



AEI's Visit to Wisma Putra *Aidilfitri* Open House

By JOHN PAUL R PETINES, AEI IMIM Student

AEI students and staff were invited to the Malaysian Foreign Ministry's *Aidilfitri* Open House in Putrajaya last December 1, 2003. The visit was arranged by AEI Distinguished Research Fellow and former ASEAN Secretary-General Tan Sri Dato' Ajit Singh. The 29-man delegation was led by AEI Executive Director Prof. Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib.

It was a memorable day for AEI students and staff as it gave them an opportunity to visit the administrative capital of Putrajaya as well as the office of the Foreign Ministry. Everyone was excited as they entered the majestic gates of Wisma Putra.

Malaysian Foreign Minister Y.B. Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar cordially greeted each and every one of the guests from AEI. After which, he invited the delegates to the food stalls to partake of authentic Malaysian cuisine.

As the guests were enjoying their sumptuous

Malaysian meal, the newly-inducted Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, arrives and was warmly welcomed by the Foreign Minister, the Ministry's officers, the diplomatic and expatriate community, and other distinguished personalities and guests. "I never thought the Prime Minister would be this approachable; he shook hands even with the common people," observed Maria Abiti, an AEI student from Italy.

The AEI students and staff did not waste any time and enthusiastically approached the Prime Minister to greet him. They seized the opportunity to take pictures as mementos of this once-in-a-lifetime occasion. Vietnamese student Pham Hai Au declared, "This is a rare event I will truly cherish forever."

Indeed, the memories of this unique experience will always be treasured by the AEI students and staff.

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From left: Romain Revol, Minna Saneri, HE Thierry Rommel (Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Commission to Malaysia) and Prof Dato' Dr Shahril Talib

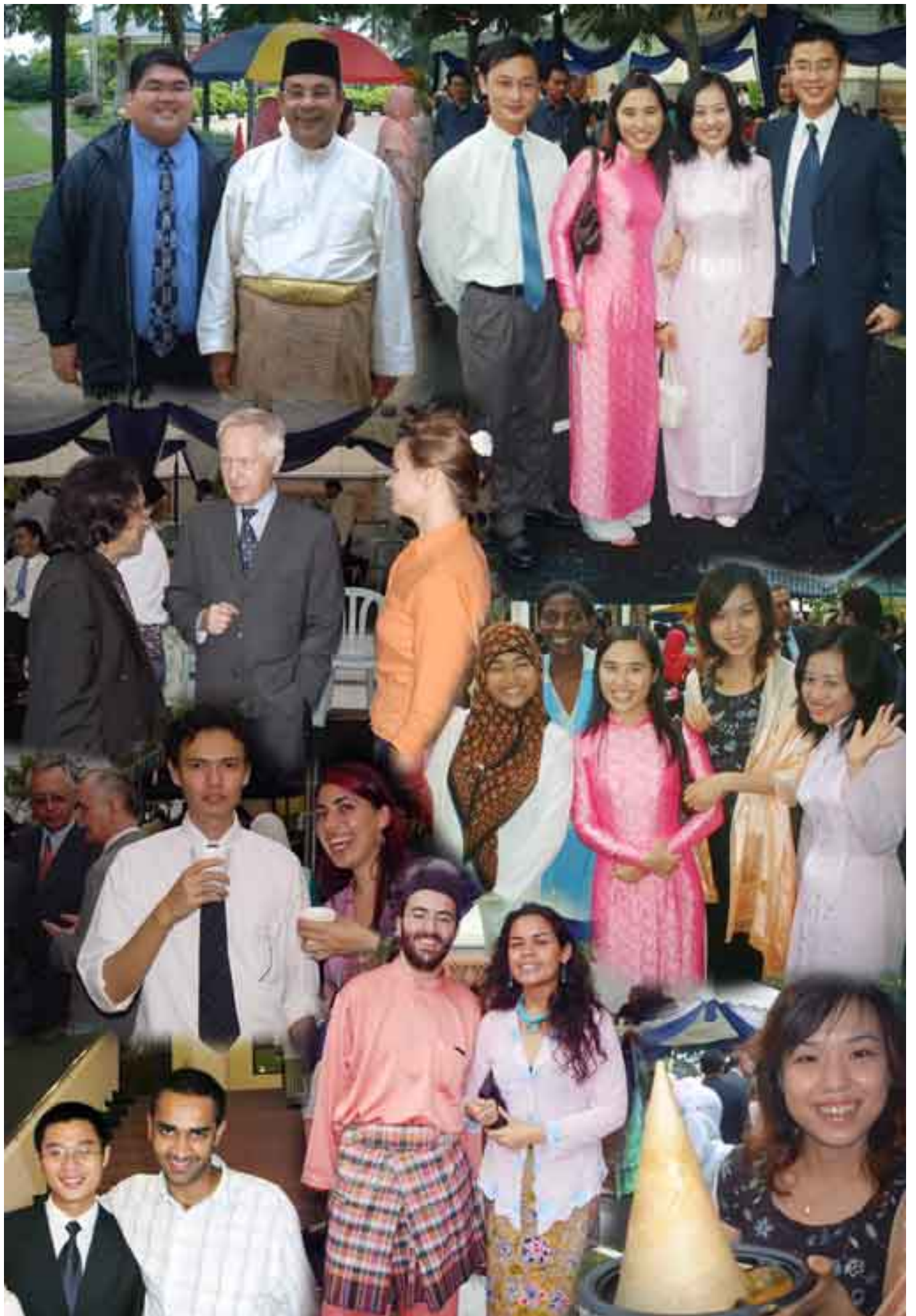


A memorable handshake for students John (centre) and Nguyen (on John's left) with the Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi



Romain Revol proudly presents his "thosai"!

From left: Students Maria (Italy), Carlos (Spain), Khoirunurrofik (Indonesia), Romain (France), Chea (Cambodia), Minna (Finland), Gustavo (Spain) and Vu (Vietnam)



European Distance Education Network (Eden) 2003 Annual Conference

**The Quality Dialogue: Integrating Quality Cultures in Flexible,
Distance and eLearning**

15-18 June, 2003, Rhodes, Greece

The quality issue is considered to be one of the management events that changed the world. It is one of the leading concepts in contemporary civilization. Quality culture is to be firmly established in economic activities, in education, in the sciences, in fact, in all aspects of life. Different stakeholders from the multivarious domains of life define quality indicators differently. The different definitions are from the perspective of stakeholders, customers,



From left: Dr Erwin Wagner (past President of Eden), Dr Ingeborg Bo, (Executive Director of The Norwegian Association for Distance Education – NADE) and Prof Dato' Dr Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid (Malaysian advisor on Lifelong Learning Initiative, Asia-Europe Institute (AEI), Ministry of Education, Malaysia)

partners, citizens and providers. Management gurus provide the overarching framework for understanding the notion of Quality. Management schools throughout the world do provide programmes and courses on the teachings of management gurus, specifically, the quality gurus. Among the most respected and popular of these gurus are Edward Demings, Philip Crosby, Kaoru Ishikawa and J. M. Juran,

In the service industry the dimension of quality include time and timeliness, completeness of service, courtesy, consistency, accessibility, convenience, accuracy and responsiveness. From the customers perspective, the quality characteristics designed into products include performance, features, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, safety, technical innovation and aesthetics. Knowledge from the areas of manufacturing, digital innovations are now brought to bear on the delivery of education.

The European Distance Education Network (EDEN) group boldly takes the steps to explore the quality agenda in relation to distance education. In Malaysia, an organization similar to EDEN is Persatuan Pendidikan Jarak Jauh (PPJJM), that is, The Malaysian Association of Distance Education (MADE). While EDEN covers interested distance educators from all over Europe, MADE, however, attracts the interest of Malaysian educators.

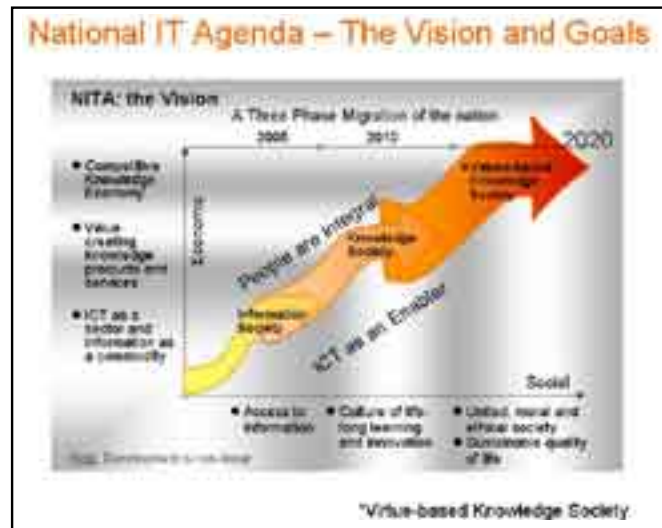
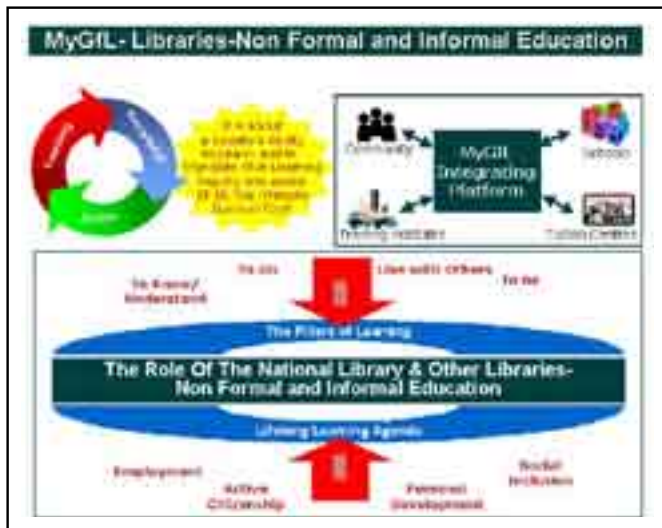
There is a change in the understanding of education. In the newly emerging countries, instruments and mechanism of educational provisions, ideas of open,

flexible, distance and e-learning are creating new settings for education. The notion of boundaryless world and open classroom and open skies are creating new opportunities for all. The boundaries between formal, non formal and informal education are overlapped. It is recognized that quality frameworks, quality assurance procedures represent quality initiatives priority for policy makers and educational providers. Learners, parents, trainer, corporate sector members

are all recipients of what schools, universities and other educational providers offer. Under the circumstances, all these people focus on the quality agenda.

