

November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**TITLE: Swiss support for a unique 'Asia-Europe Public Diplomacy' Training Initiative**

***SUBTITLE: As a new member of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process, Switzerland has chosen to support the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)–DiploFoundation – National Centre for Research on Europe(University of Canterbury) (NCRE) joint partnership on public diplomacy training for diplomats from ASEM countries, with online and in situ courses to be taught throughout 2014 and 2015.***

TEXT: At the biannual meeting of ASEM foreign ministers held on 11-12 November 2013 in New Delhi (India) Switzerland announced its first project support for this Asia-Europe dialogue.

“Understanding between Europe and Asia should match our economic interdependence and provide the basis for the future.” said Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, one year after the Swiss Confederation joined ASEM at its Summit in November 2012 in Vientiane (Laos). He added: “By building on existing research in Asia and Europe, diplomats and officials from both regions who will participate in this unique training initiative should have better understanding of each other.”

Based on the DiploFoundation's internationally recognised online training capacity, and on the Asia-Europe Foundation's (ASEF) extensive knowledge of both regions, the Asia-Europe Public Diplomacy Initiative intends to train up to 100 early career diplomats and stakeholders in the management of public diplomacy and public affairs.

The ASEF- Diplo-NCRE public diplomacy training initiative is the first of its kind bringing together diplomats from Asia and Europe. In addition to online courses delivered by recognised lecturers, two face-to-face trainings will take place, one in Asia and one in Europe. Switzerland is contributing 110 000 SGD (81 000 CHF). The project is a follow-up to the ASEF-NCRE dual perceptions studies ([EU through the Eyes of Asia](#) and [Asia in the Eyes of Europe](#)), which tracked the visibility of Asia in Europe and vice versa.). Taking into account the current interdependence between both continents, mutual public diplomacy efforts can be a tremendous booster to joint future actions and plans.

The partners are actively seeking additional support from institutions in ASEM member countries. The advisory board of the project will meet in Singapore in January 2014.

ANNEX: Project synopsis

ABOUT THE PARTNERS:

**DiploFoundation**(Diplo) is an independent non-profit organisation, with UN consultative status, established in 2002 by the governments of Switzerland and Malta. In 2009, DiploFoundation featured in the World e-Democracy Forum's list of 'Top 10 who are changing the world of Internet and Politics'. Diplo's activities include online and face to face training for officials involved in international relations; strengthening participation of non-state actors; providing capacity development programmes and using and developing tools for e-participation in global governance. [www.diplomacy.edu](http://www.diplomacy.edu)

The **Asia-Europe Foundation** (ASEF) promotes greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Through ASEF, civil society concerns are included as a vital component of deliberations of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). ASEF was established in February 1997 by the participating governments of ASEM and has since implemented over 500 projects, engaging over 15,000 direct participants as well as reaching out to a much wider audience in Asia and Europe. [www.asef.org](http://www.asef.org)

In 2000, the forerunner to the **National Centre for Research on Europe** (NCRE) - the Centre for Research on Europe - was founded at Canterbury. In 2002 a grant from the European Commission was awarded and at this time the Centre became the NCRE. It remains the only EU-dedicated tertiary level centre in New Zealand. Since then, the NCRE has developed significantly in both academic and outreach activities, involving a variety of roles and mechanisms. It has also established an effective form of collaboration with four other New Zealand universities (Auckland, Victoria, Otago and Lincoln) and one Australian university (Melbourne) during this time. Above all, the NCRE has begun the essential process of encouraging and promoting a new generation of New Zealand graduates who have a high level of expertise and interest in the European Union (EU). [www.europe.canterbury.ac.nz](http://www.europe.canterbury.ac.nz)