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**Opening remarks by President Barroso
at the Opening Ceremony of the Eighth
Asia-Europe Meeting Summit**

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Opening ceremony of the 8th ASEM Summit

Brussels, 4 October 2010

Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very much honoured to participate in this Eighth Asia-Europe Meeting Summit, which builds on the example of the successful ASEM 7 Summit which took place in Beijing in October 2008.

ASEM represents a pioneering dialogue between Asia and Europe, on an equal and reciprocal basis. I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate and thank the Belgian government for their initiative in hosting this Summit, and for arranging it superbly, both politically and logistically.

For the first time Russia, Australia and New Zealand have come to join us. I would like to extend to each and every one of them a very, very warm welcome.

I hardly need to emphasize how important Asia is for Europe. Together Asia and Europe comprise over 60% of world trade, and account for around half of global GDP and over half of the global population. Europe and Asia are the cradles of the two greatest clusters of civilization. Our two continents' cultures and values have set the trends for the whole world for centuries - even thousands - of years.

Apart from a world of opportunities that we have been exploring together, Europe and Asia also face together many acute global issues and policy challenges – whether they relate to economics, development, or social and human security. Our Summit agenda over the next two days will allow us to address these opportunities and challenges.

First the economic challenge.

As we have come through the worst of the recent economic crisis, it has become more clear than ever how interdependent are the different regions, not least Europe and Asia. We have learned that we need to find common solutions to restore sustainable growth.

The EU has adopted a new strategy for the EU in 2020, based on smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. Asia, as today's most dynamic region in the world economy, has already lifted millions out of poverty and has a major role to play in the recovery.

I see the economic emergence of Asia as a major positive development in our attempts to agree on the basic lines of global governance. The work we are doing now will impact on the global order for the many years to come. The G20 Summit in Seoul next month and next years' G20 French Presidency will certainly bring a very important contribution to our common objectives.

We can build on our experience. It is high time to bring new dynamism in resolving long standing issues, like the Doha Development Agenda, which have huge economic impact for our citizens, particularly job creation.

Second the development challenge.

The recent Summit on the Millennium Development Goals in New York demonstrated that we have done much, but much remains to be done. Asia has performed well. Europe is responsible for well over half of the world's development aid. We focus on the least-developed and fragile countries, on social cohesion and on ways to catalyze growth. This will continue to be our focus. But this is a task for all and failure in achieving 2015 targets is not an option.

Third the climate protection challenge.

This remains a top priority for the EU. In the EU we have the most ambitious climate commitments in the world. We will deliver on the pledges we made at Copenhagen on fast start financing. And we have already helped many Asian countries with climate funding. But this is high time also for joint action. We must agree on a balanced set of decisions at Cancun which bring a global agreement closer.

People-to-people contacts are also a very important part of our Asia-Europe partnership. The European Union is making substantial efforts to reach out to peoples of Asia by funding programs in this Area: the Jean Monet professorships at Asian Universities and Erasmus Mundus scholarships for Asian students, for example.

We will spare no efforts to enhance the visibility and transparency of the ASEM process - by funding initiatives such as the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) involving and supporting people-to-people, intellectual and cultural dialogues.

We will also continue to provide not only intellectual input and policy ideas into the ASEM dialogue, but also carrying forward policy, especially on matters in which the European Commission has the responsibility to represent the European Union externally, such as trade, financial and economic regulation, macroeconomic dialogue, climate protection, energy development, research and innovation, and so on – as well as participating fully in all the political dialogues.

I am absolutely certain that our Summit agenda, rich and diverse, but also focusing on concrete global challenges, will be an interesting and productive one.

This is why I look forward to our discussion here today and tomorrow, exploring common ground and new venues of cooperation for a better future for the peoples of Europe.