Malaysian Responses to the Quality Agenda

Malaysian responses to the global changes pertaining to education, training and human resource development have been the expansion of private higher education and the establishment, for instance, of the Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR) and the Open University. The corporate universities such as Universiti PETRONAS, Multimedia University and Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN) and the establishment of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) and several university colleges, are also policies to ensure that the policy of the democratization of higher education is adequately realized. To provide linkages with other institutions of higher education abroad, Malaysia approved the establishment of the branch-overseas campuses of several universities such as Monash University, Curtin University and Nottingham University. The initiatives to use Information Communications Technologies to the advantage of the citizenry are also evidenced by the Malaysian project for the establishment of a Malaysian Portal for Learning, specifically, the Malaysian Grid for Learning (MyG). When fully developed, MyG will be one of the portals which could be used for lifelong learning. The conceptualization by NITC on the way forward for the creation of a knowledge-based Malaysian society is as presented in the following diagrams.



Source: IAB/NITC

In Malaysia, the following organizations exercise influence in ensuring the development of the quality agenda, specifically in the education and training fields:

Malaysian Administration Modernization and Planning Unit (MAMPU) and such other organizations as SIRIM and MIMOS; the National Institute of Public Administration – INTAN; the National Institute of Educational Management and Leadership-Institute Aminuddin Baki -IAB and other training organizations; The Inspectorate of Schools, the National Accreditation Council, the Vice-Chancellors’ Council, professional associations such as the Malaysian Association for Education (MAE), the Malaysian Educational Research Association (MERA); the Malaysian Association for Distance Education (MADE). There is an increasing number of Malaysian companies getting involved in eLearning. All these organizations are individually and collectively involved in working to ensure technical standards and contents standards meet and exceed those standards set by international standards organizations. Programs under way which are likely to set and improve the quality standards include the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF). Plans are under way for the founding of the Lifelong Learning Association of Malaysia.

EDEN Conference Proceedings

The EDEN Conferences are professionally recognized as major events in Europe for professionals in open, distance, flexible and eLearning professionals. Every year a high number of experts from Europe attend the conference and an increasing number of people outside of Europe are showing great interest in EDEN Conferences. Experts from different fields have come forward to share their knowledge, experiences and innovations and to raise questions and search for professional and policy solutions. The major fields of focus include information and communications technology, education, policy and practices, innovations at the national and institutional levels. The conference contributes significantly to the further creation of an international community of open and distance education professionals. Various inclusive groups are representatives from the governmental and corporate sectors, community and informal learning networks and local and world class professionals engaged in contributing to meet the challenges of the digital era.

It is noteworthy that the 12th Annual Conference in Rhodes, Greece is held during the Greek Presidency of the European Union (EU). Greece has prioritized ICT and lifelong learning as a means of upgrading the quality of the European education systems.

EDEN is an example of an organization working in a geographically dispersed environment. Dupe itself has extensive and high level experience and practice in distance and eLearning and modern information and communications technologies. The activities of EDEN have brought about synergy in distinguished organizations like the University of Aegean, Lambrakis Research Foundation and Ellenogermaniki Agogi. The bringing together of the experts from various fields is useful in capitalizing on the knowledge and best practices of leading professionals in the field. The EDEN Conference provided the opportunities for the exploration of mainstreaming initiatives. The Conference brought together academia, ICT industry and the publishing sectors, ICT experts, policy makers and teachers and researchers to get them engaged in dialogue regarding various aspects of learning initiatives, issues and problems. Together the participants at individual and group levels consolidate knowledge and raise awareness of the quality agenda and contribute to the visioning and implementing of the strategic learning agenda in Europe

The conference organized by EDEN is indeed another landmark in pushing the frontiers of understanding of the newly emergent exible learning environments to new thresholds.

Dr. Erwin Wagner, Dr. Nikitas Kastis and Dr. Andras Szucs worked collaboratively to ensure the success of the Conference. One hundred and twelve papers were presented during the EDEN Conference. The papers were categorized under the following 11 broad themes:

- Quality in Comprehensive Perspective: Quality Concepts and Approaches in the Globalizing World of Open, Distance and eLearning
- Positioning eLearning Standards, Learning Objects and Specifications to Improve quality
- Design and Development of New Models and eLearning Systems and Solutions – The Quality Dimension
- Valuing the Socio-Cultural Dimension of Quality Development in ODL and eLearning
- Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks and Methods for Enhancing Quality in Distance and eLearning Systems
- National Scale Initiatives for Developing Distance and eLearning Quality and Performance
- Transnational ODL and eLearning Initiatives and Programmes-Quality Issue and the Good Practice
- New Challenges and Solutions for Improving Competencies of Teachers and Tutors in ODL and eLearning
- Quality as Tool for Institutional Innovation and Development in ODL and eLearning – Case Studies
- Cases for Integrating New ICT and Media

Applications in Learning

- And Various Short Presentations

Papers of Interest

While all the papers have their own interest groups, several of the papers attracted attention. Among the papers that attracted much attention are the following:

Quality in the Digital Age – Dr. Paul M. Clark

eLearning and the Quality of Knowledge in a

Globalised World – Sylvia van de Bunt-Kokhuis

Distance Education – A Battlefield for Standards

Susanne Loidl and Alexander Paramythis

Flexibility Beyond Time and Place: Stretching and

Opening the Course – Wim de Boer and Betty

Collis

Quality Culture in Traditional Universities:

A threatening Cultural Change Process? –

Beril Akinci Vural

Women in Distance Learning: 2nd Chance or 3rd Shift? –

Athanassia Aggeli and Paraskevi Vassala

Assessment of Writing Competence in Distance

Education – Maurice De Volder

The Swedish Net University: Quality Issues – Inger

Rathsman

European Universities Managing eLearning – Lorenzo

Cantoni, Benedetto Lepori and Chiara Succi

Distance eLearning for the Hellenic Air Force – A. S.

Andreeatos

For People with Disability - A Sense of Belonging; Real

Benefits from Virtual Presence; Enhancing the

Quality of Learning by Fostering Online

Communication Growth – Mary Bolger.

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)

CEDEFOP can be compared in some ways to any of the institutions in SEAMEO. The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) contributes significantly in the training of specialists in ASEAN. From the 15 SEAMEO institutions, several are specifically dedicated to educational development. These are the Regional English Language Centre (RELC) in Singapore, the Regional Centre for Education in Science and Mathematics (RECSAM) in Malaysia, Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH) in the Philippines, Regional Centre for Vocational and Technical Education and Training (VOCTECH) in Brunei and Regional Training Centre for Educational Management in Vietnam. The contributions of these regional educational institutions in fostering a collaborative understanding of educational challenges among the lead educators and in developing professional and personal self-esteem of lead teachers is significant and critical. This is because the SEAMEO organizations contribute to bring the state of their art knowledge to the region and to ensure that the educational leaders in the ASEAN region master the appropriate competencies and

are second to none in terms of expertise.

In January 2003, Greece took over the Presidency of the European Union for the first Semester. In the field of education, the Presidency has scheduled a number of activities. There are twelve supporting seminars and conferences on a variety of topics planned during the Presidency. The main theme of the activities will be on the New Information and Communication Technologies and Lifelong Learning. The theme focusing on the related activities is expected to move European societies, specifically through the education and training system towards modernization and greater effectiveness. Educators and schools are to play greater roles in the integration of science and the new ICT. One project, for instance, is to link one teacher schools throughout Europe. The role of the Open University and Distance learning in the promotion of Lifelong learning is another supportive theme. The Presidency is also to explore ways and means on how the democratic state can promote education and the important challenge of how there can be interrelation and synergies between local regional governments and lifelong learning.

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) is a European Union Agency. It is a European reference centre for vocational and training matters. CEDEFOP provides policy-makers, researchers, trainers with up-to-date information on developments on vocational education and training so that policy-makers can make informed decisions. CEDEFOP which was established in 1975 has a tripartite Management Board and it works for the Member States, Social Partners and the European Commission as well as for the countries in the European Economic Area. Because CEDEFOP is located in Thessaloniki, it is in a strategic position to help make a special contribution to support the initiatives of the Greek Presidency of the European Union, specifically in the field of vocational and technical education. CEDEFOP will of course continue to contribute to the other countries as it is an organization of the European Union.

After the EDEN Conference a number of participants attended a Seminar-Workshop at CEDEFOP. The organizing Committee was kind and gracious to invite the Malaysian participants to be among the workshop participants at the CEDEFOP Meeting.

CEDEFOP's Library and Documentation services offer a wide range of services and provide users with full updated collection on vocational retraining accessible online. In 2000, the bibliographic database contained 30,000 bibliographical records and the library collection is over 15,000. The numbers have, of course, increased substantially by 2003. The library information strategy is based on a decentralized approach reflected in the documentary information network with representation from 15 Member States plus Norway and Iceland.

