



CONFERENCE REPORT

'BUILDING ASIA-EUROPE PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH EDUCATION'

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Introduction

Building Asia-Europe Partnerships through Higher Education was the main theme of the Conference that brought together 150 participants from Europe and Asia to assess Asia-Europe relations and set directions towards enhancing cooperation in the field of higher education.

The Launching of the Master in International and Diplomacy Studies (European Studies) programme, MIDS, by the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) preceding the Conference was used as the backdrop to the presentations and discussions that followed. The Conference was officially opened by the Honourable Minister of Higher Education of Malaysia, Dato' Dr. Hj. Shafie Hj. Mohd. Salleh.

In his Opening Address the Minister drew a parallel to the event of the tsunami that affected several countries in the region including Malaysia at the end of 2004, and commented that the lessons drawn from dealing with the catastrophe of that magnitude are similar to the building of sustainable relationships in any field. Efforts to confront future such phenomenon must begin with building awareness, cultivating understanding and nurturing a common future together. In the area of Higher Education, knowledge in this respect is an essential multiplier to achieve intra-disciplinary excellence, human competence and universal and holistic experience.

In the ensuing sessions, presentations were made in the following order: Session I- Asia-Europe Relations: An Assessment; Session II – External Relations of an Integrating Europe; Session III – ASEAN-EU Partnerships: Looking Ahead; Session IV – Linking Asia and Europe through Education; and Session V – Asia-Europe Studies – Experiences and Expectations (the Roundtable Discussion was made part of this Session).

Speakers from Europe included from partner organizations involved in the MIDS programme such as the College of Europe, Bruges, Belgium and Tübingen University, Tübingen, Germany. From Thailand two Professors from the Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok presented papers. The Conference also benefited from the participation of several Representatives of the Diplomatic Missions of the Member-States of the European Union and senior officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its training arm, the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR). The rest of the participants were made up of representatives of the local Universities, private sector, media and the NGOs.

In his speech at the Opening Day of the Conference, H.E. Dr. Thierry Rommel, Ambassador and Head of the European Commission Delegation Office in Malaysia informed the participants on the latest initiatives of the European Commission in promoting cooperation in higher education with Malaysia. He said since the establishment of the Office, a systematic strategy has been pursued with Malaysian Higher Education authorities to facilitate the sharing of experiences and mutual learning and thereby achieve creativity, progress and cultural diversity.

The Conference next took up the issues of the state of relations between Asia and Europe as well as the future of the ASEAN's relations with the European Union. While there was a wide agreement that much more has to be done to concretize the European Commission strategy of enhancing EU-Asia relations, there was also a realization that the basis of the

relations is now being challenged by several inter-regional and trans-regional issues such as the growing importance of Asia, the further integration of Europe, the spread of radicalism across the Muslim world, the availability of weapons of mass destruction, the debate on human rights throughout the globe and the interconnectivity spawned by the Internet. The conclusion reached at the end of the first three sessions was that the shared approaches in their political and economic relations should be able to assist the EU and Asia and ASEAN in charting a common future together. At the same time to fill in the 'knowledge gap' in the EU-Asia relations and particularly the EU-ASEAN aspect of the relations, the education and cultural links need to be strengthened.

In fact the second day of the Conference was devoted to a consideration of several factors that can contribute towards the building of a sustainable relationship between the EU and Asia in the field of higher education. Dr. Thierry Rommel referred to the success of the EU's 'Smart Investment' in education strategy that has helped raised the skills levels and raise the level of education of the beneficiaries. Dr. Charit Tingsabadh of Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, made a call for more dialogues and interactions among universities on both sides where issues of common concerns can be considered.

In terms of the development of European Studies in Asia, several participants provided useful pointers. These included an appreciation of the existence of a plurality of structures, belief systems, traditions and identities that can self-enrich the relations. The Conference also debated the question of whether a multidisciplinary approach is more preferred in this connection. Participants agreed that in the final analysis market demands should dictate the choice of the preference.

The Final Session that also incorporated the Roundtable Discussion was given to a lot of sharing of experiences and insights into what could be tried and improved to sustain the relation in education that has evolved between Asia and Europe and especially that the Universiti Sains Malaysia had just launched its new Masters programme with a focus on European Studies. Notable among the comments made were the following: identify and develop a core of academics and researchers trained in European Studies, exposure also for the alumni and business groups through exchanges of visits as well regional activities on Europe, acquisition of European languages and learning to deal with diversity.

In the closing words of the Chairman of the final Session, Tan Sri Dato' Dr R.V. Navaratnam, there is a need for European Studies in Malaysia as "it is a necessary dimension of dealing with globalization".

Welcoming Remarks and Opening Speeches Building Asia-Europe Partnerships Through Higher Education

In his welcoming remarks, Assoc. Prof. **Abdul Rahim Ibrahim**, Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Malaysia elaborated on the events leading to the establishment of the Master of International and Diplomacy Studies (MIDS), the current conference to assess Europe-Asia relations, and the curriculum workshop on the next day. These three events have led to the symbolic signing of the contract between the College of Europe and Universiti Sains Malaysia on the one hand, and the European Commission represented by the EC Delegation in Malaysia on the other.

The Dean explained that the establishment of the Centre of International Studies at the School of Social Sciences was an expression of a need to complement research in international affairs. And with the resurgence of Europe in international affairs, the MIDS programme was decided on as its academic component. Subsequent to a three-day curriculum workshop in July 2003, a mixed mode graduate programme that was formulated and approved by the School of Social Sciences and the Institute of Graduate Studies, which now awaits the approval of USM Senate. Through the Asia-Link Programme, partners in Europe are contributing to the European component of the programme. Indeed, the MIDS programme is the first of its kind in Malaysia. The programme consists of 2 core courses that capture the foundations in international relations, diplomacy, conflict resolution and international political economy, 5 courses on Europe and a research methodology course that will facilitate candidates to undertake a dissertation to complete the programme.

The second event is the conference to assess Europe-Asia relations. The Dean expressed his sincere appreciation to the paper presenters and chairpersons of all the sessions. He elaborated that the deliberations will guide the implementation of the programme.

The third event is a curriculum workshop on the next day for instructors involved in teaching the various courses and will draw on the expertise from College of Europe, Eberhard Karls Universität of Tübingen University and Chulalongkorn University and Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR). This is also part of the capacity building exercise under the Asia Link Programme. A special vote of thanks was extended to the Director General of Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations for hosting the workshop at IDFR. The Dean also expressed gratitude for the support of the Vice-Chancellor of USM. Indeed research and publications of the Centre of International Studies and the graduate programme of MIDS are some of the ways in which the School of Social Sciences is contributing to make USM a research university. He concluded that the financial support and constant nudging of the Vice-Chancellor has made the School of Social Sciences a challenging place to research, teach and manage.

In his welcoming remarks, Mr. **Charles Schmit**, Charge d' Affaires, Embassy of Luxembourg, Malaysia, and representing the EU Presidency, highlighted the increase in higher education co-operation between the EU and Asia. He elaborated on the role of cooperation in education and training as a powerful instrument in fostering mutual understanding, cross-cultural learning and strengthening relations between citizens of different countries.

Mr. Charles Schmit gave various examples of such initiatives. Among them is the effort through ASEM, which involve EU and Asian Heads of State and Government. Subsequent to its first meeting in 1996, ASEM established the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF) to strengthen inter-university networks and co-operation in higher education as well as intercultural learning and understanding among the student population. The conference on 'Universities of Tomorrow', to be co-organised by ASEF and the University of Luxembourg will be another similar effort.

Mr. Charles Schmit applauded the presence of the Honourable Minister of Higher Education as a testimony of the Malaysian Government's commitment for closer co-operation with European universities. The establishment of the European Studies programme was cited as an important step forward in reinforcing co-operation between the EU and Malaysia in the field of higher education. In conclusion he wished all present an enriching and successful conference as well as the success of the MIDS initiative.

In his speech, H.E. Dr. **Thierry Rommel**, Ambassador and Head of the European Commission Delegation, presented an overview of (1) EU-Malaysia higher education co-operation, (2) the reasons why the EU has prioritised higher education co-operation with Asia, and in particular with Malaysia, (3) key features of the MIDS as a new project of higher education co-operation, and (4) the latest initiative of the European Commission in support of EU-Malaysia Higher Education co-operation.

On EU-Malaysia higher education co-operation, H.E. Dr. Thierry Rommel explained that the process has been progressing along two parallel and complementary tracks. These consist of (a) bilateral agreements and memoranda of agreements between individual member states and Malaysian universities as well as (b) initiatives by the European Commission between higher education institutions of EU and Asia/ASEAN/Malaysia aimed at developing new curricula, enhancing human resources of higher education institutions, and/or their institutional development. In Malaysia, the EU funded projects have been increasing and involves Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and the Multimedia University. He noted the great enthusiasm from the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education as well. Since the opening of the EU Commission Delegation Office in Malaysia in April 2003 a systematic strategy has been pursued with Malaysian higher education institutions, including the organizing of one-off events. Of particular significance was the 1st ASEAN-EU Rectors' Conference, organised by the EU Commission Delegation and the Ministry of Higher Education at the University of Malaya (UM) in October 2004, which brought together more than 80 Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and University Presidents.

He highlighted three reasons for EU's emphasis on higher education co-operation. Firstly, it is believed that quality higher education will help to reduce marginalisation and poverty, hence stabilizing the middle-class and ultimately contributing to the enforcement of human rights, economic and social rights, and even towards the attainment of stability and peace. Higher education co-operation is also seen as a powerful tool in promoting mutual awareness, mutual understanding and mutual respect. The cross-fertilisation through sharing of experiences and mutual learning will enhance the development of creativity, progress and cultural diversity.

On the new Masters of International and Diplomacy Studies at the School of Social Sciences of Universiti Sains Malaysia, he explained that it is a three-year Asia Link project, co-financed by the European Commission with a grant of almost 300,000 euro. This degree will be developed through the partnership and cooperation with three other prestigious universities: the College of Europe in Bruges which is the oldest and most experienced institution specializing in European Studies, the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Germany, which has an extensive knowledge of EU related matters, and the Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, which established its Centre for European Studies in 1997 after the very successful completion of the European Studies Program supported by the EC from 1992 to 1999.

H.E. Dr. Thierry Rommel further elaborated on two of the latest initiative of the European Commission in support of EU-Malaysia higher education co-operation. The EU-funded Erasmus Mundus programme was launched in 2004 to support postgraduate studies at the Master's level. Currently two out of the 150 worldwide intake are Malaysians. The EC has also earmarked a Malaysia-specific window that will be launched by mid-2005, which will be implemented through the Erasmus Mundus mechanism. It is expected that around 60 Malaysian students will benefit from this scheme in the next 2 years.

H.E. Dr. Thierry Rommel concluded his keynote address by thanking the Honourable Minister of Higher Education for officially launching the conference. He also thanked the organizers, in particular USM and IDFR and all partners in the new project, and wished the European Studies Programme a successful implementation at USM.

Prof. Dr. **Paul Demaret**, Rector of the College of Europe commenced his speech by thanking USM for giving prominence to European Studies in its MIDS program. He also extended his thanks to the Ambassador of Malaysia to the EU, Associate Prof. Dr. Paul Lim who initiated the project, EC's financial support, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, Eberhard Karls Universität of Tübingen and Dr. Marc Vuijlsteke, the staff person from College of Europe who is directly responsible for this Asia Link Programme.

