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## BELGIUM SOUNDS OUT ASIAN AND EUROPEAN PARTNERS ON ASEM 8 SUMMIT

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HANOI, 26.05.2009.BELGIUM SOUNDS OUT ASIAN AND EUROPEAN PARTNERS ON ASEM 8 SUMMITThe Kingdom of Belgium will host the next ASEM Summit of Heads of State and Government (ASEM 8) in Brussels on 4 and 5 October 2010. In this respect Belgium is sounding out Asian and European partners on the global issues that should be dealt with at this Summit. Belgium will take on the Presidency of the European Union from July 1 till December 31, 2010. In this capacity it will host the Summit meeting in the prestigious halls of the Royal Palace in Brussels.Belgian Head of delegation, H.E. Mr. Dirk ACHTEN, Secretary-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium, addressed the participants at the ASEM Foreign Ministers meeting in Hanoi today. He assured that Belgium "is fully committed to make the next ASEM summit equally a success". As to the content and methodology of the ASEM 8 Summit, Mr ACHTEN stressed that "an important lesson learned from ASEM 7 is that we need to address what really matters to our societies and populations"."No doubt we all agree that a continuous reinforcement of our Asia-Europe partnership must be mutually beneficial. In our view, we must therefore guarantee the continuity in the work of ASEM".Belgium is proposing to focus during ASEM 8 on the economic challenges as a global opportunity to promote the quality of life. During the discussions that took place at the ASEM Foreign Ministers meeting in Hanoi it became clear that "we should vie for turning deficiencies into benefits". Belgium is convinced that "the goal of our Asia-Europe partnership should first and foremost be the enhancement of the quality of life of our populations in an ever more globalised world". H.E. Dirk ACHTEN stressed that our efforts should not only start from a quantitative but also from a qualitative basis and seek "a common purpose for sustainable economic development, social responsibility, a rules based society, energy security, environmental excellence, food safety and public health". In the follow up of the Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change, Belgium considers that the ASEM 8 Summit will be the ideal moment for exchanging views on the implementation of the measures to be taken. The Brussels ASEM 8 Summit will also give special attention to the organization of a Business Forum that will equally be held on October 4 and 5, 2010. This Forum will aim at the dynamic encounter of Asian and European businesspeople and politicians. Belgium will also organise a major exhibition on 25 centuries of cultural and trade relations between Europe and Asia in order to promote a greater visibility of ASEM among large audiences.

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