CEDEFOP is one of Europe's exciting educational centres responsible for a wide range of cooperative

initiatives. In November 2002 the Ministers of Education, Youth and Culture of the European Union adopted a resolution on enhanced cooperation at European level in the field of vocational education and training. The Council reaffirmed that priority should be given to the European dimension of cooperation, on transparency, information and guidance, on quality assurance and on recognition of competencies and qualifications. Obstacles to occupational and geographic mobility are to be removed and there is to be promotion of access to lifelong elearning with the end result of making Europe recognized as a world-wide reference for learners.

The European CV Initiative-e-Portfolio

Initiatives such as the European CV, certificate and diploma supplements, the common European framework of reference for languages, lifelong learning and the European Employment Strategy, the European Social Fund, and the EUROPASS are to be put together in one common framework. Most of the affirmations and resolutions are confirmation of actions and policies developed primarily in the context of the Report on the Concrete Future Objectives of Education and Training Systems. In March 2002 the European Commission proposed the formulation of a European Curriculum Vitae Format. The CV was designed in conjunction with Member States and Social Partners in collaboration with CEDEFOP, to ensure the success of one of the initiatives in the context of the European Forum on transparency of vocational qualifications. The European CV offers European citizens a new format providing comprehensive overview of their skills and qualifications. Almost 200,000 people have downloaded the CV format available in all official languages of the European Union and the European Economic Area.

The concept of personal portfolios is being rejuvenated by technology. The interest in digital or electronic portfolios is gaining interest because of its multiple dimensions a tool for learning, assessment career and personal development. E-Portfolios help transform individual and organizational learning. It becomes and extended CV establishing links to online databases. It contains personal and professional achievements, team results, all relevant evidence of competencies obtained from course work, learning and practical attachments. E-Portfolios go beyond recording test results but provide a global view of the individual and of the assessment process. It provides a collection of evidence in the academic, professional and social context and allows for inference from proof of competence than from the results of examinations or tests. E-Portfolios help people to manage personal knowledge and competencies, continuing professional development and networking. Trent Batson offered the following comments on e-Portfolios:

“We seem to be beginning a new wave of technology development in higher education. Freeing student

work from paper and making it organized, searchable and transportable opens enormous possibilities for re-thinking whole curricula: the evaluation of faculty, assessment of programs, certification of student work, how accreditation works. In short, e-Portfolios might be the biggest thing in technology innovation on campus. Electronic portfolios have a greater potential to alter higher education at its very core than any other technology application we have known so far.

Research Institutes and Futures Scenarios

CEDEFOP and the European Training Foundation have funded research institutes in several European countries to devise training scenarios and priority strategies for the next ten years. Over 1,000 players and decision-makers from EU nations and candidate countries participated in the research project on Scenarios and Strategies for vocational training and lifelong learning policy and practice in Europe. Three alternative European level scenarios acted out were: 1) Europe on the Edge of Precipice. This is dark picture of Europe with unresolved problems, uncertainty and unemployment and recession. 2) A Protective and Expanding Europe. This is a picture of Europe which provides access for all but still has unemployment and social inequality. 3) A Sustainable and Competitive Europe. In this Europe there is a reduction in unemployment, increase in need for foreign labour, lifelong learning broadly practised. The specialist of the research project recommends continuing strategic dialogue among the social partners, private sector leaders and government leaders to clarify vision and work out future strategies and be prepared for all eventualities.

There is much that Asia, and specifically, that Malaysia can learn bilaterally and multilaterally, from EU governments and social partners on the ways and means and strategies of national development. With the Malaysian socio-economic-and political philosophy of enrich thy neighbour, such cooperation could contribute to a wealthier contemporary civilization and perhaps a more stable world order where states and people are working together towards peace and mutual prosperity, championing basic human rights universally defined and acceptable to all.

3rd DELOS Seminar – “Towards a New Generation of Indicators”

The 3rd DELOS Seminar was held in Thessaloniki, Greece on 19 and 20 June, 2003. DELOS Project is the acronym for Developing a European eLearning Observation System. The DELOS Project is set within the eLearning Action Plan of the European Commission. In Europe today there are many as yet uncoordinated efforts on eLearning. Among the most important of such efforts are SOCRATES, LEONARDO DA VINCI and IST. The DELOS Project aims to monitor and forecast developments in elearning practice, policy and researches

into a comprehensive, relevant, efficient and sustainable Observation System. The DELOS Observation System which coordinates the activities of existing observatories is to support decision-making in colleges, schools, universities, research institutes, government, industry and other organizations.

DELOS has a Strategic Advisory Committee composed of EUROSTAT, EURYDICE, OECD, PROMETEUS, EUN, EuroPACE, IEA, EICTA and EITO. DELOS also has other strategic partners and stakeholders. All of whom are involved in various consultative phases of the project. The 1st DELOS Seminar was held in Brussels, Belgium on 12 and 13 June, 2002. The 2nd DELOS Seminar was held in Parsberg, Germany on 30 and 31 January 2003. The various analyses and consensus building phases of the project worked on the extensive long list of indicators moved to the eLearning core indicators, policy related and eLearning relevant indicators by using the Attribute Indicators Matrix (AIM) to validate each indicator including the list of bridge indicators and the meat data of each relevant indicator. In the process of Indicator refinements, Pillar Indicators were, for instance distinguished from Research Indicators which were excluded from the Document.

Elements of the Attribute Indicator Matrix (AIM) Analysis span the following areas:

Related Main Policy Question; Nature of Indicator; Description and Concept; Subsets; Data Requirements; Closest Available Approximations; Possible Collecting Organization; Year of Data Collection; Periodicity of Data Collection; Language of Existing Indicators; geographical coverage; Availability no, full or partly of indicators; Feasibility; Reliability; Validity; Related Clusters; Related Clusters; Policy Question Relevance; Stakeholder Relevance; Keywords; and Comments.

The 10 DELOS Policy Questions and 6 Important Indicators

For the 3rd DELOS Seminar the consortium had come out with a shortlist of 28 indicators as a whole: 6 core indicators and from 1-4 indicators in for the key policy question areas. The 10 DELOS policy questions are:

1. Access to Learning: Is eLearning an effective means to improve access to learning opportunities?
2. Social Inclusion: Is eLearning actually contributing to social inclusion/preventing social inclusion?
3. Quality of learning: Is eLearning contributing to quality of learning?
4. Cost Effectiveness: Is eLearning cost effective/paying for investment?
5. Employability: Is eLearning making people more employable?
6. Personal Development and Citizenship: Is eLearning contributing to personal development/

socialization citizenship?

7. ICT and Content Industry: Is eLearning an interesting development for the ICT and Content Industry?
8. Organizational Change: Is eLearning a facilitator of organizational change in users organizations (companies, public administration)?
9. Internationalization of E&T: Is eLearning helping the internationalization process of education and training systems in Europe?
10. E&T Innovation: Is eLearning supporting innovation processes in existing Education & Training organizations?

Within the ambit of the 10 Policy Questions are 6 Important Indicators as follows:

1. Percentage of population using Internet for improving E/T (Eurobarometer)
2. ICT expenditure on total E/T expenditure
3. Percentage of eLearning expressed demand on overall E/T demand
4. Budget for IT in ICT as % of total E/T budget
5. Number of new courses offered on internet per year
6. Percentage of educators using ICT in teaching time.

DELOS had also designed the DELOS Indicator Documentation System which shows the possible relationships between information, sources, users and specific stakeholders. The strategy of how to collect information in a useful way and who are to collect specific information was also built into the Documentation system.

Levels of eLearning Reality

DELOS determined the three levels of eLearning Reality as follows:

- 1) Level 1: The actual state of the elearning landscape in Europe, which is not observable in its totality due to the dynamic, diverse and complex development
- 2) Level 2: The existing observation activities which use different sets of indicators to observe and interpret sectors of Level 1 from their respective perspectives
- 3) Level 3: The policy level of the eLearning Action Plan of the European Commission with its aims and objectives.

The initial clusters of DELOS Indicators identified were the following clusters:

- Contextual Factors of Education
- Education Finances
- Access and Participation in Education
- Characteristics of Learning Environments
- ICT Penetration and Use in Education
- Learning and Knowledge Outcome Achievements
- Labour Market and Social Outcomes of

Education

- Other Indicators

The methodological approach is to identify 10 relevant policy objectives. There is then the matching of the expected contribution of e-Learning towards the realization of these policy objectives. There are also 10 sectors corresponding to the 10 policy objectives. This approach has created a synopsis displaying four levels of proximity. The core indicators are the e-learning specific indicators which represent the best diffusion of e-Learning and ICT in Education and Training (E&T) systems. The second indicators in the concentric circle are the Bridge Indicators, linking the e-learning specific indicators to the policy objectives. The third sets of indicators are the policy specific indicators where the indicators are linked to specific policy objectives but not to e-learning. The fourth sets of indicators are the broader and basic statistical indicators on education and training, demographics, economics, and technology. The data encompassing these areas are to be systematically collected by statistical institutes.

In the Malaysian context the series overview studies of "Malaysia in the Information Age" include an initial infrastructure and user study. The MIMOS and National Information Technology Agenda (NITA) study of the 2002 Internet Subscriber Study provides useful insights on the directions of the Flagship Applications under the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) Initiatives. The various indicators in such studies also indicate the trend and readiness and reality in the country for e-Learning.

