

## Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) - Norway marks the ASEM day

On the occasion of the ASEM day, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs organized a seminar on "[A more connected Asia – new possibilities for Europe?](#)". In her opening remarks, State Secretary Marianne Hagen called "the rise of Asia (...) the most dramatic change the world economy has seen in the last four decades. Asia's impressive economic growth presents tremendous opportunities." She also underlined "the value of ASEM for Norway as a platform for political dialogue between Europe and Asia".

Together, Europe and Asia represent 60% of the global population, 60% of the global production and 60% of the global trade.

Norway will organize its first ASEM activity this year, together with Singapore, Germany and the Philippines. The conference is named 'Green Shipping: Blue Business. Moving Forward Together' and will take place in Singapore on 26 and 27 April. The Norwegian Minister for Climate and Environment, Mr. Ola Elvestuen, will open the conference together with the Secretary General of the IMO, Mr. Kitack Lim, and Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Erik Solheim. View the program here: [www.asemgreenshipping.com](http://www.asemgreenshipping.com)

Sustainable growth and value creation are key objectives of Norway's maritime policy, and crucial for the ocean economy at large. At the same time, green shipping is a focus area in Norway's environmental policy. Facilitating the development of new and environmentally friendly solutions at sea is a priority. Together, these are key elements of the Norwegian Government's maritime strategy, presented in 2015, as well as the recently launched Ocean Strategy. Norway has launched a NOK 150 million programme aimed at combating marine litter and microplastics in the oceans in developing countries. Initially, the programme will focus on Southeast Asia, which is the region where the problem is most acute.

The Foreign Ministry also hosted an inter-ministerial meeting to offer information about the ongoing work of ASEM and the meetings planned for 2018. During this meeting, introduced by director Inga M. W. Nyhamar, Norway's national expert in the European External Action Service's ASEM team, Mr. Paal Ivar Aavatsmark, gave a presentation of ASEM. Norway's Senior Official, Mr. Eivind Homme reflected on lessons learnt, and the Ministry's ASEM Contact Point, Ms. Mirjam C. Ehl, informed about recent and upcoming ASEM events.