In his address, Prof. Dr. Paul Demaret presented (a) an overview of the College of Europe and explained why the College is involved in the MIDS project, and (b) the increasing prominence of EU as a growing entity.

The College of Europe was established in 1949, after the 2nd World War to bring students and teachers from different European countries to deal with European issues from a truly European perspective. The College is a true European microcosm as students and teachers come from all over Europe and are in residence for the entire academic year. It has 2 campuses: in Brugge (Belgium) and Natolin, (Poland) and supported by a network of 8000 alumni all over the world, including one in Kuala Lumpur. The Brugge campus offers 5 specialised European studies programmes while the programme at Natolin is interdisciplinary. Special academic or training programmes are also designed for specific audiences from different parts of the world.

Prof. Dr. Paul Demaret also stressed the increasing importance of the EU as a growing entity and as an international actor. He added that it would be useful to look at the European experience of regional integration for countries, which are members of regional groupings, like Malaysia, which is both a member of ASEAN and APEC. At the same time it would be important for Europe to be confronted with the views of non-European countries. It is for this

very reason that the College of Europe and its partners are enthusiastic at the prospect of co-operating on a long term basis with the Centre for International Studies and the School of Social Sciences. He concluded by wishing the new programme much success.

On behalf of USM, Vice-Chancellor Y.Bhg. Prof Dato' **Dzulkifli Abdul Razak** warmly welcomed everyone. In his speech, he elaborated on the internationalization of higher education, USM's aspiration for excellence, its role and contribution in charting new knowledge frontiers by creating a critical pool of highly qualified personnel complementing the Government's efforts to accelerate the development of human resource in Malaysia.

Y.Bhg. Prof Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak described the day's event as a milestone in the Ministry of Higher Education's aim to internationalise higher education in Malaysia. For USM (with the help of its esteemed partners in Europe and Thailand), it is also a stepping-stone to consolidate its position of excellence at the international level. He further elaborated on the importance of collaboration and mutual learning between universities and the private sector, citing the example of the MIDS endeavour as another learning experience in its partnership with the EU. In fact with the undertaking of MIDS (European Studies), USM will be the first university in Malaysia to offer a European Studies package at the postgraduate level. Like the Erasmus Mundus programme, the Vice-Chancellor asserted that these cross-border educational co-operation activities need to bring mutual development and mutual benefits. As a research intensive university, USM aspires not only to excel in producing expertise in specialised fields, but also bring out graduates with trans-disciplinary perspectives and in tune with the concerns of humanity.

The Vice-Chancellor reckoned that the Asia Link programme could be further developed into a regional programme. Noting the increasing importance of Europe, the Vice-Chancellor expressed that Asia Link programmes can represent a significant step in the building of sustainable relationships with regional, intra-regional organisations and countries around the world. Indeed the establishment of the Centre for International Studies (CIS) at USM will contribute towards this goal.

The Vice-Chancellor then extended a special welcome to representatives of partner organizations from Europe and Asia. He noted that their deliberations at the conference would help shape the future of CIS at USM as a premier centre of European Studies in this part of the world. Likewise, the participation of fellow academics from universities in Europe and Asia would enhance a fruitful exchange of experience and expertise.

The Vice-Chancellor then recorded his gratitude and appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IDFR for collaborating in the MIDS programme. Special thanks were extended to Y.Bhg. Dato' Dr. **Mohd Yusof Ahmad**, Director of IDFR, for his commitment and support. Appreciation and thanks were also accorded to Prof. Dr. Paul Demaret, Rector of College of Europe, H.E. Dr. Thierry Rommel, Head of EU Commission Delegation in Malaysia and the EU Presidency, and colleagues from CIS and the School of Social Sciences. Finally the Honourable Minister was acknowledged for giving USM time amidst his busy schedule.

The Minister of Higher Education, Y.B. Dato' Dr. Hj. **Shafie Hj. Mohd Salleh** officially declared the conference open after some remarks on the importance of higher education, sustainable collaboration between Europe and Asia and the potential role of the MIDS programme.

The Minister started his speech by making a comparative reference to the tsunami calamity in terms of its challenge to build something more durable and effective for the future when managing the complexity of such a disaster. Likewise higher education demands an equally committed outlook on building sustainable partnerships between all parties.

He affirmed the importance of the conference's theme as the Malaysian government has also put a high value on education as a vehicle to take the country to its next level of development. He further elaborated that our former and current Prime Minister in the ASEM Heads of State Summit has emphasized the importance of higher education cooperation between Europe and Asia in 1996 and in 2004 respectively. Since the first ASEM summit, an Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) has been established in University of Malaya, which conducts international masters program like the International Masters in Regional Integration for students from Asia and Europe. The Minister also noted that the preparation of the Ninth Malaysia Plan would take into consideration the EC's Country Strategy for Malaysia, which has identified Higher Education as a priority area for cooperation.

Apart from the 'Look East' Policy, the Minister expressed that Malaysia has also looked towards Europe. In recent years, Malaysia has been sending students to several European countries. He highlighted the great merit in including the private sector into this partnership, in both the tertiary and professional levels. Together with the Asia Link Programme, the Erasmus Mundus Programme was cited as an excellent example. Indeed the opening of the European Commission's Delegation Office in Kuala Lumpur would further increase these mutual benefits. The Master of International and Diplomacy Studies with European studies as its main concentration was referred to as an exemplary case of pooling resources from Europe (the College of Europe in Belgium and Eberhard Karls Universität of Tübingen in Germany) and Asia (Chulalongkorn University in Thailand) and with our own local institution, IDFR. As the first of its kind, the MIDS programme which involves countries from Europe and Asia will open new avenues of sharing common experiences and for engaging into cultural dialogues.

He pointed out that exposure of government institutions, civil servants, businesses and other organizations to development taking place in the EU is critical, given the increasing prominence of Europe as a single market in the global economy. With an integration of over 25 countries and 455 million people, the EU has accounted for 1/4 of the world's GDP and about 1/5 of the world's trade. The EU has also provided global grant aid totaling 55% of the combined development assistance extended to developing countries.

In conclusion, the Minister stressed that to achieve sustainable educational partnership three elements are essential, namely, building awareness, cultivating understanding and nurturing a common future together, with adequate multipliers in place to undertake the necessary follow-up activities. He also identified intra-disciplinary excellence, human competence, universal and holistic experience as the three critical criteria in the creation of new knowledge.

Session I

Asia-Europe Relations: An Assessment

This session was chaired by Y. Bhg. Dato' **Mohd Yusof Ahmad** (Director General of IDFR), and the speakers were Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Rudolf Steiert** (Institute of Political Science, Eberhard Karls Universität of Tübingen, Germany), Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Sutiphand Chirathivat** (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand), and H. E. **Daniel Mulhall** (Ambassador, Embassy of Ireland, Malaysia).

The session began with the Chair welcoming the speakers and all the participants to the session. He then introduced Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rudolf Steiert who was representing Dr. Rudolf Hrbek to the audience, and asked him to present his assessment on Asia – Europe relations.

Speaking on behalf of Prof. Dr. Rudolf Hrbek, Prof. Dr. **Rudolf Steiert** thanked the Chair and USM for the privilege of being invited to present a brief overview on EU – Asia relations within the framework of ASEM. Assoc. Prof. Steiert presented Prof. Hrbek's overview focusing on: (a) describing the establishment, and the development of EU–Asia relations over the decades; (b) identifying the policy fields which had been the centre of the relations; (c) looking at the institutions, communication patterns formed, activities undertaken, and the public and private actors involved; and, (d) examining the problems that had arisen in these relations, evaluating how they were being perceived, the perspectives for their future development as against the challenges to which responses must be formed. He noted that both Asia and Europe were aware of the need for common responses that would better meet the needs of the people, especially so given their interdependence in a globalizing world.

He then proceeded to give an account of the EU. It was noted that the EU was an entity made up of nation states. The EU was not a state itself, and would never assume this state of being. Nor would it replace the nation states which made it up. Yet, it was more than an international organization with limitations to its functional goals and tasks. The reason was that the EU was conceived as a political system with institutions and political rules with which collective decision-making could be made, and values could be allocated to all member states. Indeed since the Treaty of the European Economic Community in 1957, the functional scope of the EU has been extended considerably. Various treaty revisions and amendments has led to the EU being responsible for almost all policy fields such as development policy, environmental policy, regional and cohesion policy, and monetary policy among others. Now the EU had grown from its initial six member countries to twenty five countries. Member countries existed within the EU compound and all had agreed to uphold the principle of shared sovereignty.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Steiert then presented the current development in the EU – ASEAN relations. The relations could be traced back to ASEAN's initiative of setting up cooperative relations with the EEC. First, the Special Coordination Committee of ASEAN Nations (SCCAN) was formed to build up contacts with the Commission of the EEC. This was followed by the establishment of the ASEAN Brussels Committee (ABC) in 1972, followed by the ASEAN-EEC-Joint Study Group in 1975. All in all, the relations focused on economic cooperation activities, with the EEC not giving enough importance to the relations formed.

This attitude changed at the beginning of the 1990s because of several factors namely: (a) the emergence of new security needs following the end of the East-West Conflict; (b) the

economic development of the “Tiger Economies” in South-East Asia; and (c) the utilization of the APEC forum by the USA as a platform to enhance its cooperation with the countries in the Asia-Pacific area. Hence, the 1994 ASEAN/EU Ministerial Meeting in Germany, led to the European Commission formulating a document on a new strategy towards Asia. The threefold strategy focused on political, economic and cultural aspects. First, politically a common foreign and security policy vis-à-vis Asia was adopted, with objectives such as supporting regional and sub-regional cooperation, protection of human rights and the consolidation of democracy as well as the control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Second, economically the EU would attempt to strengthen its economic presence in Asia by supporting economic development, assisting the transformation towards market economy, reducing trade barriers and preparing the developing Asian markets for foreign investments. Third, communication and exchange would be intensified, focusing on vocational training, university education and knowledge transfer.

The first Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), was a summit conference attended by the Heads of EU and ASEAN governments, as well as the Heads of the Governments of China, Japan and South Korea. Under ASEM it was a cooperation between equal partners whereby members could have informal discussions on economic cooperation and political matters (including security issues, e.g., terrorism). The cooperation was also carried out at three different levels, namely: (a) meetings of senior civil servants to monitor the progress of cooperation relations; (b) parliamentarians from both the European Parliament and their ASEAN/North East Asian counterparts discussing issues on the development of democracy, protection of human rights and environmental concerns; and (c) Ministerial level meetings whereby Foreign Ministers would meet every two years, with the participation of a member of the European Commission.

On behalf of Prof. Dr. Hrbek, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Steiert elaborated that since 1996, the nature of EU-Asia relations had been relatively ambiguous. The cooperation agreement now included Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, whereby economic and development cooperation became the focus. However the EU was also interested in political and security issues, including good governance, environmental development, poverty eradication, and maintaining internal peace and order. Major difficulties with regard to political dialogues on the issue of human rights in Myanmar/Burma had led to the EU imposing sanctions on this country. ASEAN countries however did not agree on the policy of isolation adopted by the EU and had adopted the constructive engagement strategy to deal with the issue.

The second ASEM meeting was held in April 1998 against the background of the South East Asian financial crisis. This led to the establishment of the “ASEM Trust Fund” which could be used for technical and advisory support to reshape the financial sector and tackle poverty. This measure was alongside the Trade Facilitations Action Plan (TFAP) which reduce or remove completely non-tariff barriers, promoting and facilitating goods and services, as well as cooperating in the scientific-technological area. The formation of the ASEM Business Forum served as a network for people in business to realize projects and activities together. The ASEM was established with the objective of enhancing communication across cultures, involving the younger generation.