Sustainability of the DELOS e-Learning Observation System

EU is now embarked on a series of programmes, projects and activities which are not just incremental, continuous improvement and gradual development but are also of more dramatic breakthrough benchmarking nature. One of the existing projects is, of course, the DELOS e-Learning Observation System. This system which encompasses the function of providing information and organization structure, makes varied important information compatible and filling in the information gaps assures sustainability of the system. The significant dimensions of its sustainability include the following aspects and dimensions:

- a) an inventory of existing indicators as database for an indicator system
- b) an evaluation and assessment cycle throughout the development of the Observation System
- c) Exploration and refinements of other approaches to use indicators and to monitor complex developments
- d) Close relations to other monitoring and benchmarking strategies, in particular, to ensure compatibility with an Open Method of Coordination (OMC)
- e) Taking serious efforts of linking existing

observatories.

The design principles of the proposed DELOS include the following:

1. Initial focus on indicators and the building of a collaborative approach
2. Openness among the people who are observing, collecting and analyzing data
3. A Broad framework structure that balances openness and formal agreements at partner and institutional levels
4. A multilayer approach upholding the principle of transparency
5. Decentralization
6. Providing maps of different interests targeted to different stakeholders
7. Digestible indicators and information (easiness to access) and state of the art documentation and communication
8. Flexibility, evolutionary approach and adaptability
9. Emphasis on quality of data
10. The progressive trend of metadata standard description of information
11. Embedding evaluation of process and results, impact. Kind of use et cetera.
12. Making reference to Open Method of Coordination.

The multilayered approach of the DELOS eLearning Observation System includes the hierarchical layers of basic statistics, surveys, analyses and forecasts.

European Wisdom

European Policy research and policy formulation is driven by databases and indicators. While superficial collection and use of indicators can be misleading, the robust and rigorous focus on indicator for policy making allows for sound judgements. European policy makers are favorably disposed towards the use of indicators. Indicators allow decision makers to follow and benchmark developments in any field. In the field of eLearning as in other fields, different individuals and institutions collect data. In the eLearning context in Europe data on eLearning is made available from unofficial sources, often based on ad hoc surveys. Typically, such surveys focus on e-learning specific indicators and the use of ICT in different sectors. National, international companies such as the International Data Corporation (IDC) collect data and the European Commission Eurobarometer funds surveys. The existence of diverse sources of data of variable quality underlines the need for sound and coherent definition of indicators, data sets and data which can provide background analysis and explanation. One of the most crucial functions of DELOS is the highlighting and analyzing of the data indicator gaps.

A lot of practical Europe wisdom with idealism and realities; pooling of rich heritage of expertise, balancing centralization and decentralization; emerging principles of collaboration, sensitivity to the diversity of cultures,

stages of development, different ideologies, unique institutions and different actors, political, bureaucratic, professional and business partners, use of technologies and traditional and emerging knowledge disciplines.

The DELOS Indicator Documentation System has a database design that allows for front-end system to be employed on the website and a back end content management system. The front-end system allows viewers to find, select, and view information on indicators according to specific criteria. The front-end system contains First relevant page, Next page, and search result. The back end content management system allows DELOS partners to upload new indicators or other information to the database either directly or partially. The partners are to come to an agreement before the final loading of data for the public domain. Partners could log in with varying degrees of user rights to add, amend, or delete information on the database and to suggest inclusion of new information. Three perceived user levels are, namely, a public user; a registered user and a full administrative user. The back end system allows full administrator rights, allow users to manage stakeholders, manage policy questions, manage indicator, manage clusters, manage sources, manage organizations/ contacts. The user would have the authority to ADD, Edit or Delete information. The Data Tables include Indicators, Policy Questions, Policy Indicator Map, Stakeholder and Stakeholder Policy Map, Source, Organization, Contacts, Attribute Indicator Matrix, Other Tables.

The SEQUEL – Sustainable Environment for the Evaluation of Quality in E-Learning Project

The SEQUEL – Sustainable Environment for the Evaluation of Quality in eLearning Project is a joint initiative of the eLearning Industry Group (eLIG) and a number of expert organizations and associations at all levels of education and training. It brings together the companies in the eLearning industry that provides the tools and services, the expert agencies and the users. SEQUEL, Supported by the MENON network aims to establish a European eLearning Quality Forum (EeQF). The EeQF will address the issues of Quality assessment, evaluation and conformance practice; cases of “good practice” and design guidelines and quality assurance frameworks (with criteria and standards). The main activity of the project is to foster inclusive and comprehensive consensus-building regarding the various quality approaches to quality definition and quality assurance practices currently used by a broad range of stakeholders in education and training in the public and private sectors. The EeQF is to explore the different “cultures of quality” from the perspectives of user groups including industry, academia, professional organizations and students and teachers. These cultures of quality to be explored include different quality concepts, principles, habits, visions, technical solutions, content development guidelines, etc. The project output

for the sustainable environment for eLearning standards conformance and quality assurance are to include reports, quality certification laboratory, guidelines, validation workshops and e-learning quality conference. The partners for the SEQUEL Project include MENON Network EEIG as coordinator, eLearning Industry Group (EIIG), CEDEFOP Eifel (European Institute for eLearning), EDEN-European Distance Education Network, EUROPACE, European Students Association (ESIB), the University of Reading and the University of Edinburgh.

Key Messages of the L-Exchange Study

The L-Exchange Study of the overall analysis of innovation in Education and Training raised and summarized the following Key Messages:

1. eLearning survived the collapsing – e-bubble and is less damaged than other ‘e-’s.
2. Quality: clear consensual priority, but different roadmaps of different groups of actors confused.
3. Reuse: big promise with underestimated time-consuming processes, still struggling with the ‘not invented here’ phenomenon and underdeveloped inter-institutional reuse.
4. Converging European aims need adapted policies strategies to meet the needs of quite differently matured national markets
5. The ‘blended learning’ trend favours reputed E&T actors ‘embedding’ eLearning in a credible and sensitive way into the traditional offers.
6. Growing of services with ‘sandwich functionalities’ (from orientation and consultancy to accredited certification and competence performance support).
7. Learners accept eLearning as a method to reach competencies desired, not being only curious ‘how eLearning works.’
8. Coordinated/embedded multi-area policies not to lose focus on eLearning
9. Professionalism of eLearning institutions and persons: clear-out in progress, not more actors needed on short term, fostering quality, and networking and regulated fair competition.
10. Improving transferability of skills and competencies (between educational sectors and formal/informal learning) seen as a strategic role for eLearning
11. Need for a value-oriented deeper debate on aims of learning and ownership of learning results

Evolution of Education and Training Policy Overview, Insights and Trends

The policy overview of the field of eLearning and broader education and training innovation indicate a positive trend in policy evolution. The possible policy eLearning aims that should be formulated include policies in the following policy cluster objectives:

- Infrastructure

- Inclusivity
- Competence in using ICT
- The eLearning Market
- Learning Through ICT
- Learner Centered Approach
- Learner Support
- Qualifications and Assessment
- Monitoring
- Quality Assurance

The broader factors affecting the Evolution of Education and Training include the following insights and trends:

1. A climate of discontinuity and uncertainty in redistribution of resources and allocation of investments
2. Slowdown of economic growth in uencing market dynamics and public investments trends with reduced investments in education and training and stronger emphasis on privacy and security issues
3. Decrease of ICT market growth
4. Changing individual priorities in uencing individual behaviours and choices because of globalized wars, con icts and terrorism
5. Increasing policy focus on security and privacy
6. E-Government gradually in place within public administration and with indirect effects on the adoption of eLearning
7. The increasing importance of education in the policy agenda to increase awareness and overcome persisting gaps. Obsolete and too bureaucratic administrative systems hindering innovation and implementation of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning blurring the boundaries of formal, nonformal and informal learning.
8. eLearning policies are moving from infrastructure to skills development and employability and increased concerns placed on quality issues and educational performance
9. The growth and upgrading of teachers’ eLearning qualification programmes
10. Contradictory trends in investment in education and increase of pubic investments in eLearning
11. There is smaller market growth in eLearning than predicted
12. Regional and global eUniversities begin to appear with new business models, mainly in partnerships and consortia of existing institutions with the aim of retaining their dominant position and responding to changing needs of demand and technological innovation challenges
13. Emergence of new top priority in establishing legal framework for management of intellectual digital property rights (IPR) in the digital field.
14. Open Source Software (OSS) counterbalanced with Government Security Program (GSP)



Mohd. Anuar Mohd. Zainun, from the Ministry of Education, Malaysia (right), with another participant



Walter Kugemann (left), and Werner Herrmann



Ms Maruja Gutierrez Diaz, Head of Multimedia Unit, European Commission (left), and Dr. Claudio Dondi, President of SCIENTER



Dr. Claudio Dondi, President of SCIENTER (left), making a presentation



Participants making their way to the DELOS Conference in Thessaloniki



"AEI in safe hands".
Dr Erwin Wagner (left), with
Prof Dato' Dr Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid

15. Growing and Maturing Quality Awareness in Education and Training
16. The increasing acceptance of new technologies integration in learning and the increase in numbers of “pioneering” teachers using ICT in the teaching-learning processes.

