

Asia–Europe Connectivity Vision 2025 Challenges and Opportunities

An ERIA–Government of Mongolia Document

Edited: Anita Prakash



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Message

It gives me great pleasure to address the readers of the Study Report on Asia–Europe Connectivity. As a Mongolian, I am truly pleased that the ASEM (Asia–Europe Meeting) Summit will take place in Mongolia for the first time, a nation that geographically and historically has been a bridge between the two oldest continents—Asia and Europe. Mongolia joined ASEM and decided to host the next Summit in Ulaanbaatar as our nation’s modest contribution in strengthening connectivity between the two regions.



In recent years, connectivity has been a buzzword in the ASEM community and the international arena, and discussions over this concept have been evolving. Mongolia approaches this concept in its broadest interpretation. Connectivity in the ASEM framework encompasses not only tangible or physical infrastructure links between the two continents which include rail, highway, air, and maritime routes but also much wider non-tangible intertwining and links ranging from cultural, educational, spiritual, and even philosophical interaction between Asia and Europe. Our country seeks to further develop and expand Mongolia’s existing infrastructure links between the two continents and concrete projects are being implemented in this field.

The achievements in Asia–Europe connectivity should not be undervalued and belittled. Compared to 20 years ago, Asia and Europe enjoy a much greater degree of connectivity, thanks to conscious and intentional efforts made by ASEM partners.

I believe that ASEM should be a platform of dialogue not only between governments but also between business communities, civil society, academia, youth, and other stakeholders from Asia and Europe. We are truly pleased to see the continuation of ASEM-related meetings and activities involving various groups from both continents. Mongolia also supports ASEM’s principle of consensus and inclusiveness, and believes that these principles must be safeguarded and continued.

This July, ASEM will celebrate its 20th anniversary. It is a perfect time to reflect on the achievements and lessons from the past two decades and seek to project the future of Asia–Europe cooperation. I believe that fruitful discussions and effective decisions made by this Summit will greatly contribute to enhancing connectivity between the two continents.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'U. P. Lundeg'.

Purevsuren Lundeg

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia

Foreword

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) is very pleased to bring *Asia–Europe Connectivity Vision 2025: Challenges and Opportunities* to the Leaders of the Asia–Europe Meeting (ASEM), who are assembled in Ulaanbaatar for the 11th ASEM Summit 2016.



ERIA is a forerunner of connectivity-related studies in the ASEAN region. It has worked very closely with ASEAN and the East Asia Summit to develop the concept of holistic connectivity, which takes into account the physical, institutional, and people's aspect of connectivity in a community or region. Our insights into connectivity issues also derive from our continuous public engagements with varied stakeholders, and in many formats. Research and policy design, along with public dissemination of connectivity issues, are ERIA's forte. It gives me great pleasure to share this expertise, through this vision document, with the wider ASEM community.

Mongolia's relations with ERIA are deep and friendly, and the ASEM Connectivity Vision 2025 is a fortuitous outcome of this relationship. ERIA is deeply honoured to be requested by the Government of Mongolia to prepare this important document for the 11th ASEM Summit in Ulaanbaatar. We hope that this book will help the ASEM Leaders prepare the road map for ASEM Connectivity beyond 2016.

As the ASEM enters into its third decade, there is every reason to strengthen this group's efforts in bringing the people of Asia and Europe closer, and to integrate the two regions as deeply as possible. Towards this, ERIA will remain committed in providing all possible support and expertise that may be required to make the ASEM a responsive and creative platform for connectivity between Asia and Europe.

I believe that this book will contribute to the success of the 11th ASEM Summit in Ulaanbaatar.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "H. Nishimura". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hidetoshi Nishimura

President

Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia

Preface

Asia–Europe Connectivity Vision 2025: Challenges and Opportunities is an outcome of various fortuitous connections that all took place around the same time. Participating in the conference ‘ASEM at 20: The challenge of connectivity’ held in Brussels on 9 September 2015, on the sidelines of the ASEM Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), I came across the ideas and concerns of ASEM on the issue of connectivity between Asia and Europe, and the role that ASEM could play in fostering this connectivity. Placed within global developments of social and economic importance, a consensus outcome was to give ASEM a more responsive and significant agenda in bringing Asia and Europe closer through people, institutions, and even physical infrastructure.

The Government of Mongolia and ERIA, who share deep and friendly relations, came together for developing deliverables for the 11th ASEM Summit 2016 in Ulaanbaatar, and ERIA was requested to produce connectivity-related works for Mongolia’s chairmanship of ASEM. Recalling the outcomes of the conference in Brussels and measuring in ERIA’s expertise on connectivity-related work in the ASEAN and East Asia region, the two parties agreed to prepare a connectivity vision document which ASEM could use to develop its work plan and agenda for connectivity in the coming decade.

With the help of our wide research network and internal expertise, ERIA was able to finish this book in a short period, in time to address the 11th ASEM Summit in Ulaanbaatar. I am extremely grateful to all the academics and practitioners who contributed their ideas and research results for this book in a very short time. All the authors in this book are experts in their respective fields, and it is expected that ASEM will take due note of their recommendations towards connectivity and cooperation between Asia and Europe under ASEM.

As new challenges in the connectivity agenda continue to emerge, the ASEM Connectivity Vision emphasises the need for creating more opportunities for the people of Asia and Europe.

On behalf of ERIA, I would like to thank the Government of Mongolia for their generous financial support for preparing this book. The generous guidance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia in developing this book is also appreciated.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of David Taylor, New Zealand’s Ambassador to the European Union, and former Ambassador to Indonesia and ASEAN, who supported the concept of this book. I also want to thank Peter Kell, ASEM Senior Official for New Zealand and Deputy Head of Mission in New Zealand Embassy in Tokyo for providing valuable comments and insights into ASEM’s position, and outlook on connectivity.

This book would not have been brought out in time for the summit without the tireless contribution of Maria Priscila del Rosario, ERIA Chief Editor and Publication Director.

I expect that Asia–Europe Connectivity Vision 2025 will be embedded into the ASEM Connectivity plans in 2016 and beyond.

Anita Prakash

Director General, Policy Department
Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia

Jakarta
July 2016

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