In October 2000, the third ASEM meeting was conducted in Seoul, focusing on the continuation and strengthening of political dialogue, intensifying economic and financial cooperation, and increasing cooperation in cultural and social affairs. New initiatives introduced included issues on human resources development, environmental and health, as

well as questions on transnational jurisdiction. The EU also gave a high priority on security issues such as international terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal migration, armaments control and weapons of mass destruction, during the meeting. NGOs were also included, and their views were sought on dealing with soft security problems.

In September 2001, the European Commission submitted a paper on proposals for further enhancing EU – Asia relations. The strategy focused on intensifying trade and investments, poverty eradication, democracy, human rights and good governance with specific countries being targeted for special attention. The ASEM meeting in Copenhagen in September 2002 focused on the WTO process as well as the European perspective on this matter. In 2003, the European Commission submitted a paper which responded to the concerns of ASEAN countries regarding China's dominance in EU's policy on Asia. A reiteration was made on issues of human rights, democracy and good governance, judicial cooperation, new incentives for trade and investment, more support for less wealthy countries, and increasing dialogue and cooperation in a few selected policy fields. The EU also paid more attention to Indonesia especially after the 2002 terrorists' activities there. During an ASEM meeting, it was stressed that terrorism should not be linked to specific racial, religious or ethnic groups, and instead dialogues between cultures should be promoted so as to improve understanding between them. In May 2004, existing bilateral programmes were supplemented by multi-country programmes which concentrated on higher education, environment, and trade and investment. However the Myanmar/Burma issue remained a controversial issue whereby its participation in ASEM V in Hanoi in October 2004 was agreed to by EU governments against the wishes of the European Parliament. This did not affect the sanctions imposed against Myanmar/Burma by the EU Council. During ASEM V, further commitments were made with regard to economic cooperation, ICT, energy, transportation, intellectual property and tourism. Participants were satisfied with anti-terrorism activities already undertaken. Moreover they felt that the United Nations could play key roles in these areas using a multilateral approach. In addition, more emphasis should also be paid to dialogue between religions.

Associate Prof. Dr. Steiert concluded by stating that the EU – Asia relations had developed from modest beginnings to form a more stable pattern with ASEM being the key framework and forum based on the principle of equality between all participants. This framework concentrated on the economic, political and cultural elements and dimensions, with security issues being linked to the above three. It could be argued that the ASEM process would continue in the future as it had allowed each participant to voice out its interests and concerns. The informality of the interaction style would remain although more stable structures would emerge later on. It was believed that membership of ASEM would increase on both sides with Parliaments, civil society actors and NGOs playing more active roles. The participants would then face the challenge of continuing the ASEM process as the appropriate model and structure for interregional relations.

Assoc. Professor Dr. **Sutiphand Chirathivat** of Chulalongkorn University was then asked by the Chair to present his assessment of Asia-Europe relations. He began his presentation by contextualizing Asia-Europe relations in a world that was more interdependent and less autonomous. This was because of globalization whereby most of the benefits achieved had been unevenly distributed although the increase in per capita income had gone up by 750%. Indeed he argued that the benefits had been restricted to the more developed regions of the world. It was noted that whilst most growth occurred in Asia, economic dynamism was focused on China, India and the ASEAN countries. He then touched on the negative aspects

of globalization, namely: (a) the widening gap between the rich and the poor; (b) the spread of infectious diseases such as AIDS, SARS and Avian Flu; (c) environmental degradation on a serious scale; and (d) climatic changes that were detrimental to the health of the population.

The above factors had led to the emergence of threats and new challenges whereby unprecedented flux and uncertainty could be perceived. Moreover there were also issues of cross border security and terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as well as increases in transnational crimes. The impact on institutions had been the growing connectivity and proliferation of virtual communities, the need for the United Nations to adapt so as not to be marginalized, the challenges posed to Bretton Woods institutions, the erosion of US supremacy, and political Islam rallying disparate ethnic and national groups.

Associate Professor Suthiphand Chirathivat then presented his current assessment on Asia – Europe relations. He believed that both parties recognized globalization as the order of the day. Hence they supported global multilateral system which addressed common concerns through a multilateral approach and collective actions. Therefore initiatives on peace, counter-terrorism, AIDS and environmental issues were welcomed. He then focused his attention on the security aspect in Asia and the concerns of the world. First the increasing assertiveness and confidence of China had had an impact on the China-Taiwan conflict and the role played by the US. One should also take into consideration the China-Japan tensions and their inability to get along. Moreover attention should also be paid to the North Korean and Iranian nuclear proliferation as well as the US invasion and presence in Iraq. Closer to home, the issue of Burma/Myanmar's record on democracy was also a cause for concern.

He then examined Asia – Europe economic links whereby he believed that Asian regionalization had led to more openness than Europe in the 1960s. Indeed the links were more significant for both regions as the growth of Asia meant that European presence was needed in foreign direct investment, finance, technology, human resource development, etc. Both parties could learn from the experiences of each other. The integration trends noted were the fact that the EU had grown to 25 countries. In Asia, the trend had been for the competition between regionalism and bilateralism. Hence the challenge was to preserve diversity without hindering social and economic progress whilst addressing common interests and concerns.

Opportunities and challenges pertaining to Asia-Europe relations were attributed to several factors. First, he believed that Asia and Europe mattered to each other and the world. This was because the world needed other voices, and hence both had more roles to play in global affairs. Both parties could help by finding ways with which problems could be solved and common goods and collective actions could be fine-tuned to serve each other's interests better. It was seen that ASEM could be a meaningful vehicle for inter-regional relations whereby it could strengthen the Asia-Europe link with the world system. Moreover it could contribute to the prosperity and stability of the regions concerned, as well promoting, recognizing and building upon people-to-people exchange and understanding. Indeed the ASEM process and achievements had resulted in deepening the political dialogue between both parties, bringing closer economic ties, expanding and strengthening cooperation in fields such as education, culture, exchange of ideas and knowledge as illustrated by the development after ASEM I to ASEM V. One could also note the existence of micro and macro networking linkages that had emerged out of the relations. It was also argued that ASEM faced challenges from inter-regionalism to trans-regionalism in the forms of the growing importance of Asia and the further integration of Europe. In addition the Pax

Americana had also been questioned. Another concern was the spread of radicalism across the Muslim world and the availability of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists. This was compounded by the debate about human rights on a global scale, as well as the growing connectivity of people through the Internet. Indeed ASEM would be a success if it could handle the above successfully.

The Chair then called upon the third speaker H.E. **Daniel Mulhall**, Ambassador, Embassy of Ireland, Malaysia to begin his presentation. Ambassador Mulhall began by congratulating the IDFR and USM for embarking on the venture in collaboration with the College of Europe and the Eberhard Karls Universität of Tübingen. He then presented his assessment of the Asia-Europe relations from the Irish perspective. He believed that Ireland had greatly benefited from the EU integration as evident by the transformation of its economy. Moreover it had also been involved in EU – ASEAN and ASEM relations for more than three decades.

The Ambassador then traced the history and outlined the prospects of Asia – EU relations. He saw the EU as “a remarkable venture in transcending our Continent’s past problems and creating a common destiny under the powerful maxim of ‘unity in diversity’”. He saw the new European Union as having gone through an ambitious phase through the extension of its activities and membership. The past decade saw the emergence of a Single European Market, the Euro as a common currency, the admission of 10 new member states, and the drafting of a new constitution if ratified would enable the EU to play a more active and consistent global role suiting its economic standing.

Ambassador Mulhall noted that in Asia, things had also been interesting. Its economic vitality as exemplified by China and India, had made these as well as other Asian countries attractive to Europeans, and global challenges meant that political dialogue must be undertaken by both parties. Indeed he believed that Europe-Asia relations were driven by economic considerations whereby the fact that both made up 46% of the world economy and 43% of world trade made it imperative that an environment conducive to advance the interests of both parties be maintained. Moreover Asia imported 21% of EU’s exports and EU imports from Asia amounted to 31% of its total imports. The EU’s external investment in Asia was about 10%, and it had given almost half of its overseas assistance to the region. Continuing relations were also attributed to the fact that ASEAN was viewed as a region with dynamic economic growth, and the EU was ASEAN number three trading partner, and the second export market for ASEAN goods and services after the US.

Ambassador Mulhall explained that EU – Asia political links would be maintained by the people, businesses, NGOs, academic communities to their benefit, and it was up to the political leaders to support these activities. Indeed constructive political ties had been formed between EU and ASEAN, as well as between EU and the individual Asian countries. EU’s dialogue with ASEAN could be traced back to the early 1970s. It was felt that the relationship had not been optimized because of EU’s preoccupations with international and domestic responsibilities and demands. However the appointment of an EU Foreign Minister would ensure that coherence and comprehensiveness in the conduct of its external relations which could be extended to Asia. He believed that 2004 had been a good year for EU – Asian relations because despite the predictions of the collapse of ASEM V in Hanoi, the worst did not happen, and Myanmar/Burma was accepted as a member. Its membership should not be construed as an acceptance of the unacceptable political situation in Rangoon by other ASEM members as the principles of democracy and human rights were held dearly by the EU members.

Ambassador Mulhall viewed the ASEM process in a favorable light as it afforded opportunities for meaningful encounters between the two parties. Its comprehensiveness had enabled a wide range of issues to be discussed such as the need to revive multilateralism in international relations, terrorism, etc. The Tsunami itself highlighted how close the contact between the people of Asia and Europe had become. Through enhanced knowledge and education, whether through tourism or formal education, potentials for greater understanding between different cultures existed. The level of EU's support for the victims amounted to Euro 2.58 billion, with another Euro 1 billion being committed from the European Investment Bank for reconstruction purposes.

Ambassador Mulhall concluded by saying that EU – Asia relations had a set of shared approaches to the main political and economic issues, and that the relations should keep both parties from drifting apart. He was optimistic about future relations based on common economic interests be it between EU and ASEAN or another entity.

Questions and Answers session

Dato' **Sallehuddin** of the IDFR asked three questions, namely: (a) the realization of globalization, commonality and interdependence on the relations with Myanmar; (b) Brussels's actions with regard to Myanmar; and (c) perceptions of Europeans visiting Myanmar.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Paul Lim** clarified that EU's sanctions on Burma/Myanmar were not the same as the US sanctions. Indeed, EU's relations with Asia had been overestimated when compared to the rest of the world, whereby EU's emphasis had been first on the near then abroad, followed by the US, Africa and finally Asia.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Ooi Keat Gin** (USM) asked about Asian studies in Europe. This question was not addressed by the panel.

Instead the panel responded further to the previous questions posed. First Ambassador Mulhall answered that with regard to Burma/Myanmar, EU's emphasis had always been on a politically active civil society and parliamentarians had been criticizing practices that did not adhere to the principles of democracy and human rights. The Constitution would guide the EU and this could give rise to further difficulties in the future. However concessions could be made so as to ensure ASEM's continued presence in the future.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Steiert responded by saying that it was a positive development that ASEM did go on despite the difficulties on Burma/Myanmar. Despite the EU's and ASEM's structures, the dialogues did continue and foreign relations between individual countries had gone on further than before.