Lessons for Malaysia

The Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) has prepared an initial proposal paper pertaining to the identification and building of Indicators of Lifelong Learning in Malaysia. An initial mapping exercise is to involve a comprehensive and inclusive group of representatives directly and indirectly engaged in the Lifelong learning and eLearning initiatives in Malaysia. The National Task Force Forum is to determine the infrastructure supporting lifelong learning in Malaysia. The Government’s existing policy objectives as well as new policy objectives are to be identified. Such objectives will incorporate objectives pertaining to access to learning, social inclusion, bridging the digital divide, the quality of learning, return on investment for learning, internationalization, intercultural, employability, personal development, active citizenship and innovation. Suggested areas which need attention for promoting and expanding the Lifelong learning Initiative in Malaysia include the following areas: Government Policies, Plans and Strategies, Current Status of Lifelong Learning Practices in Malaysia; Lifelong learning support including infrastructure support in Malaysia; Awareness raising initiatives which could be implemented; training initiative including adult, vocational-technical, civil service training and incentive schemes. Indicators for Lifelong Learning in Malaysia which could be explored and developed include the following: Access to LLL including indicators on infrastructure and incentives; Participation in LLL; Investment in LLL; Educators’ involvement in LLL; ICT in LLL; Strategies of LLL; Coherence of supply-degree of coverage of formal and non – formal demand for LLL; Guidance and counseling; Accreditation and certification of LLL; Quality assurance of LLL; Demographics of LLL, e.g. Profiles of learners in LLL and Profiles of providers.

As Malaysia moves forward in promoting Lifelong learning and lifewide learning in the country, it should explore the policy and implementation experiences of other nations, particularly the experiences of the European Union. To this end, policy makers and lifelong learning champions in the country should study the documents which constitute significant works pertaining to the subject, such as the following:

- *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (European Commission, SEC (2000) 1832, October 2000).
- *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* (European Commission, COM (2001) 678 final, November, 2001).
- *Lifelong Learning – An Overview of National*

Measures in EU Member States and Candidate Countries (European Trend Chart on Innovation-European Commission, DG Enterprise).

Documents specifically related to the identification and formulation of indicators includes the following:

- *European Report on Quality Indicators of Lifelong Learning* (European Commission and Eurostat, February, 2001).
- *Lifelong Learning Practice and Indicators-Commission Staff Working Document* (European Commission, November, 2001);
- *Report on Eurostat Task Force on Measuring Lifelong Learning* (European Commission, June 2002).

In addition to materials from the European perspective, other works from other nations and regions should be the reference points as well. Among these other works from other traditions are the following:

- Longworth, Norman and Davies, W. Keith. *Lifelong Learning*. Kogan Page, London, 1996.
- *Comparative Studies on Lifelong Learning Policies* (National Institute for Educational Research of Japan and UNESCO), March, 1997.
- *Making Lifelong Learning a Reality* (IIEP/ UNESCO-KRIVET International Policy Seminar, June 2003. Rosemary S. Caffarella, *Planning Programs for Adult Learners*, Jossey Bass, New York, 2002.

These various seminal works constitute a treasury of literature on lifelong learning which could be used as benchmarks and “best practices” and “pitfall” reference frameworks for Malaysian policy makers and implementers of the Lifelong Learning Initiative in the country. As there is the maturing of the lifelong learning initiatives in Malaysia and there is the momentum and strategic achievement from the initiatives, the Malaysian experience and examples can be the reference models for other societies. It is so very critical that countries share their experiences and initiatives in order to ensure relevance, effective and efficient use of scarce resources for the initiatives. In fact, as nations share their experiences regarding the provisions of formal educational opportunities to their citizenry from Pre-school through primary, secondary and tertiary education, there is a need to share similar experiences in the lifelong learning initiatives. As there is the International standard Classification for Education (ISCED) in the formal education context, there could one day be an expansion of the existing classification to be more comprehensive or the formulation of a separate and different International Standard Classification for Lifelong Learning (ISCLL). ■

International Workshop: New Perspectives on Asian Epistemologies : Japan

22 –24 September 2003

By DR. PATRICIA MARTINEZ, AEI Senior Research Fellow

As part of its commitment to enhancing research between Asia and Europe, the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) through its Intercultural Studies Research Hub is developing a series of workshops that explore new perspectives in epistemology. A fundamental premise of this exploration is how knowledge is constructed, transferred and appropriated, and an area that has received little attention is how these dynamics have evolved among Asians. Analyzing, reflecting upon and theorizing how knowledge is constructed in Asia and between Asians is useful for understanding the kinds of capabilities, sensitivities, skills and insights that have evolved among Asians. The ramifications for the future are enhancing collaboration despite our language and cultural differences in Asia, as well as furthering area studies.

The West is developed and leads in so many areas, including academia, because it has a history of being willing to be self-analytical about knowledge itself, and then writing about the findings of such analyses. There is a whole tradition of ‘epistemology’ or the study of knowledge, asking what it is that constitutes the study and exchange of knowledge, why it is significant, and how those in the West have gone about it. We have no such tradition in Southeast Asia. So it is time we examined how Asians learn from and about each other.

We have many differences that divide us as Southeast Asians



Welcome address by YBhg Prof. Dato' Dr Shaharil Talib (left) and YBhg Tan Sri Datuk Mohamed Khatib Abdul Hamid with his opening remarks

PANEL 1 The Value of Our Learning Experience



Dr Awang Hasmadi Awang
Mois, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia



Associate Prof Dr Cynthia Neri Zayas,
University of the Philippines, Diliman



Prof Dr I Ketut
Surabaya, University of Indonesia



Prof Dr Nguyen Van Lich,
National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam



Prof Consuelo Joaquin-Paz,
University of the Philippines, Diliman

and also in terms of ‘Asia’ itself: these differences are significant – in language, culture and religion. Yet, we have not just co-existed,

we have, over thousands of years, also learned from each other. We have appropriated, assimilated, co-opted knowledge about each other, and been appropriated, assimilated and co-opted in return. Yet, we almost never talk about such a process, as Asians.

The first in a series of workshops that explored these new perspectives in Asian epistemology was on Japan. It was held at the end of September at AEI. The University of the Philippines, Diliman and also Chulalongkorn University of Thailand provided collaboration.

The participants were an elite group of Southeast Asians who have studied in Japan, well regarded in their areas of specialization, from Indonesia, the Philippines, Myanmar, Vietnam and Malaysia. Also with them were Japanese scholars and an Italian scholar who studied in Japan.

There were 5 panels and a plenary. The papers were on a variety of topics that were the area of expertise of the presenter, but what was significant was the exploration of how each of these specialists acquired knowledge, exchanged knowledge and in turn changed Japanese academia.

By analyzing and naming the dynamics of knowledge exchange, we opened up so many possibilities and potential for furthering study among ourselves as Asians, for assisting each other, for bilateral and multilateral co-operation in every field – from foreign relations and economics, to culture and the Arts. ■

PANEL 2
Japanese Experience of Change



Associate Prof Dr Shamsulbahiah Ku Ahmad, AEI, University of Malaya



Associate Prof Dr Viveca V Hernandez, University of the Philippines, Diliman



Associate Prof Dr Rujhan Mustafa, University Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia



Prof Dr Graciano P Yumul, Jr, University of the Philippines, Diliman



Associate Prof Dr Tin Win, Meiktila Institute of Economics, Myanmar



Associate Prof Dr Cynthia Neri Zayas, University of the Philippines, Diliman

PLENARY
Creation of new knowledge network: some perspectives from a Southeast Asia-trained Japanese scholar



Ichiro Sugimoto, AEI, University of Malaya

PANEL 5
Experiencing Japanese Theatre Arts in the Philippines



Dr Patricia Martinez, AEI, University of Malaya



Prof Dr Ermelinda R Roman, University of the Philippines, Diliman



Associate Prof Dr Amparo Adelina C Umali III, University of the Philippines, Diliman



Ms Naomi Matsumoto, Sinag Arts Foundation, Japan



Prof Dato' Dr Shaharil Talib, AEI, University of Malaya

PANEL 3
Balancing Responsibilities



Dr Stephen Leong, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia



Prof Dr Ricardo Trota Jose, University of the Philippines, Diliman



Mr Duong Quoc Thanh, Institute for International Relations, Hanoi, Vietnam



Prof Dr Nu Nu Yin, Yangon Institute of Economics, Myanmar



Dr Giovanni Capannelli, Asian Development Bank; Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

PANEL 4
Exploring Japanese Narratives



Prof Dr Mohamed Yusoff Ismail, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia



Prof Jerry C Respeto, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines



Dr Bambang Wibawarta, University of Indonesia



Prof Jose Wendell P Capili, University of the Philippines, Diliman



Associate Prof Makoto Ishibashi, Trinity College of Quezon City, Philippines

Interview **DR. GEOFFREY N. DICK** *Visiting Australian Professor*

By MANIQUE A.E. COORAY, *AEI Senior Research Assistant*



Dr. Geoffrey Dick visited Asia-Europe Institute on an invitation extended by the Institute to deliver a series of lectures on Introduction to Information Technology to the AEI International Master Degree students (Academic year 2003/2004) in his capacity as a Visiting Professor from 25th September 2003 to 3rd October 2003.

He is presently attached to the School of Information Systems, Technology and Management, UNSW Sydney, Australia. Among his many other Academic and Professional service positions Dr. Geoffrey is currently the President of the governing board of the International Academy for Information Management and a Visiting Professor, at Georgia Southern University, USA.

Q: Have you been to Malaysia prior to this visit? What are your impressions of this country?

Prof: Yes, I have been to Malaysia several times but always on vacations Initially I was here about a decade ago We had a holiday in Kuala Lumpur and Camaron Highlands. Since then I have been here a few times to Malacca and Kuala Lumpur.

If I am to talk about the impression of this country: perhaps we could consider Malaysia as cross roads of the world both in the geographical sense and in the mixed cultures of Malaysia. Being an Australian, it represents cross roads in another sense, as we associated people with other cultures.

Q: What are your impressions of the Institute?

Prof: The idea of linking young graduate students from Asia and Europe is a terrific concept. I think the building in which the Institute is housed is ideally suited for interaction among these students. It seems to me the course I am involved with works very well with students coming from very different countries and backgrounds.

