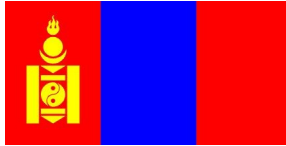




European
Commission,
DG External
Relations



Mission of
Mongolia to the
European
Union



European
Institute for Asian
Studies

**Proceedings of the
Luncheon Briefing**

MONGOLIA: FROM CHINGGIS KHAAN TO ASEM

Thursday, 23 November 2006 from 12.30 -14.30 hrs

**Co-organised by
the European Commission
and
the Mission of Mongolia to the European Union**

**Moderated and hosted by
the European Institute for Asian Studies**



Prepared by Sebastian Bersick

With the kind assistance of Signe Bruun-Jensen

Table of Contents

1.WELCOME AND OPENING STATEMENT 5

2.PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE LUNCHEON BRIEFING.....7

3. SYNTHESIS REPORT OF THE LUNCHEON BRIEFING..... 30

4.BIOS OF THE PANELISTS35

1. Welcome and Opening Statement

by Sebastian Bersick



Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me extend a warm welcome to all of you who have come from places as far as Mongolia – and Finland’s capital Helsinki – to the European Institute for Asian Studies. Today’s Luncheon Briefing is the first of two events that have been co-organized by the EIAS, the European Commission and the Mission of Mongolia to the European Union. The Second ‘Cultural Evening Event’ will take place on 6 December 2006 at the Berlaymont Building of the European Commission. We are honored to welcome you and a distinguished panel of speakers for a discussion and analysis of contemporary EU-Mongolia relations.

This year the 800th anniversary of Mongolian statehood is celebrated and it is against this historical background that Mongolia’s ongoing integration into the East Asian region and Mongolia’s new role as a participant in the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process shall be analyzed. Hence the title and topic of this event: “Mongolia: From Chinggis Khaan to ASEM”.

Chinggis Khaan was a Mongol military and political leader who founded the Mongolian empire. He unified the Mongolian tribes and counts among the most successful military leaders of all times. Yet, his successes resulted in different images. Whereas he is regarded as a bloodthirsty and ruthless conqueror in most parts of the world in Mongolia his image is that of the father of the Mongolian nation. One thing is for sure: The rule of the Mongol across the Eurasian continent altered radically the geopolitics and demography of its time. In fact the Washington Post and The Time Magazine named Chinggis Khaan “Man of the Millennium” in 1989 and 1995, “making him the most influential person of the past 1000 years”.

It is my pleasure to introduce to you Professor Jigjid Boldbaatar who is the Director of the Institute of History, National University of Mongolia (NUM), a Full Member of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and an Associate Justice of the Constitutional Court of Mongolia. Professor Boldbaatar will assess Chinggis Khaan’s role in Asia-Europe history. Mr Munkh-Ochir, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Strategic Studies in Ulan Bataar will present Professor Boldbaatar’s paper and as a scholar add his own comments. Our Luncheon Briefing focuses on the discussion and analysis of contemporary EU-Mongolia relations and it is an honour to further introduce to you Ambassador Onon, the Head of the Mission of Mongolia to the European Union, and Ambassador Ochirbal, a Senior Diplomat and former Ambassador of Mongolia to the UK, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Egypt, Kuwait, Israel, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Their paper “From Chinggis Khaan towards Democracy – Mongolia’s Role in Euro-Asian Affairs“ will discuss Mongolia’s process of (re)integration into the international political and economic system, the role of the European Union in Mongolia’s foreign policy and Mongolia’s interest in the participation in Asian regional institutions. Mongolia is an observer in the Shanghai

Welcome and Opening Statement

Cooperation Organization (SCO), a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and has signed the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). However, Mongolia did not participate in the East Asia Summit.