Associate Professor Dr. Suthiphand Chirativat believed that each Asian country was capable in managing issues such as the environmental etc.

In closing the Chair summarized by saying that there existed tremendous amount of potential in Asia – Europe relations. Indeed encouraging trends could be observed on both sides. Whilst there were problems, e.g., Myanmar/Burma, to be sorted out, this did not in any way

lessen the future prospects. Both regions still had a long way to go despite the existence of the available institutions. ASEM was seen as a good sign as it facilitated the dialogue process, especially given the globalization and interconnectivity of people at present.

Session II

External relations of an Integrating Europe

Mr. **Roland Grafe**, Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Malaysia, pointed out that for more than 15 years European relations have been limited to information sharing. As the nature of international relations changed by mid 1980s, European relations reach a certain culmination and moved beyond merely networking or exchanging information.

Prof. Dr. Dieter Mahncke, Director of the Department of Political and Administrative Studies and Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Professor for European Foreign Policy and Security Studies at the College of Europe, acknowledged Grafe's point. Although Europe took a long time to create convergence, Prof. Dr. Mahncke elaborated that the EU has become a significant and important international actor. Not only has it played an influential role in the economic sector, the EU also played major roles in the political and military sectors. The EU is one of the world's major trading partners, a vital financial player, and the biggest donor of development aid.

Nevertheless, Prof. Dr. Mahncke warned that to protect European values and interests on the global scale and to fulfill the responsibilities in the era of complex international relations, the EU must not act as individual actors, but as a single actor. He added, in acquiring unity, the EU needed a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Since the EU is a union of states and the issue of CFSP touches upon national sovereignty, an agreement between the 25 states on CFSP is not an easy task to achieve.

Realizing this difficulty, Mahncke discussed two determining factors in the development of "ever increasing coherence" in CFSP. First, the EU seeks ways, means and procedures to make finding a common stance among all or majority of the states easier. Second, the EU has dialogue sessions between integrationists (those who favour CFSP) and inter-governmentalists (those who favour CFSP only when there is an agreement among all the member states).

When there is a consensus in the form of an agreement, the EU achieves more convergence through cooperation and consultation, attains better procedures in decision-making, and improves its capabilities. A decisive push to develop CFSP is seen after the end of the Cold War in the Maastricht Treaty (1992), and later on in the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) and the Treaty of Nice (2000). Basically, these treaties portray ways of facilitating decisions and the European Council can make a decision unanimously with some exceptions to the Council of Ministers in its General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) configuration. The European Council provides the guidelines whereas the GAERC provides the common positions and actions.

Prof. Dr. Mahncke argued that the diplomatic and economic measures may not necessarily suffice to increase the EU capability. He used Bosnia/Kosovo conflict to illustrate this point. Should the United States refuse to act in the Balkan conflict, the EU must take an action on its own. And if China can be independent of the United States, so can the EU. In 2003, the decision to increase the capability of the EU was finally made. The EU decided to set up 12 "battle groups" consisting 15000 soldiers put together by the European countries. However,

he alerted that this capability was not a defense capability. Instead, it is a capability to preserve what the EU has at present, i.e. maintaining status quo.

Prof. Dr. Mahncke stated that there are two reasons as to why it is worth looking at the Constitutional Treaty. First, the Constitutional Treaty will be ratified and second, the Constitutional Treaty is an indicator as to how far Europeans are willing to go with regard to security. “The framers of the Constitutional Treaty have made an effort to extend the possibilities for improving the decision-making process, the bases for growing convergence and the improvement of capabilities.” He further listed six main points that connect the Constitutional Treaty with foreign and security policy.

- Declaration of objectives
This advances the development of enlargement, the issues of human rights or environment, the partnership with other countries, and the promotion of multilateral solutions in overcoming international problems.
- Reiteration of obligations
In order to work together, member states have to inform or consult each other before taking an action, refrain from an action against the Union, and practise solidarity.
- Inclusion of ESDP
European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) is to be “an integral part of CFSP”.
- Extension of the Petersburg tasks
The extension of the Petersburg tasks includes humanitarian, peacekeeping, crisis management, disarmament, and combating terrorism.
- Decision-making
Decision-making remains the same whereby member states can abstain from making a decision via “constructive abstention”, object to a certain decision, and apply veto power in protecting their national interests. However, if the European Council has made a decision, the Council can decide the guidelines.
- Declaration to improve military capabilities
The development of the European Defence Agency (EDA) assists cooperation, production and procurement for others to come and work together in improving military capabilities.

In addition to these six points, Prof. Dr. Mahncke stressed that perhaps the two most important changes that link the Constitutional Treaty to foreign relations would be the Union’s Foreign Affairs Minister and the creation of the possibility for smaller groups of states to act in the name of the EU. Union’s Foreign Affairs Minister combines the functions of the current High Representatives for CFSP and the Commissioner for External Affairs.

Prof. Dr. Mahncke explained that besides aiding in proposal making and coordinating the policy of the member states, the Foreign Minister would represent the Union to the outside world in foreign and security questions. The Foreign Minister can speak for the Union in the United Nations Security Council if a common position is arrived at, leads the EU External Action Service, and coordinates policies of the member states in international organisations.

Although the Foreign Minister would cover a wide array of functions, these functions do not replace national foreign policy of the member states. Instead, Prof. Dr. Mahncke believed that they can lead to more coherence and a Common Foreign and Security Policy, hence creating the EU “single voice”.

Despite all efforts, it may still be difficult to achieve these ideals, as some doubts would be raised by the “realists”. Prof. Dr. Mahncke proposed two remedies: ad hoc group and permanent structured cooperation. The GAERC may ask a group of states to perform a specific task (ad hoc group) or a more structured group (permanent structured cooperation/will) in setting up security cooperation. He claimed that such procedures bring an advantage for a group of states to act in the framework and in the name of the EU.

Even though the aim of having a CSFP has not yet been achieved by the EU, he concluded that significant efforts have been made to enhance coherence and encourage solidarity, to improve decision-making procedures, to enhance flexibility, and to improve capabilities. The EU hesitation and simultaneously, determination, in a way capture the gist of European integration.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Grafe expressed appreciation towards Prof. Dr. Mahncke for touching upon all relevant aspects of the EU foreign relations. He agreed with Prof. Dr. Mahncke that at this stage there was a strong popular support in Europe to get solidarity for the Constitutional Treaty.

As a second speaker of Session II, **Dato’ Salman Ahmad**, Under-Secretary Strategic Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, continued to discuss the external dimension of an integrating Europe. He claimed that there are three major developments of the EU that Asia is keen to observe. First, the development process of “widening” and “deepening” of the EU. Second, the powerful appeal that the EU has in attracting many countries to join the Union. Third, the EU stands in practising and promoting “soft power” instead of “hard power”.

Although the EU brought peace, security and prosperity to Europe, one must not hasten in making the EU success story as a model for others to follow. Given different cultural backgrounds, histories, and dynamics of other regions and groupings, Dato’ Salman Ahmad asserted that it is rather inconceivable for others to become “carbon copies” of the EU model. However, other regional groupings should remain inspired by the EU integration efforts and mechanisms.

The EU-US relation has been the main focus of the EU external relations. Even if Asia is said to be having relations with the EU, the external relations were highly concentrated on strategic partners, namely China, Japan and India. Since the EU is the largest single market, the rule-setter in international trade, and the trend-setter in global issues, the EU makes a significant impact on international relations and appears to emerge as a “counter-weight” to the US hegemony. In order to effectively penetrate the EU market and engaging with the EU, Dato’ Salman Ahmad urged that Asia needs to build a pool of resourceful people who have in-depth knowledge of the EU institutions, treaties, and integration process.

The most vital component of the Asia-EU relation undoubtedly is trade. Nonetheless, Dato’ Salman believed that there is an overwhelming need to strengthen educational and cultural pillars between these two continents. He asserted that it is in the interest of Asia to have

Asian academics more 'Europe literate' and for the Europeans to be more 'Asian literate'. Indeed, he claimed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia looks forward to USM establishing both European studies programme and Asian studies programme. He added, "Once these programmes are well established, USM can aspire to transform itself into a regional hub for teaching, researching and training of both European and Asian Studies, or rather of Eurasian Studies – in Southeast Asia."

In conclusion, Dato' Salman emphasised that Asia must overcome the 'knowledge gap' between these two continents so that it will not engage the interdependent world with a superficial idea of Europe, particularly when the EU is the world's crucial trading partner.

Questions and Answers session

During the question and answer session, Associate Professor Dr. **Paul Lim**, the Co-ordinator of the MIDS (European studies) programme, poses these questions: Why are the panelists confident that the Constitutional Treaty will be ratified? How does the new Foreign Minister combines his roles as the Vice-President of European Commission and Member of European Council? Do the three pillars in the Maastricht Treaty still exist in the Constitutional Treaty?

Prof. Dr. Mahncke responded to the first question by stating that he has 60-70% confidence that the Constitutional Treaty will be ratified. Furthermore, the ratification will depend heavily on the referendum. While Prof. Dr. Mahncke anticipated that a major crisis will erupt if it is not accepted, Mr. Grafe on the other hand commented that from the practical standpoint, it would remain difficult to attain a consensus among the member states. But, the Europeans eventually will come to terms just like in the Myanmar/Burma issue. On Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paul Lim's second question, Prof. Dr. Mahncke stressed that when there is an uncertainty, there should be efforts to separate these roles.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paul Lim raised another question: Will the EU negotiate with the UN as an individual country or as a bloc? Prof. Dr. Mahncke answered that the EU can negotiate with the UN as a union when there is an agreement by the member states and the Constitutional Treaty did foresee this matter. Mr. Grafe elaborated that the outside world needs to realise that the EU does not operate on a presidential system whereby decisions can be discharged in the hand of the President.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paul Lim further asked, "ASEAN will not be a carbon copy of the EU. But one of the ways to move forward was to emulate certain things. What can we learn from the European model?" Prof. Dr. Mahncke answered that the EU does not ask the world to follow it as a model. "But there are personal, business, and students interactions in the beginning of everything else."

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paul Lim posed his final question by stating that the EU Parliament did not have any say in foreign policy. Therefore, the members of the EU should grant the EU Parliament the power in foreign policy. Dr. Mahncke thought that Dr. Paul Lim's reaction about the dual foreign policy debate is an interesting thing to ponder and discuss further.

Session III

ASEAN-EU Partnership: Looking Ahead

Assoc. Professor **Azhari Karim** chaired this session. He was formerly the Ambassador to Spain and he is now attached to the Centre for International Studies, School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

Mr. **Ilango Karuppannan**, the first speaker of this session is from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia. He is the Principal Assistant Secretary (Policy Planning) in the Ministry. He started out his speech by congratulating USM for launching its new Master's Degree Programme in International and Diplomacy Studies (MIDS).

EU was one of ASEAN's oldest dialogue partners. Dialogue between these two regions started in 1972, eight years before the formal signing of the ASEAN-EU Cooperation Agreement in 1980. The main components of the agreement are political dialogue, trade and investment, and development cooperation.

The cooperation between these two blocs started out well in 1970s and strengthened in 1980s. However, in mid 1990s, the relation seemed to stalemate. From the side of EU, it was preoccupied with the enlargement of EU after the Cold War and the war in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia. The dialogue process began to stale when EU began to insist on a "relationship between equal" instead of "donor-recipient".