If I may return to my comment on the cross roads before I think the idea behind the setting up of the Institute is probably a good example of cross roads in action, enabling people of different nationalities to come together. We are also at a point in the history where an alliance between Asia and the Europe might well diffuse the pressure of an unchallenged, world power.

Q: What were your expectations of teaching the International Master Degree students? If you make a comparison with your students in Australia what similarities and differences do you find in the students at AEI?

Prof: In my home University we have undergraduate students whose standard of education is very high in Australia. These students are in a programme which is attractive and demanding. The students at AEI certainly exceeded my expectations in English language proficiency. They possess a high command of English and seem to understand me well even with my Australian accent. From what I have seen to date, their work is of a very high standard and they are keen to understand the implications surrounding the use of Information Technology.

Q: How would your course contribute to the International Master Degree Programme?

Prof: Yes this is something that Prof Bryant (Coordinator of the International Masters in Information Management) discussed with me. He felt that we need the students to have some exposure to information technology as a part of their principal course.

And I think it is vital for these students to derive as much practical knowledge during the programme as possible as most of the students will one day be holding managerial positions.

When new technology is introduced it causes upheavals. It causes change and, in many cases, fear, along with exploiting the opportunities which it is set up to do. I think it is very important that the students understand the balance between ups and downs in Information Technology.

Q: As an Australian what are your views of the development of the ASEM process as well as ASEAN +3 concept?

Prof: If you examine the history, Australia has experienced mixed relations with many parts of Asia, including Malaysia. Though Australia is not

closely linked with the ASEM process, the nation finds itself in a sort of a unique position in Asia - a kind of a white, or a European outpost. Australia struggles to define its role in Asia.

As the political scene changes I believe that it is important for Australia to be a part of Asia and contribute on an equal basis for the development of achieving the objectives of ASEM. Perhaps in some small way my being here and teaching in this programme goes a little way in that direction.

Q: What do you consider to be the main benefits of a multicultural learning environment such as the Asia-Europe Institute and what role can it play in the ASEM process?

Prof: If my reply to this question is based on Information Technology I must say that we are continually told that Information Technology makes the world a small place. I have been stressing to the students, the opportunities and the future of the Internet. The local work environment and work practices are important in the globalised world.

I think perhaps bringing students from cross-cultural backgrounds will make them understand the traditional values and traditional practices of each other. This will enhance their knowledge in adapting to different circumstances in a working environment.

Q: Considering the multicultural setting of the Institute do you consider cultural diversity as an inhibitor or catalyst in fostering educational and intellectual exchange?

Prof: I believe that group study acts as a catalyst in fostering cross-cultural backgrounds and in bringing people together. Students try to work in small groups and comment on a theory or an exercise presented to them from a very practical point of view. Therefore the multicultural backgrounds of the students in the class promote the sharing of diversified views in their understanding of the theories and the practices that they are examining.

Q: To sum up could you tell me your views on your teaching experience here at AEI?

Prof: I will be interested to see what the students have to say on this matter!

But certainly from my perspective my module has gone very well. They, the students have shown a great interest and a willingness to be involved in discussions. They were very keen to contribute, enthusiastic in their discussions, and in undertaking their practical exercises. I therefore enjoyed my first visit to AEI, teaching these students and I hope to be here again soon. ■

CULTURAL PROGRAMME

By SOPHIA KIZILBASH, AEI Senior Research Assistant

For list of movies in January 2004, please visit our website at <http://www.asia-europe-institute.org>

Cultural Programmes during the last quarter:

OCTOBER

1st - **KREIDLER** Concert - Germany - German Trio - GOETHE Institut Inter Naciones, KL

8th - *Por si no te vuelvo a ver* (If I never see you again) - Mexico - Embassy of Mexico, Kuala Lumpur

15th - *Wekande Walauwa* (The Mansion by the Lake) - Sri Lanka - High Commission of Sri Lanka

22nd - Behind the Sun - Brazil

NOVEMBER

4th - 16th - "Germany in Mind" poster exhibition

No other programmes due to Fasting Month

DECEMBER

2nd - "Shaping a Foreign Policy - The Case of Switzerland", a talk by HE Dr. Peter A.

Schweizer, Ambassador of Switzerland in Malaysia

3rd - *Halbe Treppe* (Grill Point) - Germany - GOETHE Institut Inter Naciones, KL

10th - *Les Petites Couleurs* (The Small Colours) - Switzerland - Embassy of Switzerland

17th - *Escape to Paradise* - Switzerland - Embassy of Switzerland

The German-based electronic trio KREIDLER



The last quarter of 2003 was filled with much cultural programmes at AEI, hosting a diverse range of activities. The German-based electronic trio KREIDLER started the cultural programmes for October. Their performance and was organised jointly by AEI and the GOETHE Institut Inter-Nationes, Kuala Lumpur.

The remainder of the year was packed with activities, mainly involving cultural exchanges in collaboration with the diplomatic community. The first film of October, *Por si no te vuelvo a ver* (If I never see you again), was provided by the Mexican Embassy and introduced personally by His Excellency Ambassador Alfredo Pérez Bravo showing his support for this cultural collaboration.

The second film of October, *Wekanda Welawa* (The Mansion by the Lake) literally brought its all-star cast. This award-winning film was introduced by HE High Commissioner Rosy Senanayake and not only brought

Sri Lankan community leaders from the Malaysian Sinhalese Association, Sasana Abhiwurdhiwardhana Society and Sri Jayanthi Association but those involved in the making of the film itself. Film star Ravindra Randeniya attended the screening as well as the film's producer, Chandran Ratnam who briefly addressed the audience.

During to fasting month of *Ramadhan*, there were no cultural programmes planned. There was however the "Germany in Mind" poster exhibition from the 4th-16th November sponsored by DaimlerChrysler Malaysia and the Goethe Institut. This art competition was sponsored to amass students' reactions on the perceptions between Germany and Malaysia-including immediate images, responses and stereotypes.

Finally in December, the Embassy of Switzerland hosted a 'Swiss Highlights' month at the University Malaya, of which AEI hosted three events. ■

On 2nd December 2003, the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) hosted Ambassador of Switzerland in Malaysia, HE Dr. Peter A. Schweizer's lecture entitled, "Shaping a Foreign Policy: The Case of Switzerland" as part of a month-long series of events at the University of Malaya called the "Swiss Highlights". The Embassy of Switzerland organized several events in December at the university including lectures, an art exhibition, films, and a poetry reading session by Ambassador Schweizer. The poster exhibition was housed at the Muzium Seni Asia entitled "Classic Arts of the World", comprising representations of art works from around the globe.

Specifically at AEI, three events were scheduled including Ambassador Schweizer's lecture on Swiss foreign policy. As a collaboration with AEI's December cultural programme, two films were screened on 10th December and 17th December. The first was "*les Petites Couleurs*" (The Small Colours), a film about a woman testing her boundaries and finding love through untraditional life choices. The second film shown, "Escape to Paradise" addressed more pressing social issues, those of the plight of Kurdish refugees in Geneva and the challenges they faced along with other immigrant communities in Switzerland.

In his "Shaping a Foreign Policy: The Case of Switzerland" lecture, HE Ambassador Peter Schweizer's highlighted various historical influences, influencing the current foreign policy positions of Switzerland:

Early efforts for defining a role in external affairs

- birth of a pro-active Swiss foreign policy was induced by the establishment of the Swiss Federation in 1848, functioning as a Federal State
- creation of the Red Cross that determined the outlines of the present Swiss image
- neutral, non-belligerent nation with an active interest in international co-operation for the furtherance of peace and human values

Redefining foreign policy in a globalised world

- political vest of 'neutrality' suited Switzerland during earlier history and kept it out of the two World Wars-however, that any declaration of neutrality has not much value, if it is not supported by hard facts and circumstances



Ambassador of Switzerland to Malaysia HE Dr. Peter A. Schweizer (right), with Prof Dato' Dr Shaharil Talib and Maimuna Hamid Merican

The present guidelines of swiss foreign policy

- Switzerland wants to be respected as a predictable, co-operative and responsible partner in international affairs
- classical definition of Swiss foreign policy has been since 1848: "to ensure the external security of Switzerland and the preservation of its independence and neutrality"
- shift from the Nation's traditional inward-looking egotism to a participatory approach towards a global management of values and resources. Neutrality figures no longer as an aim in itself, but is now considered to be one of several means for pursuing the specified goals

Conclusions

No sustainable foreign policy can be implemented, if

- a) it is not credible
- b) the means for carrying it out are not at hand
- c) it is not reflected in a strong national determination shared by the entire population.

- use of one, equitable standard for dealing with international problems and not treat a situation different from others, just because it happens to concern a nation adhering to one culture, religion or ideology rather than the other

The lecture was followed by a lunch at AEI, where graduate students could discuss the topic of the lecture in greater detail. ■



Interviews: AEI Alumni Network

By MAMIKO HADA, former AEI Senior Research Assistant
currently residing in the U.S.

Happy New Year! I hope this year will be a fruitful one for everyone. For the first issue of the AEI News of 2004, we interviewed Alessandra Pala from Italy. Let's hear what her experience pre-, during and post-AEI has been. If you are interested in joining AEI Alumni Network, please drop me a line at mhada@vzavenue.net Happy reading!



Alessandra Pala, from Italy, is currently working as the Executive Director of a youth NGO, the International Federation of Liberal Youth (ILFRY) in Brussels, Belgium. While AEI has welcomed a lot of young interns who are finishing their first degrees, Alessandra was an unusual addition—she was working on her Master's degree already with a significant work experience in NGO under her belt.

Q: Please tell us a little bit about your background before joining AEI.