This issue area of regional cooperation is linked to the ASEM process and Mongolia's coming participation in this inter-regional regime. I am honored to introduce to you Ambassador Lehtinen of the Finnish Foreign Ministry who is the Head of the ASEM 6 Secretariat and represents the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Finland has hosted this year's 6th ASEM Summit during which the current ASEM members agreed to enlarge the ASEM process. Mongolia along with India, Pakistan and the ASEAN Secretariat as well as Bulgaria and Romania will officially become ASEM members during the Beijing ASEM Summit in the year 2008. Yet, ASEM members have agreed that from 1 January 2007 onwards all of the new partners will participate in ASEM-related meetings on the working level. From the side of the European Commission let me warmly welcome Mr Geoffrey Barrett, who is its ASEM Advisor of the Commission and Dr Frank Schmiedel who is in charge of the Mongolia Desk of the European Commission. In their paper they will analyze "EU-Mongolia Relations Today and New Prospects through the ASEM Process".

2. Papers Presented at the Luncheon Briefing

EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN STUDIES: LUNCHEON - BRIEFING ON EU-MONGOLIA RELATIONS

Brussels, 23 November 2006_

The Mongolian Empire and Its Contribution to World History

By Professor J. Boldbaatar

Translated by D. Munkh-Ochir



As we commemorate the 8th centennial of the Great Mongolian Empire, the major significance of such celebrations is vested in the learning from the richness of heritage of the Great Empire's diplomatic policies and practices, as well as from the lessons of the past history of our nation. For two consecutive centuries the Mongol geopolitical entity has dominated the world scene, and has left deep marks on the global development ever since.

Unlike the common perception prescribed by either Euro-centrist or Marxist interpretation of history, the Mongol hegemony was not all but terror and vandalism, or barbaric raids and merciless devastation. As human history progresses, it becomes more and more evident that this period, albeit with an initial wave of conquests and destruction, is to be largely remembered by stability, progress and development that the region and the world owe to Mongol rule. Hence this years anniversary is an important occasion to recall some of the contributions that the Great Mongolian Empire has made to world history. Four hypotheses can be differentiated in this context.

1. The Mongolian Empire has left a deep impact on the political scene of the medieval world, an impact that was carried into modernity.

The story began in 1189 AD, when Temujin restored the unity of Khamagh Mongol – the domain of his deceased father, Yesugei. It was this year that he was bestowed the title Chinggis, often transliterated *Genghis* in the Western tradition. With restoration of political unity the Khamagh Mongol was reorganized as a political entity, emerging from a chiefdom into a consolidating state.¹ From then onwards, Temujin has devoted himself to a historic mission to unite the scattered Mongol race and create a unified, consolidated state. His natural ability, talents, courage, wisdom and statesmanship soon overshadowed his rivals in this endeavor. Victorious in 32 battles of varying scale between 1185 and 1206, Temujin conquered 81 Mongol tribes and alliances and established the Great Mongolian State.

In the year of Fiery Red Tiger (1206 AD), the Grand Assembly of the Mongol nobility, the *Khuralday*, convened on the banks of Onon river. It unanimously crowned Temujin, now a 45-year old prominent statesman with two decades of struggle, to unite the Mongol world

¹ See *The Cambridge History of Asia*. Vol. 6, "Alien Regimes and Border States (907-1368)," edited by H. Franke and D. Twitchett. Cambridge, 1994, p. 342.

behind him, as the Great Khaan, the emperor, of the newly founded nation. As *The Secret History of the Mongols* mentions,

“Peace came to the felt-dwellers in the Year of the Tiger. The Grand Assembly convened, and Temujin was enthroned as Chinggis Khaan (the Dalai Khaan, or “Universal” Khaan).”²

Hence the Great Mongolian State that incorporated a large number of Mongol-speaking domains and realms came into being in Inner Asia.

As to the nature of the Mongol statehood under Chinggis, scholars tend to offer two differing versions, the one stressing the “charismatic” features of Chinggis Khaan’s personal rule; the other the features of statehood in a modern sense of the term in the complex legal system and early democratic institutions as they existed in the Mongolian Empire. Proponents of the former, predominantly Russian scholars, presume that the Mongol realm was not a state but a short-lived political entity largely due to the charisma of its founder.³ However, the proponents of the latter view, including Prof. Shagdaryn Bira and many other prominent Mongolian and Western scholars, emphasize that the Mongolian Empire deserved to be called a consolidated state.⁴ This view gains momentum in studies of the Mongolian Empire and its role in the medieval world. Wherever the truth is, there is an undeniable fact that the Empire facilitated the revolutionary changes in the history of Inner Asia, by creating a common identity and Mongolian nationhood among the hitherto scattered nomads of the area.

