

ASEM-LLL Competence Development as Workplace Learning Innsbruck Symposium 25 – 28 September 2006

Experts from eight countries (Austria, PR China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Malaysia, Thailand and the United Kingdom) met in Innsbruck for four days' intensive exchange to consider research and action agendas for competence development as workplace learning in Europe and Asia. This international symposium was hosted by the Education–Generation–Life-course Research Centre at the university's Institute of Educational Sciences. Participants presented research reviews drawn from their countries and language communities, with a view to developing cooperation activities including comparative research projects, joint publications and staff and student exchanges.

Opening the symposium, which was held in the beautiful environment of the Seehof Education Centre, Vice-Rector Tilmann Märk emphasised the importance that the University of Innsbruck attaches to internationalisation, interdisciplinary approaches and closer links between science and society. "This is an excellent example of good practice in all three respects," he said. Dr. Matthias Schennach, Head of the university's International Office, noted with appreciation that the symposium fits with the priority given by the university to developing close links with the Asian region and was especially pleased to welcome participation by Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, which is one of the University of Innsbruck's closest partners in Asia.

The Symposium took place within the framework of the ASEM-LLL Research and Education Hub, a network of academics and policymakers coordinated by the Danish University of Education in Copenhagen. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Lynne Chisholm is the network's Austrian university representative and is a member of the Hub's Advisory Group. The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM; see <http://www.aseminfoboard.org/>) is a high-level focus for dialogue and co-operation between the 25 EU Member States, the European Commission and 13 Asian countries. Lifelong learning (LLL) was accorded thematic priority in 1999; the launch of the ASEM-LLL Hub in 2004 marks its long-term stability as an ASEM priority topic (further information at: <http://www.uvm.dk/aseml/>).

The Innsbruck Symposium was sponsored by the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the regional government of Tirol, the Austrian Science and Research Liaison Office (ASO Brno), the Future Centre Tirol, the University of Innsbruck's Rector's Fund, ASEA-Uninet funds and the International Office, and from the Research Centre's own resources.

The participants much appreciated Tyrolean hospitality in all its historic, cultural and gastronomic dimensions – and even the weather was generously changeable. All are keen to return for a second symposium – but first, the Hub will meet for its 2007 annual conference at the National University of Malaysia. It is planned to publish the Symposium's proceedings in the coming months in the University of Innsbruck Press Conference Series.