Alessandra: Well, I graduated with a BA in Political Sciences, majoring in International Politics, in Pisa, Tuscany, the beautiful town famous for the leaning tower. I immediately moved to Rome afterwards to attend a postgraduate course in International Politics, Development and Cooperation with a specialization in Protection and Promotion of Human Rights. In the meantime I was working in a development cooperation NGO and gaining work experience in the field I chose for my career. I also attended a training course in Pisa for International Election Observers, and this helped me be selected by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to supervise the elections in Kosovo in 2001. Just before going to that mission I was accepted for a Master's programme in Development Cooperation and Project Design and was awarded a scholarship by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy.

While I was working on my Master's degree, I came to know AEI. During the summer of 2002 all the students in my programme were expected to spend two months for an internship in a foreign country, preferably in a developing country, as part of the requirement to earn a Master's degree. I chose Bangladesh as my first choice, but then my previous experience in India made me realize that I wouldn't be able to survive for two months in Bangladesh eating spicy food! I need to explain why I was in India: at the end of April 2002, I went to Chennai, India for

two weeks to help run a seminar "Women for Peace in Asia" with the NGO where I used to work with. It was by all means a wonderful experience from a personal point of view, but I had a hard time adjusting to their spicy food. So, only one month before my scheduled departure, I decided to change my country of destination. And that's when I decided to go to Malaysia and this has been a choice I never regretted! How it happened was that my internship coordinator proposed AEI to me, specifically its international office. I arrived on the tenth of July and left on the fourth of September 2002.

Q: What projects did you work on while at AEI?

Alessandra: In the very beginning I was told that AEI didn't have any projects going on, because everything stopped for the summer break. I felt a little bit frustrated but then I decided I would conduct a research on my own on an issue that could be considered important for AEI as well as for me. I was working as Gender Officer in my NGO so I was interested on conducting a research project on a gender issue. Furthermore, AEI was planning on starting a Master's programme on Small and Medium Enterprises at that time, and this gave me the idea of combining the two needs in one research on Women's Micro Entrepreneurship in Malaysia. Since it was an independent research I worked alone, but all the AEI staff helped me secure appointments with various Ministers' officers. This experience helped me realize that I was able to work independently, without any tutorial help and it made me more confident.

Q: Can you give us a comparison of the academic institutions that you know in Italy and AEI?

Alessandra: According to my experience, universities and the academic institutions in Italy are completely different from AEI. But I should say that the Italian academic institutions are different from those in any other countries. Our university system has been changing these past few years in order to harmonize it with those in other countries,

especially in EU. We also didn't have any Master's degrees until a couple of years ago. We did have specialization courses, and even though they were very hard and thorough, they were not recognized in other countries.

AEI's strength is its multicultural environment that helps people from Malaysia to understand European cultures better and Europeans to get to know the multicultural Malaysia, abandoning prejudices and stereotypes. Personally, I always regarded myself as an open-minded person and I was able to experience this at AEI, so I really "used" this great chance to know myself better.

Q: Now tell us what you have done after leaving AEI.

Alessandra: Actually, I worked hard to leave AEI a week earlier than my scheduled date because I needed to be in Italy earlier. This was because I was selected by OSCE again to monitor the elections in Macedonia in mid September 2002. It has been a wonderful (and a little bit dangerous) experience and it made me realize that I would like to work in the Balkan region. I also decided to leave the NGO I had been working with and found a new job in Brussels almost immediately.

Q: Tell us a bit more about your current job.

Alessandra: In mid November 2002 I started in my new position as Executive Director of a youth NGO, the International Federation of Liberal Youth (IFLRY) in Brussels, Belgium. My tasks are diverse, given that I'm the only person employed. I take care of the day-to-day work of the organization, such as accounting, organization of activities (such as seminars, training courses, and congresses), writing grants to fund these activities, and answering to any request from our member organizations from all over the world. This job allows me to be involved in projects from the very beginning until completion, like finishing up a final report to the funding body all by myself. The challenging part is to search for new funding bodies and to come up with budget lines to broaden the organization's activities in the world.

But at the same time since I'm still responsible for a project on women's development in Pakistan through my former organization, I went there in September 2003 for an evaluation mission. It has been a great learning experience for me, knowing and speaking with women who are usually treated as just mere numbers.

Q: What kind of projects have been implemented in your current organization?

Alessandra: Up till now, they are mainly

training courses. So far, I have run a seminar on Human Rights and International Law in Strasbourg (France) and a training course on Advocating Youth Perspective in Belgrade (Serbia). I have also applied to other grants to fund future seminars in other parts of Europe.

Q: What kind of projects are planned in the future?

Alessandra: Since I saw the ASEF (Asia-Europe Foundation) call for projects, I immediately thought of Malaysia. I submitted a proposal for a seminar on "Advocating Human Rights: Position of Young People in Society" to be held in June 2004 in KL. I think this would be a great opportunity for young leaders from both Asia and Europe to know each other better, to discuss the situation of human rights in their own country and hear others, and explore how they can make a difference in protecting and promoting human rights. KL is the perfect venue for such an event: a city with an Asian heart that also appreciates Western values. And just a few days ago I received the great news from ASEF: they approved my project, so I'll be back in KL!!!

Q: Congratulations! How do you like Belgium so far?

Alessandra: I can't give a short description of Belgium; there is so much to say! But I can say for sure that I never expected it to be so cold! Besides this, I regret to say that I had a better impression of Belgium before I arrived here.

My feelings aside, Belgium is divided into three regions: Walloon, Flanders and Brussels, the capital. In the first two regions there is a very strong sense of belonging to a "different country". In Walloon they only speak French and in Flanders the language people use is Flemish (there is also a small part where they speak German) and Brussels is bilingual. I didn't find the "capital of Europe" to be what I expected it to be. I have had the impression that Belgians are very strict and less flexible compared to Italians or Malaysians who I think live a more comfortable life. But I recognize the fact that a foreigner who doesn't speak a word of French, Flemish or Dutch won't have any problems in Belgium, while it will be a problem in Italy! I'm not planning to stay in Brussels for a long time, but you never know what life offers to you!

Q: Any message to the current AEI students and friends?

Alessandra: Just one: I hope to see you next year in KL. I miss you very, very much!!! ■

Bicara at Déjeuner [Discussion Over Lunch]

By DR KHADIJAH MUHAMED, AEI Senior Research Fellow

The Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) launched its *Bicara at Déjeuner* (Discussion Over Lunch) Programme this term. '*Bicara*' is a Malay word for an exchange of views and '*Déjeuner*' is French for lunch thus the title '*Bicara at Déjeuner*'. This was chosen to reflect the spirit of what is being done at the Asia-Europe Institute in fulfilling its role as the center for the meeting of minds and experiences of east and west. The special series of discussions is focused on bringing together the business and corporate sectors into the campus community. The speakers are chosen from the respective sectors of the economy to share with the audience their experiences.

The inaugural session of '*Bicara at Déjeuner*' was launched on the 15th of October 2003 by the Academic Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malaya, Profesor Dato' Dr. A. Hamid b. A. Hadi. In his opening speech the Deputy Vice-Chancellor praised AEI on the initiatives of the Institute for promoting interaction between the students, academic, public and business communities through the *Bicara at Déjeuner* programme.



Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Prof Dato' Dr A Hamid A
Hadi



Dato' Yatina Yahaya is an Executive Director of DRB HICOM Berhad. She was appointed to the Board on 20 March 1998. She currently holds the position of Senior Group Director, Management Support & Group Synergy of DRB-HICOM. She is a member of the Board's Executive Committee. She holds a Bachelor of Science Economics (Hons) Degree in Accounting and Finance from University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, United Kingdom.

Prior to joining DRB-HICOM, Dato' Yatina was a Capital Market Executive with Commerce International Merchant Bankers Berhad. From 1997 to 1998, she was the Executive Director, Master-Carriage (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.

Dato' Yatina is the Chairman of DRB-HICOM Information Technologies Sdn. Bhd., and a Director of HICOM Holding Berhad, HICOM Berhad, Horsedale Development Berhad and several other private limited companies under DRB-HICOM.

The first guest speaker was Dato' Yatina Yahaya, Executive Director of DRB HICOM Berhad who touched on the issue of "Globalisation and Our National Agenda". Dato' Yatina Yahaya who currently holds the position of Senior Group Director, management Support & Group Synergy of DRB-HICOM, is a member of the Board's Executive Committee. After a brief introduction about the guest speaker by Dr Khadijah Muhamed who chaired the session, Dato' Yatina Yahaya took to the floor, and explained briefly on the topic, followed by giving the audience the chance to interact with her through her business ventures. Dato' Yatina Yahaya shared with the crowd the importance of globalization in her company as well as the difficulties and challenges that she faced when she found herself the inheritor of DRB-HICOM Berhad, Malaysia's single largest totally integrated automotive company in Malaysia as well as their other companies under the DRB-HICOM group.

On Wednesday the 22 October 2003 after the success of our inaugural *Bicara at Déjeuner*, Mr. Jamie Montalvo the Economic and Commercial Counselor of the Embassy of Spain in Kuala Lumpur came to give a



Mr. Jaime Montalvo is Economic and Commercial Counselor, Embassy of Spain-Economic and Commercial Office, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

He holds a Master Degree in Economics from the University of Madrid UCM. He was an Area Manager with Regional Incentives Department, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Madrid.

From 1993 to 1997, he was the Deputy Director for Foreign Investment, Ministry of Commerce & Tourism in Madrid. Then from 1997 to 1999, he was the Assistant Director General for Commercial Policy, Ministry of Economy and Finance in Madrid.

presentation on "Spanish Companies Experience in Asia: The case of Malaysia". Mr. Jamie Montalvo was previously the Deputy Director for Foreign Investment at the Ministry of Commerce and Tourism in Madrid. Then from 1997 to 1999, he was the Assistant Director General for Commercial Policy at the Ministry of Economy and Finance in Madrid.

