



EU Centres Institutes Regional Roundtable on

“Climate Change Action in the EU and Asia”

January 30 - 31, 2012, Korea

Organized by the Yonsei-SERI EU Centre in Korea

and funded by the European Union

#### Possible Composition of participants

- 2 to 3 participants from Europe – European Commission DG Climate Action, Climate Action Network Europe, European Climate Change Program
- 2 to 3 participants from each EU Centres in Asia – Singapore, Japan, Taiwan
- 3 to 4 participants from Korea – Korean Universities, Research Institutes, Civil Servants, Policymakers
- 2 to 3 from the Centre – Yonsei University’s researchers and professors

#### Objectives and Purpose of Roundtable

The roundtable will provide a floor of debate and exchange for policymakers and scholars alike. It will examine the salient question of climate change, and address the efforts of Europe and Asia, and the possibilities for cooperation. The challenges that these two regions face are one, yet the responses have been different. This roundtable will identify the current issues at stake, and attempt to determine the best course of action towards cooperation and a concerted effort against global climate change.

#### Schedule –

October 10th , Monday – Deadline for registration / tentative title of paper

November 15<sup>th</sup> , Tuesday – Deadline for Abstract

January 10<sup>th</sup> ,Tuesday – Deadline for Position papers

## Format

The Roundtable will be composed of four sessions, of which three will concern climate change action, and one a working session to discuss the cooperation between the EU Centres. Each session will last approximately 2 hours. The specific topics will differ from session to session, and each will see the participation of a moderator, a principal speaker, and various discussants.

## Introduction and Background

- The 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen once again failed to achieve a satisfying consensus on how to counter climate change
- What should be the roles of the EU and Asia regarding climate change, and how should cooperation take place?
- What has the EU achieved so far regarding climate change? How has Asia developed its own environmental policies?
- Sustainable development and green growth, how can the two regions cooperate, what lessons does Europe hold for Asia?

The EU has been at the forefront of climate change action, being the first to acknowledge that countries are already enduring the impact of climate change, and that there is an urgent need to work against environmental damage. Despite the conflicting interests of the member states and the restrictions inherent in the structure of the European Union, the EU has tabled ambitious proposals to create a global consensus on climate change, to foster adaptation in a post-2012 global agreement, notably via the comprehensive Framework for Action on Adaptation. Within Europe itself, the EU has implemented EU-wide policies such as the Emissions Trading System. At the regional level, various local initiatives, the Covenant of Mayors among others, operate.

However, Europe only constitutes but a fraction of the world's total emissions. The majority of the world's pollutants are created by the rapidly developing industries of Asia, Korea being one of the significant emitters of greenhouse gases. While the amount of yearly emissions is expected to steadily increase, how should these economies adapt to the changing environmental situation, and what lessons can they learn from the European example?

Due to the 2008 financial crisis, and the recent Greek situation, attention for the climate change action of the EU has declined, and its environmental policies have been sidelined to the pressing economic concerns. Awareness in general of the global climate change has

waned in recent years, and the situation is no different in Asia. It is difficult to find coherent government policies regarding environmental protection, much less organized efforts to promote 'green' policies. The two leading industries in Asia, China and Japan, have been hesitant regarding matters of climate change, only aspiring to the very minimal environmental standards.

Sustainable development and environmental protection is a must, not a choice. There is considerable evidence stating that action must be taken to prevent future disasters. In this light, the Yonsei-SERI EU Centre believes it is an opportune time to re-examine the EU's environmental policy, the progress it has made, and the challenges that remain.

#### Session 1 – European Leadership – January 30<sup>th</sup>, Morning

- Self-imposed targets and actions: How the European Union is leading the world by example
- Building an effective global carbon market - Is the European Union willing to take lead and make the necessary commitments to building a functioning global market?
- The possibility of a legally binding, international framework on climate change – The EU's political leadership

The EU's climate action framework is based on a phased approach that is scheduled to be completed by 2012. In this preliminary phase, the EU plans to: build a solid knowledge base on the impact and consequences of climate change for the EU, integrate adaptation into EU key policy areas, employ a combination of policy instruments to ensure effective delivery of adaptation, and step up international cooperation on adaptation. What is the current progress on these projects, and have they been successful? As the European initiatives and projects begin to establish themselves, success stories as well as shortcomings are beginning to emerge. Which projects have, or have not, been successful, and how does the EU evaluate them?

#### Session 2 – The role of developed Asian nations – January 30<sup>th</sup>, Afternoon

- Low-carbon development and adaptation – have the Asian nations take the first steps, and have there been any success stories?
- The Korean approach to climate action – the presidential green growth committee and its commitment to green industry
- Are current environmental regulations sufficient? The need for more stringent environmental standards in Asia

Asian nations have been lagging in terms of adaptation strategies and commitments to sustainable growth. However, as the region becomes a world leader in industrial output as well as carbon emissions, the need for a comprehensive strategy and regional cooperation is rapidly emerging. Domestic regulations as well as trade policy adaptation should be incorporated, through the trade in environmental goods and services. There is a huge potential for green trade within the regional bloc which can contribute to enhancing growth and creating jobs. The Korean approach has been characterized by voluntary action and pledges to reduce emissions, but lacking in any concrete commitments or regulatory action to enforce those promises. Is the situation any different in other nations, and what the role of developed nations in this region?

### Session 3 – Cooperation between the two parties – January 31st, Morning

- Bridging the gap between developed and developing nations: the role of Korea
- Renewable energy – the possibility of joint research projects and technology exchanges
- Towards a more environmentally friendly trade and transport management – reducing carbon footprints

As the Korean foreign ministry touted, its proposed role in international negotiations has been to bridge the wide different in position between the developed and developing nations. The EU external cooperation already makes significant contribution to promoting adaptation in partner countries. With a view to supporting adaptation in developing countries, the EU is working with developing countries to facilitate effective adaptation policies. The Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) was launched in 2008. How could the developed nations of Asia participate in such programs, and are they willing to actively participate in technology transfers to developing nations? Additionally, how could technological cooperation take place between Europe and Asia? The exchange of researchers and development projects could yield valuable results.

### Session 4 – Working Session – January 31<sup>st</sup>, Afternoon

#### EU Centre's Staff Meeting