows: "Working together with the ASEM Economic Ministers, the private sector has pursued its own ASEM dialogue through the Asia-Europe Business Forum". See: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/asem/min_other_meeting/index_min.htm (downloaded 5th March 2002).
- xi Dublin Agreed Principles of the Asia-Europe Foundation, in *Asien*, No 64, July 1997, p. 190.
- xii Report of Workshop No. 2: NGOs: Networking and Cooperation between Asian and European Development NGOs and Social Movements, Connecting Civil Society, 18 June 2004, Casa Asia, Barcelona, Spain.
- xiii International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), ICFTU Asian and Pacific Regional Organisation (ICFTU-APRO), Creating a Social Partnership in ASEM: Trade Union Statement on the Agenda for the 5th Summit of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Hanoi 24 April 2004.
- xiv For an overview of the current programme see ASEF News, No. 212/03/2004 or www.asef.org.
- xv Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum, AEPF's Strategies & Structure & Emerging Questions, Internal background paper, October 2003.
- xvi See Charles Santiago, cited in Brid Brennan (ed.), *Linking Alternative Regionalisms For Equitable & Sustainable Development*, Transnational Institute Briefing Series No 2004/11, Amsterdam, 2004, p. 19-20. The AEPF dealt with four thematic clusters, including Peace and Security, Economic and Social Security, Democratization and People's Rights and the Peoples' Responses.
- xvii See Dot Keet, *Regional Programs in the South and New Peoples' Initiatives*, in Brid Brennan (ed.), *Linking Alternative Regionalisms For Equitable & Sustainable Development*, Transnational Institute Briefing Series No 2004/11, Amsterdam, 2004, pp. 7-13.
- xviii For the following see Felix Henkel et al., p. 4.
- xix Interview in October 2003.

xx Report of Workshop No. 2: NGOs Networking and Cooperation between Asian and European Development NGOs and Social Movements, Connecting Civil Society, 18 June 2004, Casa Asia, Barcelona, Spain.

xxi Bhanravee Tansubhapol, "Hanoi hijacks a meeting of the people", <http://thailabour.org/news/04091701.htm> (downloaded 6th December 2004).

xxii See Bulletin of the European Communities May 1999; Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy, Report on the Commission Working Document: Perspectives and Priorities for the ASEM Process (Asia Europe Meeting) into the new decade, (COM (200) 241) - C5-0505/2000 - 2000/2243 (COS)) Final: A5-0207/2001, 31 May 2001; PE 294.868; Rapporteur: Elmar Brok.

xxiii European Parliament Resolution on Burma/ASEM, PE 347.73719, 16 September 2004, paragraph 1.

xxiv European Parliament Resolution on Burma, 12 May 2005, paragraph 1, www2.europarl.eu.int, downloaded 16 June 2005.

xxv European Parliament Resolution on the third Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM 3) in Seoul, 20-21 October 2000, 4 October 2000, PE 296.99999, paragraph 2.

xxvi The Secretary General of the ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Organization (AIPO) and the Secretary General of ASEAN took part as well. See for the following: Declaration of the third Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting, Hue City, Viet Nam, 25-26 March 2004, www.asem5.gov.vn/ downloaded 4th May 2004.

xxvii Summary, Fifth Asia-Europe Young Parliamentarians' Meeting, Guilin, China 23-26 October 2003, p. 1.

xxviii For the complete list of the 71 recommendations see BR 2004. The recommendations have been differentiated into general and specific ones. The former recommend, inter alia, "dialogues between all stakeholders of Civil Society and the governments" and a "regular and direct dialogue between Civil Society representatives and the officials of ASEM". The latter recommendations range from the need to address the plight of trafficked women as a human rights issue to the establishment of a social dimension in the ASEM process and to the launch of an ASEM think tank network.

xxix Resource organizations are active in enhancing the role of civil society in both regions in order to foster greater cooperation.

xxx BR 2004, p. 6.

xxxi See ASEF News, MITA (P) No 212/03/2004, p. 8.

xxxii International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), ICFTU Asian and Pacific Regional Organisation (ICFTU-APRO), Creating a Social Partnership in ASEM: Trade Union Statement on the Agenda for the 5th Summit of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Hanoi 24 April 2004, p. 5.

xxxiii In May 2002, the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation organised a Consultative Forum on ASEM IV with the support of the European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS) and the European Commission.

xxxiv Interview in August 2004, Berlin.

xxxv Speech at the opening ceremony of the ASEM Employment Conference by Wang Dongjin, Chinese Vice Minister of Labour and Social Security, 1st June, 2004 Berlin, Germany.

xxxvi The co-sponsors of the German initiative are China, Spain and Ireland.

xxxvii See Axel Berkofsky, John Quigley & Willem van der Geest, Asia-Europe Consultative Seminar with Civil Society, Seminar Report, European Institute for Asian Studies, 2003.

xxxviii Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum, AEPF's Strategies & Structure & Emerging Questions, Internal background paper, October 2003.

xxxix International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), ICFTU Asian and Pacific Regional Organisation (ICFTU-APRO), Creating a Social Partnership in ASEM: Trade Union Statement on the Agenda for the 5th Summit of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Hanoi 24th April 2004, p. 5.

xl While Albert states "Government can't do it alone" Rocamora stressed that "we have no choice but to relate to governments". Observation of this author, 26th November 2004, Manila. The analysis underscores the findings of those theorists of international relations who do not call into question politics as practised by States. As the call for a social dimension and a 'Social Forum' within the ASEM process and for the integration of the Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum in the official ASEM process indicates, civil society actors "seek the entrance to State power" (Rittberger 2003: 201) in order to become part of the policy making processes. In that context, it can be said that - within the interregional setting of international relations - civil society actors work with the statist preconception of the liberal democratic model (see: Baker 2002: 129).

xli See for that line of argument: Volker Rittberger, Weltregieren: Herausforderungen, Probleme, Tendenzen, in Thomas Bruha & Carsten Nowak (eds.) Die Europäische Union nach Nizza: Wie Europa regiert werden soll, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2003, pp. 218-219.

xlii On the broadening from representative to participatory democracy and the role of civil society see: The Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations, p. 8.

xliii Rüländ notes that 14% of the signatories of the ASEM People's Vision of the second AEF in London in 1998 did not come from ASEM countries and that several smaller countries were overrepresented while countries like Germany and China were "represented very weak or not at all" (Rüländ 2001: 68).

xliv Observation of this author at the International Convention of Asia Scholars, 24 August 2005, Shanghai.

xlvi For these documents see www.asienhaus.org

xlvii Chairman's Statement of the 7th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Kyoto, 6-7 May 2005, paragraph 20.

P.S.

* Jürgen Rüländ/Gunter Schubert/Günther Schucher/Cornelia Storz (eds.), Asian-European Relations: Building Blocks for Global Governance? Routledge 2005, forthcoming.

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