However, this was brought to the attention of the European Parliament and member states were urged to abandon their "minimalist" approach toward ASEAN-EU relations. This led to the establishment of the European Commission Delegation Offices in a number of ASEAN capitals including Kuala Lumpur. According to Illango, "Wisma Putra views the EC Delegations Office as a catalyst and a focal point for networking to foster Malaysian and EU interest groups to provide a wide range of activities aimed at promoting understanding between institutions, cultures and, ultimately, the peoples of both regions".

Academia's involvement in the ASEAN-EU relation was crucial because the country needed a pool of experts in this area to provide ideas and commentaries on Europe. The cooperation in education and training allowed the ASEAN academic community and private sector to be aware of the current developments in Europe. He affirmed that "this is why Wisma Putra welcomes the project of MIDS being offered at USM as both timely and one that is long overdue".

On the future of the ASEAN-EU partnership, he stressed that "ASEAN should be high on EU's list of priorities". In the recent signing of the Declaration of Bali Concord II in 2003, ASEAN has intensified its attention on community building. The ASEAN Community would be supported by the three pillars – the ASEAN Security Community (ASC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). Furthermore, the ASEAN + 3 (China, Japan and Korea) process has also quicken the path to community building in East Asia.

He pointed out three areas where ASEAN and EU could strengthen their cooperation. First, is the trade and investment where both regions could cooperate to promote a freer flow of

goods, services and investments. The second is the political and security cooperation. These two regions can broaden their cooperation in the fight against terrorism, illegal migration, trafficking of illegal drugs, money laundering, piracy and other transnational crimes. Lastly, the financial and monetary cooperation with a larger East Asia community, as East Asia is becoming more interdependent and integrated.

The second presenter was Dr. **Chua Soo Yean**, lecturer from School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia. He told the participants that the fruits of the ASEAN-EU relationships since the first dialogue in 1972, emerged largely in the areas of trade and foreign investment. Currently EU is the most important contributor of foreign direct investment (FDI) to ASEAN and its third most important trading partner.

Despite the importance of this relations as we could see today, ASEAN-EU dialogue has not demonstrated the dynamism consistent with its long history. He pointed out several factors that contributed, either singly or cumulatively to this state of affairs. First, the unique nature of ASEAN and EU in the early part of the dialogue – ASEAN was a heterogeneous and informal grouping of nations and the EU is neither a state nor a government – this made the conduct of dialogue difficult. Second, both ASEAN and EU have been expanding and this kept them involved in their respective challenges. Third, the dialogue was dampened by the conflicting views on Myanmar, when the EU insisted on linking human rights clauses with the EU-ASEAN dialogues. Fourth, the formation of Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in 1996 has downgraded direct ASEAN-EU dialogue and finally, member states in EU have not viewed Asia as a strategic partner.

He proceeded by giving a brief assessment of the ASEAN-EU partnerships. The most visible areas in this long-standing relationship between ASEAN and EU have been in the area of trade and investment.

The EU is ASEAN's third most important trading partners, after the US and Japan. He noted that in recent years exports to EU from Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have declined, and this was mainly due to the emergence of China as a new export destination. However, the percentage of imports and exports from EU to ASEAN were only a small percentage of EU total trade.

The EU has emerged as the most important source of FDI for ASEAN whereas ASEAN investments in EU are largely insignificant. The main destinations for EU FDI in ASEAN are Singapore and Malaysia while the ASEAN outflow of FDI to EU is mainly to the newly acceding countries.

In security issues cooperation took a longer time to emerge. Apart from Britain, France and Netherlands, Europe did not have any direct security interest in ASEAN region. EU has attempted to include non-traditional security issues such as human rights and environmental issues in its dialogue, which has been a major stumbling block in the dialogue. However, recent events in terrorism have brought the EU and ASEAN closer to a common ground.

The future ASEAN-EU partnerships must include both the economic and non-economic spheres. Six priorities areas were identified – partnerships in trade, FDI, security, dialogue, education and potential new markets.

The recent developments in ASEM have fostered closer economic cooperation between the two regions. Steps have been taken to promote trade flows and oversee the reduction of trade barriers. The Trade Facilitation Action Plan (TFAP) was introduced to reduce the non-tariff barriers among countries.

There is scope for expansion in investment relations. EU can invest in ASEAN's future oriented industries such as ICT, and science and technology applications while ASEAN countries can invest in the newer member states of EU.

The main challenge in the partnership in security is to forge a framework that can give form and force to the common stand against terrorism and other transnational crimes. In the political dialogue, the EU assured that ASEAN-EU dialogue was still relevant in region specific issues and will consider ASEM as a forum for dealing with global issues.

The next area of possible ASEAN-EU partnerships is the cooperation in basic education to reduce poverty. This included cooperation in area of scientific development, and greater understanding and appreciation between Asia and Europe through cultural and intellectual exchange. Finally, potential of ASEAN-EU cooperation in exploiting the untapped potential of new markets in China and India.

He concluded that China, India and the larger ASEAN were equally relevant to EU not only in trade and investment but also the balance of power in the global scene. ASEAN needed a strong and interested EU just as much as the EU had something to gain from its relationships with ASEAN.

The third speaker was H.E. **German Bejarano**, Ambassador of Spain to Malaysia. He started his speech by noting that EU's partnership with South East Asia is a long established one. The interactions between these two regions have been strong in terms of trade and investments. He also acknowledged that this link should also be "reinvigorated". A number of projects have been undertaken to strengthen these relations and this included – trade facilitation (standardizations, quality control and conformity assessment, intellectual and property rights), energy, environment, capacity building and higher education.

H.E. Bejarano mentioned that the EU desires to maintain a broader relationship between ASEAN and other East Asia countries. The European Council had identified six strategic priorities, which were endorsed by the European Parliament to be implemented by the EU.

- Supporting regional stability and the fight against terrorism
- Promoting human rights, democratic principles and good governance through its policy dialogue and development cooperation.
- Poverty reduction, improving basic health and education services as main priorities for development assistance.
- Improving internally on areas of freedom, justice and security.
- More political priorities, and the reinforcement of economic ties between ASEAN and EU and
- Intensifying cooperation in science and technology, environment, transport, energy and information.

He urged ASEAN to participate in open dialogue on the common global issues and to share experience.

In the recent New Partnership programmes, the EU had identified more than 25 areas of policy for possible dialogue and cooperation. A few of these programmes are quite successful and this include regional integration support, which provided training, institutional capacity building, conduct studies and publication of policy papers. The outcome of this programme is the dialogue on Trans-Regional EU-ASEAN Trade Initiative. This initiative allows issues such as industrial standards, custom, trade and environment, investment, competition, electrical commerce, services, sanitary and phyto-sannitary to be added into its agenda.

The second programme is the gathering and disseminating of reliable regional data on ASEAN countries. This data is needed for policy evaluation and implementation. The other important programme under the New Partnership is the cooperation in the fight against terrorism. In this regard the EU will assist countries in the Asia region in implementing the relevant UN Convention and Security Resolutions.

Finally, an information and communication awareness programme has been launched, which stresses the importance of ASEAN and EU partnership as a key economic force in the East Asia region.

He concluded his speech by noting that there are still many more areas of partnership that both ASEAN and EU can explore such as environment, energy and higher education. He stressed “consistency in improving and deepening relations with key partners is a priority for the Union”.

Questions and Answers session

Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Paul Lim** from the Centre for International Studies, School of Social Sciences, USM, posed question to what extent the vision of ASEAN has been successful? He said, in reality ASEAN is competing economically with each other and between ASEAN and EU.

Much was said about learning from the European experience on economic integration, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paul Lim raised the issue of the ASEAN Programme for Regional Integration Support (APRIS) project that discusses ASEAN integration and questioned how much has ASEAN gained from the project? How do member states of ASEAN react to the proposal of an integrated ASEAN? Some countries may want to go slow while others want to go fast. According to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paul Lim, the degree of integration depends on how member states want to move. He raises the issues of national sovereignty and the internal dynamics of ASEAN.

Dr. **Charit Tingsabadh** from the Centre for European Studies (CES), Chulalongkorn University, commented on the insignificance of ASEAN in the EU scheme of things but not vice versa. He raised the issue of China-EU relationship and how this affects the ASEAN-EU relationships. Dr. Charit predicted that with China, it is natural to expect a tectonic shift, but the question that arises is to what extent China is still important in the medium term when China reaches its consumption plateau. Would China still be an important market then? Charit also added that it is also a common knowledge that it is not easy to do business in China. Lastly he questioned the importance of ASEAN-EU relations and what can we learn from the statistics? Do they reflect the reality?

Mr. Ilango responded by saying that the ASEAN Secretariat was not like EU. The drivers within ASEAN are in the member countries. He mentioned that ASEAN tries to overhaul its Charter to make it more conducive for community building. With regard to the question on the speed of integration, the answer lies in the ASEAN Charter. The newer countries wanted to move slower as they are less certain about the benefit of ASEAN integration.

Ambassador Bejarano believed that EU member countries will be present as a global player in the region and all trade negotiation and facilitation will be used to enhance the EU-ASEAN relations.

Dr. Chua agrees that ASEAN will have to compete with the new acceding countries. ASEAN used to be an export platform but now ASEAN, especially Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are markets for products while China has taken over as export platform. With regard to the trade statistics, it is true that from the EU, ASEAN remains relatively insignificant but EU is an important partner for ASEAN. Traditionally, ASEAN-EU trade was in goods but now trade in services such as ICT, finance and transport have become more important.

Dato' **Sallehuddin** asked Mr. Ilango if the ASEAN Charter have the capacity to change the perceptions of China, Korea and Japan who are also major players in the region. Mr. Ilango responded by saying that he would be optimistic. The ASEAN + 3 countries in the past two years have begun to have consultations among themselves and he believed that this relation will continue. All the three countries agreed that so long as they believe that ASEAN is a force, it is much more acceptable for them to work together.

Session IV

Linking Asia and Europe through Education

H.E. **Roland Van Remoortele**, Ambassador of Belgium, chaired this session.

The first speaker for this session was H.E. Dr. **Thierry Rommel**, Ambassador- Head of EU Commission Delegation in Malaysia. His speech highlighted five points about EU's approach to higher education cooperation between European Union and Asia.

Firstly, H.E. Dr. Rommel emphasized that higher education is a high priority in the Asia-Europe cooperation, which includes Malaysia. The differences between EU cooperation and cooperation with member states were explained. EU cooperation is conducted through funds from the EU Budget, which is different from the bilateral funds for cooperation with member states. There has been a significant downward trend in cooperation with member states and this is primarily because member states have been transferring bilateral cooperation funds into the EU Budget. As the bilateral funds diminish, member states have become more selective and higher priorities are given to least developed countries. On the other hand, funding through the European Commission has been increasing and has increased substantially. However, funds from European Commission are not earmarked for Malaysia only but to Asia and the funds are allocated on the basis of competition and are provided in specific priority sectors. The competition for funds is based on the proposals submitted. Proposals with convincing and sustainable projects are mostly likely to be successful. H.E. Dr. Thierry Rommel stressed that this is different from the usual bilateral donor-recipient relations where the donor will dictate the type of project undertaken. European Commission has earmarked RM 75 million or Euro 15 million for higher education and the large amount indicates that European Commission puts high priority on higher education cooperation. This amount excludes funds for infrastructure and scholarship and is mainly allocated for the use of networking, human resource development, curriculum development and capacity building of higher education institutions in Asia.

