**The 1st Meeting of the Asia Europe Political Forum (AEPF)**
**(Republic of Korea, Seoul, July 7-10, 2017)**

# Concept Paper

## Background

Mr. Chung Eui-yong, Co-Chairman of the Standing Committee and Secretary General of the ICAPP, International Conference of Asian Political Parties, which represents over 360 political parties in 52 countries in Asia, visited the European Parliament (EP) in Brussels during September 22-23, 2015, and had separate meetings with the representatives of the four groups of political parties represented in the European Parliament, i.e. European People's Party (EPP), Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR), and Alliance of Liberals and Democrats Group (ALDE).

At the meetings, it was agreed to establish regular contacts and promote closer cooperation between the ICAPP and the principal groups of political parties in the EP. In particular, an idea of establishing the "**Asia Europe Political Forum (AEPF)**" and holding the first meeting of the AEPF in the near future had emerged during the meetings. The representatives of the groups of political parties in the EP responded positively to the idea and agreed to have more detailed discussions on how to further pursue the idea with the ICAPP Secretariat.

The Members of the ICAPP Standing Committee welcomed and endorsed the initiative to establish regular contacts and promote closer cooperation between the ICAPP and the political parties in the EP at their 25th Meeting held in Beijing on October 15, 2015. They also requested the ICAPP Secretariat to have more detailed discussions with the representatives of the four principal groups of political parties in the EP with a view to holding the first meeting of the AEPF in the near future.

## Proposals for the establishment of the AEPF

Mr. Chung visited Brussels again in early December 2016, and had meetings with representatives of the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE and the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe (ACRE), and agreed to the following principles regarding the establishment of the AEPF and convening its first meeting in 2017.

### *Composition of the AEPF*

AEPF will be, in principle, composed of the Members of the ICAPP Standing Committee and representatives of the four principal groups of political parties in the EP, i.e. EPP, S&D, ECR and ALDE.

- Currently, the ICAPP Standing Committee is composed of high-level representatives of 35 leading political parties from 23 countries in Asia.
- Representatives of other principal political parties in Asia which are not represented in the Standing Committee may be invited.
- Representatives of other groups of political parties in the EP or representatives of other principal political parties in Europe may be invited.

***Future Meetings of the AEPF***

AEPF will meet regularly (either annually or biannually) on a rotational basis between Asia and Europe.

The host of the meeting will provide conference facilities and other conveniences, including, if possible, local accommodation for the participants.

The main theme or topics of the meeting will be prepared in advance through consultation between the ICAPP Secretariat and the representatives of the four groups of political parties in the EP.

**Plans for the 1st Meeting of the AEPF**

After close consultations with some Members of the ICAPP Standing Committee and the representatives of political groups in the European Parliament, including Hon. Zan Zahradil, President of the ACRE who visited Seoul in early January 2017, it was tentatively agreed to hold the 1st Meeting of the AEPF in Seoul during July 7-10, 2017 in consideration of the work programs of the EP.

The hosts of the meeting suggest "climate change" and "populism in politics" as two topics for the meeting accommodating some suggestions they have received from SC Members of the ICAPP and European delegations. They are, however, still open to further suggestions from other participants.

At the end of the meeting, it is also suggested that participants adopt a brief joint statement on the future of the AEPF. The draft for the statement will be prepared by the ICAPP Secretariat and circulated in advance to all participants. In this regard, all participants are requested to submit their proposals which should be reflected in the statement to the ICAPP Secretariat.

In addition, at the request of several representatives of the political party groups in the EP, the hosts agreed to include the tour of Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). But since the tour of Panmunjom is not available on Sundays, the meeting of the AEPF has to be held on Sunday, July 9th, and the tour will be on Saturday, July 8th.

The meeting will also be held back-to-back with the 28th Meeting of the ICAPP Standing Committee which will be held in the evening of July 7th, and several representatives of European delegations may be invited to the SC Meeting as observers if they wish.

A separate meeting between the representatives of the Korean National Assembly and the European Parliament can be arranged on July 10th upon agreement by the two sides.

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