Students were briefed on the Economic status of Spanish presence through Spanish companies in Asia. The focus was concentrated on the problems faced by Spanish SMEs in Asia either from economic reasons or business cultural differences. The audience was then given examples of the Challenges and Opportunities Spanish companies had in doing business in Asia. The enriching presentation was then followed by a long session of question and answers

These two *Bicara at Déjeuner* sessions were great opportunities for the students from various nations including Malaysia, to interact and learn more about doing Business in Malaysia for Malaysian companies as well as for foreigners. In the year 2004 AEI will continue to play the role as the center for meeting of minds and experiences of successful role models in the business and corporate sectors with the campus community. ■

The EU and Its Relations with Asia

By MAIMUNA HAMID MERICAN, *AEI Senior Research Assistant*



*Dr Wolfgang Pape,
Advisor for EU-Asia
Relations*

The talk on 'The EU and Its Relations with Asia', was a timely presentation that gave us the opportunity to revisit and rekindle the relationship which the European Union (EU) and Asia had forged over centuries. Presently, the EU is rediscovering Asia. Following the footsteps of Marco Polo, the EU is developing closer political and economic ties with one of the most dynamic regions in the world – Asia. Quoting from Guttman¹ who expressed his view that Europe's diplomatic elders recognize that the global balance of the economic powers rest on a triangle between Asia (East Asia), Europe, and the United States, and that the weakest side of the triangle is the one that joins Asia and Europe. These are the three poles of the global economy, between which the vast majority of the world's capital, goods, and services flow. However, it can be seen that strong institutional bonds connect the United States to its trading partners in Europe and the Pacific Rim. But the Asia-European axis is comparatively weak, amounting to a "missing link". In an effort to correct this institutional imbalance, Asian and European countries launched a bold initiative in 1996. The result is the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

Hence, as one of the means to strengthen and understand the concept of effective regional integration and EU-Asia relationship, the Delegation of the European Commission Malaysia with the collaboration of Asia-Europe Institute (AEI), University of Malaya organised a presentation by Dr. Wolfgang Pape, Advisor for EU-Asia Relations on "The EU and its Relations with Asia" on 4th October 2003. The presentation was held at AEI and received a good hearing from the diplomatic corps, trade commissioners, lecturers, students and also a section of the populace, which brought about dynamic discussions and dialogues.

Professor Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib, the Executive Director of AEI delivered a welcoming address which was an eye-opener to the audience in understanding the EU-Asia relations. This was then followed by the opening speech by His Excellency Thierry Rommel, the Ambassador-Head of Delegation of the European Commission, Malaysia.

An overview of EU's history and evolution formed the core of Dr. Pape's presentation. The contemporary EU can trace its ancestry directly to the six-member European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) founded by the 1951 Treaty of Paris. The founding six (6) Member States were Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. They, i.e., the 6 Member States then signed the Treaty of Rome in 1957 to create the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), which were the forerunners to European economic integration. The communities have developed significantly since their founding. Membership now stands at 15 and is now set to expand to 25 to embrace a clutch of former eastern block countries. Moreover, integration has deepened considerably. Issues on enlargement were addressed considerably which, entailed presentations on the offering of membership by the EU and the prospects for negotiations. The European Parliament has called on the EU to be ready to enlarge by the beginning of 2003, and hopes to be able to approve the first Accession Treaties before the European elections in 2004. There were also discussions on conditions of membership known as the 'Copenhagen criteria' after the Copenhagen European Council 1993, which requires an applicant country to be a constitutional democracy, to respect human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule by law. Each applicant must also have a functioning market economy and the



Distinguished guests and AEI students at the presentation

capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union, and to be capable of incorporating Community law into its own body of legislation.

The presentation shifted focus to Asia and its partnership with EU. Questions arose as to how do we define Asia? Is it to be based on geographical or cultural factors? The realisation of the importance of Asia not only as a partner in trade and investment but increasingly as a partner in global governance ranging from 'Doha to Kyoto' was addressed extensively. The roadmap of the new Europe is crafted to lead to a greater participation and partnership with Asia rather than the 'ancient style' of a donor-recipient relationship. The strategic framework for enhanced partnerships gears for a more balanced and equal relationship with Asian partners: 'from aid to trade, from friction to action' which encompass politics, economics and culture. In 2001, as a move towards EU-Asia partnership, the European Commission endorsed the Asia Strategy. The main crux of the Asia Strategy identifies 40 specific actions in six priority areas and consists of promotion of peace and security, strengthening trade and investment, focus on least developed countries, promotion of democracy and good governance, building global partnerships, strengthening awareness of EU in Asia and vice versa and develop sub-regional strategies for ASEAN and China. The implementation of Asia Strategy 2001, diversify efforts leading to sub-regional strategies. An example is seen in a sub-regional strategy with Southeast Asia in July 2003 when EU channeled its efforts to revitalize relations with ASEAN, support the stability of the ASEAN region, curb terrorism and also offer new bilateral agreements.

In conclusion, what does the twenty-first century hold for European-Asian relations, particularly relations between the EU and China and the EU and Japan? The enlargement of EU 25 in 2004 and forthcoming EU Constitution are tasks for the EU. On the other hand, Asia faces challenges in the de-facto integration process of 'ASEAN+3' and its relations between trade partners within the WTO. The successful signing of Sino-EU agreement is a major step forward for China's eventual accession into the WTO, which will provide more contact between European and Chinese businesspeople and government leaders. The Asian financial crisis will become a distant memory, and Japanese firms will most likely roar back as global trendsetters in new fields. With the advent of the euro, it is possible that Europe will increase its role in Asia. Certainly, more transactions will be done in Europe's new single currency. The triangle linking the United States, Asia, and the European Union is starting to look more equilateral, with the European-Asian side growing in importance and stature. And just as the EU is re-discovering Asia, Asia is rapidly "discovering" and becoming more involved with the new Europe in the twenty-first century. Thus, the myriad of globalization is certainly not a new phenomenon but world-wide interdependence and common global responsibilities have been on our agenda for centuries. ■

¹ Guttman.R.J., 'The European Union and Asia' in *Europe in the New Century, Visions of the Emerging Superpowers*, Lynne Rienner Publishers (2001).

A Presentation by Dr Ben Jordan **Strategic Planning** **for Bricks-and-Clicks,** **E-commerce –** **an E-Marketing Perspective**

By MANIQUE A.E. COORAY, *AEI Senior Research Assistant*

Dr. Ben Jordan, Director of Fuel Card Group, United Kingdom delivered a presentation on “Strategic Planning for Bricks-and-Clicks, E-commerce – an E- Marketing Perspective” to International Master Degree students of Asia- Europe Institute at its premises on the 24th November 2003. This provided an opportunity for the students to gain an insight into a “real life” case study of business transformation of an organization.



Dr. Ben Jordan

In his presentation, Dr Jordan outlined the approach taken by Fuel Card Group in its transformation from “Bricks to Clicks,” moving from a traditional business model to one based on the use of the Internet. He demonstrated a seven step model that permitted a traditional business model to migrate into a virtual business model. His presentation further demonstrated the link between external and internal customers, data and business information flow, which were both traditional paper-based models and Internet-based models.

The presentation which was related to a module taken by the students on Business and Enterprise Modelling for their Master Degree programme allowed them to understand the use of the new media to transact sales and marketing at lower costs and to use relationship and referral marketing channels via the Web. ■

AEI Masters students at the presentation



Distinguished Visitor **to AEI**



Prof Eisuke Sakakibara

On 5 December 2003, the Asia-Europe Institute was honoured to have the distinguished presence of Prof Eisuke Sakakibara, from Keio University, Tokyo and former Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs, Japan.

A presentation on AEI's objectives and strategies was arranged followed by a briefing by Mr Gnasegarah on (1) Merchandize trade ow and (2) Student ow between Asia, Europe and USA to show the existing gap. ■



ASEAN-EU Rectors' **Conferences**

The Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya is scheduled to organize in collaboration with the ASEAN University Network Programme, the Malaysian Ministry of Education and the European Commission Delegation in Malaysia, the inaugural ASEAN-EU Rectors' Conferences in June 2004. This event will gather approximately 40 to 70 heads of higher education institutes for a 2-day meeting on higher education co-operation prospects between ASEAN and EU.

For any further information please contact Mr. Michael Gaebel at aunp@chula.ac.th or Ms. Maimuna Merican at maimuna_merican@um.edu.my.

AEI NITE

at the Asia-Europe Institute

The Institute held its first annual dinner "AEI Nite" on 5 December 2003, at the Institute premises as a way of showing appreciation to all those who have assisted the Institute with the co-ordination of the International Master Degree Programme and all other activities held at the Institute over the past year. Students of the International Master Degree Programme, staff of AEI, former students, and officials from the University of Malaya were among the guest list on this occasion.



*Professor Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib
Executive Director
and all at Asia-Europe Institute
extend to our readers*

*Seasons Greetings &
Best Wishes for the
New Year*

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University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: (603)7967 4645

Fax: (603)7954 0799

E-mail: asia_euro@um.edu.my

Homepage: <http://www.asia-europe-institute.org>

Executive Director:

Professor Dato' Dr. Shaharil Talib

Deputy Executive Director: Associate Professor
Dr. Shamsulbahriah Ku Ahmad

Senior Assistant Registrar: Ms. Rajini Kandiah

Secretary: Ms. Noeline Jayavasanthini

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