Secondly, H.E. Dr. Rommel explained the reasons why priority is given to higher education cooperation. Higher education cooperation is seen as an investment, which he termed it as a "Smart Investment". There are two reasons higher education cooperation is seen as a smart investment. Firstly, the funds can be used to develop skills that could enhance competitiveness, social and economic development, stability and security. Secondly, the funds can help raise the general level of education of the beneficiaries and help set the stage for a subsequent two-way mobility. Two-way mobility is seen as a strategic approach that will breed mutual understanding, awareness and respect. With such cooperation, individuals can be exposed to different beliefs, cultures and philosophies and hence, have a more modest view about their own cultures and civilizations.

Thirdly, EU's approach to higher education cooperation also encompasses networking between institutions of higher education, cooperative partnerships and development of curriculum. It is emphasized that the partnership should be about adapting and not adopting approaches. The cooperation is not about a one-way transfer from EU Member States to beneficiaries but open and creative partnerships.

Fourthly, H.E. Dr. Rommel pointed out that he and his colleagues derive great encouragement seeing the increased attention for higher education cooperation with the EU in

Malaysia under the Asia-Link programmes. This is clear from the significant increase in applications and cooperation with Malaysian institutions of local higher education (such as from UPM, UITM, University Multimedia, UNIMAS and etc.) The upward trend is in line with the expectation and objective of the Malaysian authorities and the government. Both Prime Ministers (Tun Dr. Mahathir and Datuk Seri Abdullah Badawi) have emphasized the urgency of improving and enhancing the quality of higher education and sees cooperation with third countries as a necessary channel to improve higher education in Malaysia.

Lastly, H.E Dr. Rommel explained that the EU's approach to partnership in education has widened in 2004. Now, it encompassed scholarships, which previously was seen as activities of member states cooperation. However, as funds from member states cooperation diminished and also at the initiatives and strong pressure from the past Commissioner, His Honourable Chris Patten, scholarships are now given out to enable students, scholars and researches to spend 1-2 years in EU to follow a Master's degrees in a wide range of areas under the Erasmus Mundus programme. The areas of study continue to grow as consortia members offering Masters programmes increased.

The next speaker was Dr. **Charit Tingsabadh**. He is the Director of the Centre of European Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand and the title of his paper was "Linking Asia and Europe Through Education: A View from Southeast Asia". Prof. Charit's talk was divided into five sections. He began by giving an overview of internationalization of education. Then, he spoke of Thailand's experience in European Studies. He also discussed the issue of transnational education, which was followed by the commoditization of education. He also identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in Asia-Europe cooperation in education. Some strategic suggestions for future Asia-Europe cooperation in education followed in the conclusion.

In giving an overview of internationalization of education, Prof. Charit first outlined the benefits of internationalization of education. Among the benefits mentioned are higher mobility of staff and student, enhanced teaching and research collaboration and greater international and intercultural understanding. Referring to a table compiled by the International Association of Universities by UNESCO, Prof. Charit showed how Asia and Europe differs in their ranking on the benefits of internationalization of education according to level of importance. It is found that Asia places high importance on student, staff and teacher development while Europe ranks standards and quality of education as the most important benefits of internationalization of education.

Dr. Charit proceeded by sharing the experience of European Studies in Thailand. He stated that European Studies in Thailand is more about learning the state of Europe today so that Europeans and Asia can have a better understanding of each other. To do that, Dr. Charit stressed that there is a need to overcome Orientalism and to look beyond euro-centrist, isolationist or unilateralist view of the world. He believes that European studies in Thailand have succeeded in overcoming the many stereotypes and differences in values system of these two cultures.

Dr. Charit, then gave an insight to the various forms of transnational education that are available in the market today. This includes, franchising, branch campuses, programme articulation, offshore institution, international institution among the different forms of transnational education. Other arrangements of transnational education are distance learning and large corporations organizing their own higher education institutions or study

programmes offering qualifications not belonging to any national system of higher education. Dr. Charit also highlighted that as education becomes a commercial and tradable commodity under GATS, trade may overshadow and dominate international academic relations of countries. National interest may be undermined as national public institutions compete with private providers of education. Concerns of consumer protectionism such as the quality of education provided by private institutions or by joint enterprise between the public and private institutions are raised. Further, in the effort to protect national interest, it is observed that restrictions are placed on visa requirements. Elaborating on protectionism, Dr. Charit explained that in Thailand, foreign institutions are only allowed to offer courses that are currently not offered by the public institutions there. Homogenization of culture as a result of transnational education also raises political and cultural concerns. As a result, some countries may have delayed opening their market for education services because of the concerns raised above.

In general, it is observed that qualifications given by European institutions of higher education are more acceptable here in Asia than the qualifications given by Asian institutions of higher education. On this note, Dr. Charit raised the issue regarding quality assurance in education as liberalization of trade in education intensifies. The issue of quality assurance arises in terms of the programmes offered, the admission requirements and quality of teaching staff. Further, in education cooperation, the issue on matching of partners' expectations is also important. On comparing Asia and Europe, it is found that while social sciences are the most internationalized discipline in Asia, social sciences and engineering are the most internationalized discipline in Europe. In terms of destination choices for education, besides having first preference to stay in their own country for study, Asians are more likely to choose Europe over North America while Europeans tend to choose North America over Asia. Lack of financial support is found to be one of the most crucial obstacles to the internationalization of education.

Having discussed many of the pertinent issues in internationalization of education, Dr. Charit analyzed the strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities and threats in the Asia Europe cooperation in education. In terms of strength, the long history of association between Asia and Europe is seen as an important strength. There is also a strong preference of students studying abroad. However, as it is costly for Asians to study in Europe, education in Europe is accessible to a few and elite of these countries. Cost of education, differences in academic traditions in Asia and Europe, the recognition of degrees and the imbalanced traffic of students going to Europe compared to Asia are considered as weaknesses in the Asia Europe cooperation in education. The availability of EU funding provides the opportunity to initiate Asia Europe cooperation in education. Further, with the development of ICT that helps lower the cost of provision of educational products and the continuing demand for higher education in Asia will facilitate and enhance Asia Europe cooperation in education. Some cautions were raised regarding the possible threats in the Asia Europe cooperation on education. Security concerns in EU, which limit the mobility of non-EU nationals, the funding problems of public universities in EU and the sluggish economic growth in EU are seen as possible threats in Asia Europe cooperation on education. As a result, Asian universities may look elsewhere more amenable i.e. Australia.

In conclusion, Dr. Charit outlined several strategies that can be undertaken to enhance Asia Europe cooperation on education. It is important to address the weaknesses so that a more conducive environment for the future could be built. Further, it is also essential to identify the real needs of the students so that the education provided is more closely aligned with

industry and business needs. Seed funding should be continued as it can play a role as a catalyst for university initiatives. Dr. Charit also suggested that there be more demonstration of more success stories so that others can learn. Dialogue and interactions among universities on both sides should intensify and encourage more involvement of Asia at the regional level. Developing centres of excellence in selected disciplinary area in Asia can improve Asia-Europe cooperation and where joint work results in patentable outcomes, intellectual property issues should be considered.

The last speaker for this session was Professor Dato' Dr. **Hassan Said**, the Director of Higher Education Department, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia. His talk focused on the Malaysian government's effort in promoting higher education.

Professor Dato' Dr. Hassan Said believes that demand for education is strong as it is obvious that more attention has been given to higher education compared to other issues. This is because many believe that education can change culture and economy. In today's world, with internationalization of education, education is now seen as a global product.

Education requires partnership and Prof. Dato' Dr. Hassan Said agreed that Asia-Europe linkages are an example of partnerships in education. Internationalization of education is more than quantity of students studying overseas or number of foreign students. Referring to Dr. Charit's chart on the benefits of internationalization in education, Professor Dato' Dr. Hassan Said said that the benefits listed can be reduced to three main points: 1) Mobility of students, staff and policy makers, 2) Partnership which refers to not only sharing of facilities but also sharing of thoughts and beliefs and 3) Recognition of qualifications. As mentioned by H.E Dr. Thierry Rommel and Dr. Charit, Professor Dato' Dr. Hassan Said also agreed that internationalization of education could teach people in Asia and Europe to live together.

Professor Dato' Dr. Hassan Said commended EU for starting a lot of initiatives and programmes to promote linkages. He emphasized that there is a need for European students to come to Asia. Linkages that are structured should share common objectives such as enhancing existing cooperation, appreciating the values of the two continents by creating strengths from differences and developing a future generation that can appreciate cooperation and thoughts.

In his explanation about linkages and collaborations by Malaysia, Professor Dato' Dr. Hassan Said asserted that Malaysia will work closely with European Union to implement more projects and some suggestions were outlined. As many Malaysian students prefer to choose UK and Ireland than the European countries, the Malaysian government will encourage more to choose other continental European countries. The Malaysian government can also establish chairs at Universities such as the current one in Leiden University, Netherlands, which is now a destination of Malay Studies in European Union. Further, the government will help promote Erasmus Mundus and welcome reputable European Universities to establish campuses in Malaysia. Local higher education institutions will conduct collaboration such as joint degrees programmes. However, Professor Dato' Dr. Hassan Said acknowledged that currently, the public institutions of higher education have problem in training PhD lecturers due to financial constraints and logistics factors. He also added that managing higher education not only requires funds but also a need to generate funds, to increase partnerships and to attract brilliant students.

Professor Dato' Dr. Hassan Said also spoke of the Asia-Europe Rectors' Conference which was first held in October 2004. The government will work closely with Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) that is established in Universiti Malaya to establish an Asia-Europe University. The idea was first mooted in the ASEM Bangkok, 1996 and AEI was established in 1997. There are plans to transform AEI into a university and to model it like the United Nations University in Japan.

Professor Dato' Dr. Hassan Said emphasized that a sustainable partnership requires responsibility, commitment and good projects. However, he noted that different countries with different policies might affect the cooperation between partners. Finally, Professor Dato' Dr. Hassan Said feels that there is a need in Malaysia to establish life long learning in the formal, informal and non-formal sector.

Questions and Answers session

Dato' **Sallehuddin** commended the good initiatives undertaken by the government but noted that there is a need to promote awareness of Europe. He cited that Malaysians are not aware of the type of institutions that are involved in Asia-Europe partnerships. On the same note, Dato' Sallehuddin also suggested that journal publications by these institutions could help create awareness of such collaborations. Further, Dato Sallehuddin also commented that there is a need for the institutions involved to specialize to reduce overlapping.

Prof. Dato' Dr. Hassan Said admits that the question of overlapping has always existed in the local universities but insisted that shortage of manpower and the need to diversify is important, as it is not possible to have only an institution specializing in one area.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Ooi Keat Gin** feels that there is a need to move forward to have more postgraduate research and joint research among academics. He cited that Japan is active in this area and perhaps Malaysia could emulate Japan. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ooi Keat Gin then questioned about the role of SEAMEO in promoting South East Asia to other regional blocs and wondered if SEAMEO is trying to tie up or work alone in South East Asia. He is of the opinion that SEAMEO is doing the former.

Dr. Charit is unclear about the role of SEAMEO but acknowledged the presence of transnational education by SEAMEO. He sees SEAMEO playing a monitoring role and does not go far in setting targets and evaluation.

Prof. Dato' Dr. Hassan Said referred to SEAMEO-RECSAM in Penang as an example of SEAMEO in Malaysia. He further explained that SEAMEO do have collaborations such as the AUDP and the Japanese supported the ASEAN University Network. He agrees that there is a need to enhance joint research such as Europe's interest on biodiversity in Asia and have joint supervisory projects.

