

**Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI)
and EU- ROK Cooperation:
Outcomes, recommendations and way forward**

Your Excellency,

The EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the Korean National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA) hosted a conference on the 'Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI) and EU- ROK cooperation', on 18-19 June 2015 in Brussels, Belgium.

The event was the second in a series of conferences organised with the support of the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European External Action Service (EEAS), aimed at exchanging opinions, expertise and experience between the EU and the ROK on prospective areas for cooperation within the NAPCI framework.

Apart from experts and governmental officials from the ROK and the EU, this year's event was also attended by experts and representatives from other NAPCI countries - China, Japan, Russia, the US and Mongolia. Notable personalities included the ROK Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, Kim Hong-kyun, the EEAS Acting Managing Director for the Asia-Pacific, Ugo Astuto, the Deputy Director General of the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Xing Haiming, the US Special Envoy on North Korea Human Rights, Robert R. King and Secretary-General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, Shigeo Iwatani.

In line with the guiding principles of NAPCI, the conference explored areas of functional security cooperation that could contribute to building trust in Northeast Asia. After a general debate on EU-ROK cooperation within the Initiative, subsequent sessions focused on how to enhance regional cooperation in the fields of environmental governance, cyber security and disaster management.

It was clear in the conference that Asia's regional cooperation, including through NAPCI, will refer to the experience of Europe, while at the same time developing its own unique dynamic, nature and type.

After a day and a half of exchanges, experts and governmental officials discussed the following main recommendations:

1. Building trust through NAPCI

- Education and youth exchanges – are keys to building good neighbouring relations, especially given the heavy burden of negative historical legacies in the region. The success of the European Erasmus student exchange programme has been put forward as a potential reference for Northeast Asia. Besides allowing the free movement of students and fostering people-to-people connections, the programme also enables the harmonisation of education degrees, which substantially facilitates professional mobility across the region.
- Community of like-minded personalities. Inspiring public figures, such as Schuman or Monnet, have been a key ideological driving force of European integration. A similar driving force could be beneficial to facilitate regional integration in Northeast Asia.
- Explore synergies with existing institutions. While NAPCI covers larger Northeast Asian region, the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS), which brings together the three core countries, could possibly serve as primary stepping stone for greater regional institutionalisation and integration – at least for non-traditional security issues. Concretely,

the TCS could take up secretariat duties for educational and scientific cooperation among NAPCI countries.

- Action Plan on NAPCI. Participants saw a value in the idea of establishing a widely agreed Action Plan outlining concrete deliverables, possible steps forward and structure for cooperation as this would be beneficial to move ahead the agenda, going beyond conferences and exchanges of views. To this end cooperation will continue.

2. Environmental governance

- Scientific cooperation. Evaluating the risks of environmental degradation requires first a thorough understanding of the complexity of the changing natural environment. The creation of a NAPCI scientific network would allow a better exchange of data, knowledge and people, building a common understanding of problems, and therefore also facilitating finding common solutions.
- NAPCI as a platform for a 'new development agenda'. Given NAPCI's open, inclusive framework as well as its focus on functional, soft security issues, environmental governance and generally development agenda (also climate change) could serve as a suitable area for cooperation within NAPCI.
- Diagonal cooperation. Including non-governmental agencies, as well as the private sector alongside governmental efforts should be given priority. Existing structures such as the TCS could take up the role, paying attention to NEA cultural specificity and focusing on non-binding forms of cooperation.

3. Cyber security

- Action Plan for cyber security cooperation. NAPCI countries play an important role in addressing cyber-related challenges: both as potential hotspots for conflict and main actors in the cybersecurity debates. Addressing cybersecurity within the NAPCI framework might therefore provide useful insights towards decreasing international tensions and serve as a positive impulse for further cooperation. Therefore, it would be desirable to put more emphasis on confidence-building measures – including concrete joint initiatives, exercises, etc. – involving all main stakeholders.
- EU as a venue setter. The EU has developed global cyber norms and legislation, and works effectively towards implementing them at the regional and national levels. As such, it is a relevant partner for other countries and regions willing to explore the possibilities of developing similar approaches in their regional or national context – including in the framework of NAPCI.

4. Disaster management

- Research and data sharing. Prevention, risk-assessment and analysis of natural and man-made disasters could be a starting point for NAPCI. Information and data-sharing, as well as scientific cooperation should be encouraged between existing national focal points (research centres, universities).

- 'Disaster diplomacy'. Cooperation in disaster prevention management and between relief agencies provides a unique opportunity for states to exert their soft power and at the same time, build confidence.

Way forward

The EUISS and the KNDA will continue their cooperation in a similar format, bringing together experts and policy makers for an ever more constructive exchange of views and better conveyance of ideas to the decision-making level.

The EU indicated its continued willingness to discuss and work with the countries involved in NAPCI, if they so desire, on the above initiatives.

On behalf of the EUISS:



Antonio Missiroli
Director of the EUISS

On behalf of the KNDA



Shin Bong-kil
President of IFANS of KNDA