Mr. Luc Shillings from the Embassy of Netherlands was intrigued by the number of foreign students and geographical priorities as shown in Dr. Charit's slides, particularly the trend that Asians students tend to choose Europe over North America. He further would like to know the strengths that Malaysian or Asian students see in European Universities and the reasons students want to study in foreign universities.

Dr. Charit admitted that the number going to Europe shown actually includes those going to UK, which is a popular destination by Asian students due to the language despite the strong pound. UK is also seen as a mother country. In response to the second question, Dr. Charit explained that students like to go to foreign universities because of life experiences and the outside classroom atmosphere provided by the foreign universities.

Prof. Dato' Dr. Hassan Said stated that there are about 13,000 Malaysian students in UK, 22,000 students in Australia and 9,000 students in USA. These countries are chosen because of four elements: due to historical factor, the language, the aggressive publicity by Australia and the strong Alumni in these countries.

Che Meriam Abdullah from the International Office at UiTM raised several questions. Firstly, she commended Dr. Charit for successfully charting out the problems that her colleagues and herself confront at the International Office with regard to issues on higher education. However, she had a question posed to Prof. Dato' Dr. Hassan Said. Referring to Prof. Dato' Dr. Hassan Said's speech where he mentioned about the fact that within Malaysian context, the future generation seemed to be more aware of global personalities than national personalities (citing the example used by Prof. Dato' Dr. Hassan Said in his speech of the younger generation more likely to know the names of all the football players in Manchester United compared to Kedah football team). Che Meriam Abdullah wanted to know the Ministry's stand on this and whether there is a cause for concern. Further, she also asked if it is true that homogeneity in the future is inevitable as mentioned by Dr. Charit in his speech?

Prof. Dato' Dr. Hassan Said clarified that he was just trying to relate the different mindsets of generations where the future generation have access to everything. In terms of higher education, he stressed that there is a need to change mindsets and to create awareness on the importance of globalization. He explained that this is a reason students are encouraged to undertake student exchanges while at school as a way to build up a resistance and to take the positive effects of globalization for a better development of the country.

Session V (including Roundtable Discussion) Asia Europe Studies: Experience and Expectations

This session was chaired by Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) **R.V. Navaratnam** and the session was conducted in two parts. One is for the presentation of papers by the speakers. Another hour was given for a sharing session especially those of staff members directly involved with the programme at USM and also sharing of experiences by members of other institutions who have had, or are in the process of establishing links with Europe.

The first speaker was Dr. **Marc Vuijlsteke**, Director General of Development, College of Europe, Belgium. Education plays a crucial role in learning to know about each other and to respect each other. It was recognised in the beginning as one of the most important factors in the European integration process. This recognition was manifested in the creation of the Council of Europe and the College of Europe in the 1950s, two institutions which were extremely concerned with global European educational matters.

Education lost its eminent place in the European agenda in later years and continued to be almost exclusively state matters. Today, however, interest in education and culture as core elements of integration has revived and both items are being provided for specifically in the Constitutional Treaty though member states are still slow in relinquishing relevant sovereignty in these issues. The Directorate General for Education and Culture in the European Commission provides various efforts towards cooperation in education. These included exchange schemes and opportunities to learn abroad, network of academic and professional expertise, a framework to address issues such as technologies in education or the international recognition of diplomas and a platform for consensus, comparisons, benchmarking and policy-making.

On the other hand, recognizing the role of education in the global knowledge-based economy, member states, within or beyond the rubric of the EU have undertaken initiatives to understand and manage challenges of education vis-à-vis globalisation. An example of such initiatives is the Bologna Process, which among others, have the objectives of adopting systems of comparable degrees and coordinated cycles of tertiary degrees, promoting mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement of students and teachers and promoting European cooperation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.

The Bologna process became an important point of reference for countries seeking educational cooperation with the EU because though not its initiator, the EU is its principal stakeholder. It is vital to understand the complex issue of ownership of education within Europe and how it is still changing. The EU is an unavoidable commercial partner that offers an alternative to a bipolar world dominated by a single dominant power. Education is a vital tool to understanding this impending economic and political partnership.

The College of Europe has given long-standing attention to all of these efforts through its two main operational considerations, namely that it aims first, to train young Europeans to work and live with and within an ever more integrating Europe and second, to train young non-Europeans to work and live with and within an ever more integrating Europe. Ultimately, though, it aims to train young people to work and live in an ever more integrating world.

The second speaker was Assoc. Prof **Rudolf Steiert**, of Eberhard Karls Universität of Tübingen, Germany. Tübingen has two relevant experiences that are useful for the purpose of the conference. One is the establishment of its own Master in European Studies Programme and another its cooperation with the University of Chulalongkorn towards the development of the multidisciplinary European Studies programme at the University. At the Eberhard Karls Universität of Tübingen, the programme aims at providing a distinguished degree in law, economics, politics and other fields. Thus, two important features of the programme are the multidisciplinary nature of its content and its orientation towards practice.

At Chulalongkorn University, Tübingen was a partner that provided expertise on the politics and history studies of the multidisciplinary European Studies programme. Visiting Professors from Tübingen periodically came to teach at Chulalongkorn. In this partnership a few obstacles were faced. One was the complexity of the subject matter of the courses. The multidisciplinary nature of the programme in the face of diversified background of students was a challenge for both students and teachers. Another was the different cultural background of the teachers and students, the former being European and the latter mainly local Thais. A third obstacle was understanding the complexity of the European Union itself as an economic, political and legal entity. Students found it difficult to understand the continuously changing phenomena of the EU. Moreover, teachers were of differing European background and might bring further different perspectives of the EU. There were also disparities in the European experiences of the students. A few may have quite good knowledge of Europe while the rest had very little. There was much difficulty in determining the minimum level of knowledge expected of the students.

In establishing European studies in Asia, a few pointers may be of use. Such studies should be understood as an integral part of efforts to establish, maintain and further stabilize relations between Asia and Europe. It should aim towards contributing to a better mutual knowledge and understanding of each other. This understanding, furthermore should include acknowledging that there are not two sides of Europe and Asia but that there are elements of plurality of structures, belief systems, traditions and identities that can be looked at as enriching the relations between Asia and Europe. Thus, European Studies should include elements of multi-disciplinary approach, historical dimension, practical insights and knowledge (eg through internship and simulation exercises), knowledge of foreign languages, intellectual exchanges between teachers through specific conferences, seminars or joint research projects, use of effective access of the internet as an important tool of learning and continuous reflection and review of curriculum.

The third speaker was Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Apirat Petchiri**, Director, MA Programme in European Studies, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. The programme at Chulalongkorn University has basis in multidisciplinary approach. It began in 1997 in a partnership between Chulalongkorn University, Eberhard Karls Universität of Tübingen, Milano University and Strasbourg University. Multidisciplinary studies have many benefits but there are a few practical issues to be addressed in using this approach for European Studies. The issue of resources, whether or not courses offered are training candidates to be truly multidisciplinary and whether or not there is a genuine need for graduates to be multidisciplinary are a few matters that needed to be looked into carefully.

European Studies in many European universities are not truly multidisciplinary. They usually focused on a few specialized fields which students may be required to cross in their choices of subjects. In terms of the employment market, there is also not a genuine demand for people

of multidisciplinary backgrounds. Graduates are normally required to have expertise in one area but knowledge in another may be an added advantage. Obtaining an equilibrium among disciplines is a difficult issue. Giving equal balance to the disciplines may not be the best approach because local demand may influence the need for each discipline at the practical level.

Multidisciplines has also a bearing on the ability to network amongst academics concerned. Even within a single discipline there are myriads of subject matter. This is more so when there are multiple disciplines. It follows that identifying academics who are truly multidisciplinary in knowledge also becomes a problematic issue. The tendencies for governmental agencies are to solicit research and expertise in specialized areas. Thus, academics may from the beginning focus on niche areas in their career development.

The case for a multidisciplinary approach lies in several aspects. First, it gives candidates flexibility for long-term career opportunity especially from the point of view that candidates can take up the challenge of being repositioned to different posts of responsibility. A multidisciplinary approach in European Studies necessitates multiple language acquisition. As such graduates may be seen as more versatile potential employees.

At institutional levels, establishing a multidisciplinary programme may have a few implications. One question is what disciplines to be included. Another is the location of the programme. Does the graduate school take ownership or do individual schools conduct their areas of focus and the students float between schools? The next issue is what background requirement do we lay out to students since at undergraduate levels students usually end up with a single-discipline degree. How do we make the degree offered an accredited degree? Ultimately, constant review needs to be made to ensure the sustainability of the programme in the light of market environment.

The final speaker in this session was Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Paul Lim**, Programme Coordinator, Master of International and Diplomacy Studies, School of Social Sciences, USM.

He started his presentation by raising the question “why has the EU looked at Asia now for cooperation in education?”

The situation in Malaysia is that students usually seek studies abroad in Anglo-American universities. However, Asian countries like Japan and Korea are opened to sending their students to Continental Europe. Europeans also like to study about Asia in the East Asian countries.

There is at least one difference in approaches to education between American and European universities. The former offers education to serve economic and market needs. Traditionally, in continental Europe, education is sustained for the sake of knowledge itself although this may be changing in the light of the Bologna Process.

With regard to the USM programme, the Chulalongkorn experience is useful in the aspect of making the programme sustainable. This is important in view of the Asia Link funding for three years. What are USM’s strategies for ensuring the sustainability of the programme without external financial assistance? In terms of funding implications also, USM has to think about how to get funding for student internships in Europe since this is an important aspect of studying about Europe. At the moment, it is not possible to make the idea go to Europe

available for all candidates. It very much still depends on the funding capacity of individual students. As such, such internship remains optional and may only be encouraged.

Another concern of the USM programme is the issue of ownership. USM must feel it, and not the European funding institution, owns the programme. It must develop teaching capacity independent of European assistance and this means developing the financial resources to train and employ people to teach. In the light of the multidisciplinary nature of the courses offered, academics must have the mindset to cross disciplines.

In the final analysis, the USM programme should ideally achieve several overarching expectations. One is that from the hopeful success of the USM programme, Malaysia will come up with core European expertise in the region. As a result, there can be a socio-cultural osmosis between Asia and Europe. Although the programme may boost USM's academic standing, it should not have monopoly over European Studies in the country. On the contrary, USM's pioneering effort should be the catalyst for European studies to eventually become a common feature in Malaysian universities' curricula.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Dr **Noraida Endut**, School of Social Sciences, USM, talk about her experiences from her visit to the College of Europe. She mentioned that it is important for students to understand the unique entity of the European Union. In other words it is to understand the cultural dynamics of the EU member states. Challenges to local academics taking up the task of teaching European Studies include their own lack of exposure to multidisciplinary aspects of Europe. Thus, there is the issue of how to make the content of the courses less background information and more critical discussions of specific issues. There is also the issue of what kind of minimum requirement on knowledge on Europe should be set out at entry level for students.

Dr **Loke Yiing Jia**, School of Social Sciences, USM also conveyed her experiences from her visit to the College of Europe. She noted that it is important for students and staff to acquire language capabilities. The challenge for academics in Malaysia is how to make classes more interactive considering the background of students who are used to one-way lecture communication in classes. Visits to European institutions are very important exposures for staff and eventually students.

Puan **Norpisah**, International Office, USM explained that the International Office face the challenge of understanding countries it is sending students to for exchange programmes. Thus, collaboration such as this is very important. From the point of view of promoting USM to international students, there are a few things that USM must give attention to. These include making the curriculum clear and comprehensible, giving effective information on services available at the university, ensuring sufficient human resources to maintain and sustain European studies programmes and making job-market survey that is relevant to potential students.

Prof **Jinap bt Selamat**, Dean, Faculty of Food Science and Technology, UPM discussed her experience in conducting the Asia Link programme in UPM. Her university collaboration is in the area of science and technology with a focus on the food industry. Its partners are institutions from France, the UK and the Philippines. Choice of partners was made based on previous research and academic connections. Benefits of Asia Link programme include wider recognition of degrees offered, participation of ASEAN and international students in graduate programmes and financial assistance. Some challenges include teaching students with different academic backgrounds getting industrial commitment for practical paperwork and proposals to the industries. For future links, a few other aspects need to be considered. One is that future projects should be developed with the same institutions. There should be wider networking. Another consideration is that Malaysians should not remain as partners only but take initiatives themselves to become coordinators in the collaboration.

Prof **Zakaria Ahmad** mentioned that UKM is establishing the Institute for International and Area Studies to encourage regional and area studies through scholarships and awards. Understanding Europe is an important aspect of the Institute. Another strategy is to ensure sustainability and to send staff for training at PhD level in European issues and to acquire certain language competencies. Scholarships on European issues should be a focus of the human resource development for the purpose of the programme.

Che' Meriam Abdullah, Coordinator for International Training and Development, Office of Corporate Communications and International Relations, UiTM pointed out that the

International Office at UiTM is responsible for sourcing opportunities in education at the University. So far, UiTM's links with Europe has been on individual country basis e.g., with Spain (scholarships and staff exchange in engineering, waste management, medical health and hotel and catering). The International Education Centre prepares government scholars before being sent overseas, with language and entry requirements. Other than the UK, these scholars are sent to Germany and France. There is an ongoing discussion of a possible link with Ireland.

Dr **Charit Tingsabadh**, Director, Centre for European Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, suggested that to ensure sustainability programmes, MIDS must identify and develop a core group of people (academics and researchers) trained in European studies. Plans should include exposure to the subject matter through informal intellectual exchange, visits, establishing alumni and interaction with business guilds. South East Asian institutions may benefit from one another with regional activities on Europe such as an annual conference on the issue. These institutions may also consider establishing intellectual cooperation on European studies through organizing an association on the model of the European Community Studies Association (ECSA).

Prof Dr. **Dieter Mahncke**, Director, European Political and Administrative Studies, College of Europe, Belgium said that although the capability of academics to adjust to different backgrounds of students may be an issue, this is not insurmountable. Part of the learning process is to learn to deal with diversity. Although many Malaysians are only exposed to UK institutions at tertiary education levels, this is not a loss since the UK can give very important perspectives on Europe. It is an active member state of the EU and is one of the member states which is quickest to implement EU decisions. Many European studies scholars come from Britain and the United States and they have been prolific in writing about the subjects. Many Europeans still find the institutional aspects of the EU difficult so this challenge is not unique to non-EU nationals.

Assoc. Prof **Shameem Rafik Galea**, Head of Foreign Languages Dept, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, UPM, mentioned that acquisition of languages of continental Europe is still not wide reaching amongst Malaysians and this may hinder partnerships. In a university setting, departments offering teaching of foreign languages should work better with other faculties to encourage such acquisition. Students should also be encouraged to look at continental Europe as places to study languages.

Dr **Marc Vuijsteke**, Director General of Development, College of Europe, Belgium said that European studies must aim to be pragmatic, moving and developing according to the needs surrounding the construction of the EU. The College of Europe has not adhered to multidisciplinary approach at all cost. It began with being multidisciplinary and has gone on to become more specialized. At present it is more trans-disciplinary than multidisciplinary where students are required to specialize but at the same time required to take subjects with specific issues looked at from different disciplinary perspective. One such subject is the analysis of Competition that addresses competition issues from legal and economic angles.

The curriculum of European studies, moreover, depends on the needs of the countries studying, e.g., potential member states would focus on the need to be a member. For Malaysia, she needs to ask why she wants to study Europe. Possible answers are that it needs to develop expertise to establish more meaningful relations with the EU. It also wants to consider what regional relations it has that may have impact on its relations with the EU.

The Chairperson in his conclusion supported the need for European studies in Malaysia. It is a necessary dimension of dealing with globalization and a case for such necessity needs to be made to the Government. The capacity for studying Europe must include acquisition on important European languages. To help further with establishing institutions studying Europe, the Government may want to make available a directory of grants and scholarships that open ways to collaboration in European studies.

ANNEX A

**Launching Ceremony of the Asia Link-funded Master's Degree in
International and Diplomatic Studies [European Studies]
Universiti Sains Malaysia and Conference on
'Building Asia-Europe Partnerships Through Higher Education'**

24 – 25 January 2005

The Renaissance Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

PROGRAMME

24 th Jan. 2005	EVENTS
08:30am	Registration
09:00am	<p>Arrival of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Y. Bhg. Prof. Dato' Dzul kifli Abdul Razak, Vice-Chancellor of USM, Malaysia ✚ His Honourable Prof. Dr. Paul Demaret, Rector of the College of Europe, Belgium ✚ Mr. Charles Schmit, Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Luxembourg, Malaysia, representing the EU Presidency ✚ H.E. Thierry Rommel, Ambassador - Head of EU Commission Delegation in Malaysia ✚ Y. B. Dato' Dr. Hj. Shafie Hj. Mohd Salleh, Minister of Higher Education, Malaysia
09.15am	<p>Welcoming Remarks by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Assoc. Prof. Abdul Rahim Ibrahim, Dean of the School of Social Sciences, USM, Malaysia ✚ Mr. Charles Schmit, Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Luxembourg, Malaysia, representing the EU Presidency
9.30am	<p>Speech by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ H.E. Thierry Rommel, Ambassador - Head of EU Commission Delegation in Malaysia ✚ Prof. Dr. Paul Demaret, Rector of the College of Europe, Belgium ✚ Y. Bhg. Prof. Dato' Dzul kifli Abdul Razak, Vice-Chancellor of USM, Malaysia
10.30am	<p>Official Opening and Keynote Address by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Y. B. Dato' Dr. Hj. Shafie Hj. Mohd Salleh, Minister of Higher Education, Malaysia
11:30am	<p>Symbolic Signing of the Contract Launching the Project of Setting up the European Studies Programme between the European Commission's Asia Link Programme represented by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ H.E. Thierry Rommel, Ambassador - Head of EU Commission Delegation in Malaysia ✚ Prof. Dr. Paul Demaret, Rector of the College of Europe, Belgium ✚ Y. Bhg. Prof. Dato' Dzul kifli Abdul Razak, Vice-Chancellor of USM, Malaysia
12.00 noon	Press Conference/Refreshments/Lunch Break

24 th Jan. 2005 2.15 – 3.30pm	Session I: Asia – Europe Relations: An Assessment Chaired by Y. Bhg. Dato' Mohd Yusof Ahmad, Director General, IDFR
	<i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Prof. Dr. Rudolf Steiert, Institute of Political Science, Tübingen University, Germany ✚ Assoc. Prof. Suthiphand Chirathivat, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand ✚ H.E. Daniel Mulhall, Ambassador, Embassy of Ireland, Malaysia
3.30 – 4.00pm	TEA BREAK
4.00 – 5.15pm	Session II: External Relations of an Integrating Europe Chaired by H.E. Herbert Jess, Ambassador, Embassy of The Federal Republic of Germany
	<i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Prof. Dr. Dieter Mahncke, Director, European Political & Administrative Studies, College of Europe, Belgium ✚ Y. Bhg. Dato' Salman Ahmad, Under Secretary (Strategic Planning), Ministry of Foreign Affairs ✚ Head of Mission of EU Member State Embassy in Malaysia
8.00pm	DINNER HOSTED BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA
25 th Jan. 2005	
9.00 – 10.30am	Session III: ASEAN – EU Partnerships: Looking Ahead Chaired by Assoc. Prof. Azhari Karim, Retired Ambassador
	<i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Mr. Ilango Karuppanan, Principal Assistant Registry, Policy Planning Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia ✚ Dr. Chua Soo Yean, Lecturer, School of Social Sciences, USM, Malaysia ✚ H.E. German Bejarano, Ambassador of Spain in Malaysia
10.30 – 11.00am	TEA BREAK
11.00 – 12.30pm	Session IV : Linking Asia and Europe through Education Chaired by H.E. Roland Van Remoortele, Ambassador, Embassy of Belgium
	<i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ H.E. Thierry Rommel, Ambassador - Head of EU Commission Delegation in Malaysia ✚ Dr. Charit Tingsabadh, Director, Centre for European Studies , Chulalongkorn University, Thailand ✚ Professor Dato' Dr. Hassan Said, Director, Higher Education Department, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia
12.30 – 2.00pm	LUNCH BREAK
2.00 – 3.30pm	Session V : Asia Europe Studies: Experiences and Expectations Chaired by Y. Bhg. Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) R.V. Navaratnam
	<i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Dr. Marc Vuijlsteke, Director General of Development, College of Europe, Belgium ✚ Prof. Dr. Rudolf Hrbek, Institute of Political Science, University of Tübingen, Germany ✚ Assoc. Prof. Dr. Apirat Petchsiri, Director, MA Programme In European Studies, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand ✚ Assoc. Prof. Paul Lim, Programme Coordinator, Master in International and Diplomatic Studies, School of Social Sciences, USM, Malaysia
3.30 – 4.15pm	TEA BREAK
4.15 – 5.30pm	Roundtable Discussion
5.30 – 5.45pm	Closing Remarks by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Professor Johan Saravanamuttu Abdullah, Director, Centre for International Studies, School of Social Sciences, USM, Malaysia

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96. Roland Grafe, Embassy of Germany
97. Dr. Raffaella Di Fabio, Embassy of Italy
98. Catherine, French Embassy
99. Pierre, French Embassy
100. Prof. Dato' Zakaria Ahmad, U.K.M.
101. Kun Lai Leng, Sin Chew Daily
102. Hafzan, Berita Harian
103. M. Kemminer, Dragon news
104. Zaliani Mohd Taib, NTV7
105. Gopal, NTV7
106. Foo, C.S., Kwong Wah
107. Selvarani d/o Kovil Pillai,
Kolej Uni. Islam Malaysia
108. Zainal Ali, UMNOTV
109. Indra, Star
110. Nyu Ka Ger, Oriental Daily
111. Nazudeen, Utusan
112. Suziena Uda Nagu, Learning Curve
113. Prof. Mohd Ibrahim, UPM
114. Chong Yik Leong, Kwong Wah Press
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116. Shaharel Kadir, TV3
117. Husna Yusop, The Sun
118. Leong Fei Ying, Nanyang Press
119. Hon Su Fung, Sin Chew
120. Lim Kean Hong, China Press
121. Anil Fahriza Adena, Min. Foreign Affairs
122. Chok Suan Ling, NST News
123. Sharinnosa, RTM
124. Ahmad Kamil, Bernama
125. Rushdan, Bernama
126. Fairoz Salleh, UiTM
127. Sharina Abdullah, Kem. Luar Negeri
128. Pang Sing Ying, Nanyang Siang Pau

ANNEX C









ANNEX D

MEDIA COVERAGE