The Mongolian Empire epitomized a specific form of a consolidated nomadic statehood, a novelty in world history. Especially within this context we should mention that in their millennia-long national histories, both of our giant neighbors, Russia and China, have acquired a sense of consolidated and centralized statehood under the Mongol domination. But centralization and autocracy were not the only features of the Mongolian Empire that other nations inherited. Specific forms of nomadic organization of a polity, with innovative meritocracy, even bordering with certain experimental elements of democracy, were set as norms of governance in the Empire and were emulated by many sedentary civilizations with lengthy traditions of statehood. Two Mongolian imperial institutions stand among the earliest embryos of parliamentarism *Grand Khuralday* and the *Council of the Wise* – both specific examples of nomadic meritocracy and formative democracy.

Rule of law was a norm in the Mongol realm. Under the universally codified imperial law, the *Great Yasa*, a strong legal system and vibrant judiciary emerged, laying the foundations for globalizing and uniting the grand civilizations of the Occident and the Orient for several centuries. In short, the *Great Yasa* was truly a global code that governed the known world in the 13th-14th centuries. According to William Fitzhugh of the Smithsonian Institution:

“[He] is credited with a host of reforms and progressive actions. Among other things, he was an early champion of religious tolerance and women's rights,

² *Mongolyn nuuts товчоо* [“The Secret History of the Mongols”], Ulsyn khevleliin gazar, verse 201, p. 66 Ulaanbaatar, 1976.

³ See T.D.Skrynnikova, *Kharizma i vlast’ v epokhu Chingiskhana* [“Charisma and Power in Chinggis Khaan’s Epoch”], Moscow, 1997.

⁴ Sh.Bira, *Mongolyn түүх, соёл, түүх бичлэгийн судалгаа* [“Studies on Mongolian history, culture and historiography”], Vol. 3, Ulaanbaatar, 2001, p. 206.

allowing women to speak in public and express opinions. He also was an early supporter of diplomacy, offering protection to envoys from other lands.”⁵

The impact of these innovative practices was evident in the century-and-a-half-long existence of the Mongolian Empire, as they generated stability and harmony.

2. During its heydays the Mongolian Empire has had pioneering impact on international relations and the balance of power.

For the newly founded Mongolian state, expansion of its territories was a necessary defensive measure and a prerequisite for its continued existence. In the case of failure to do so, an ultimate demise could have occurred due to constant pressures and aggression that the young nation faced from the neighboring empires. Preventive and preemptive strikes undertaken by Chinggis Khaan and his descendants ultimately resulted in conquering a total of 7.770 million sq. km of contiguous land area, far greater than the conquests of Napoleon, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar combined, incorporating the populous civilizations of China, Europe and the Arab-Muslim world.

In the early 13th century world, the nature of relations between the major powers was undoubtedly based on what later would be known as *realpolitik* – the survival of the fittest and the strongest. The Mongolian rulers, especially Chinggis Khaan had hardly engaged in offensive warfare just for the sake of it; their campaigns were largely instigated by either refusal to accept the terms of free trade and amicable relations proposed by the Mongolian state, or even worse, by murder of the envoys bringing the terms of peace.

Dr. Natsagiin Bagabandi, the former President of Mongolia, offers a well-rounded assessment of the Mongol conquests in his article, *Traditions and Innovations Joining Toward Progress*:

“Our ancestors had been provoked to fight till they conquered vast territories. Nowadays, the prominent scholars increasingly argue against the proposition that the Mongols conducted merely an unjust and offensive warfare without any solid reason. Indeed, how could the Mongols have achieved this enormous fame in history had they been merciless tyrants? Undefeated and victorious in his struggle to protect his nation, Chinggis Khaan then began to perceive himself as the master of the world. Napoleon, another famed conqueror of the later era, once lamented that he had not been as fortunate as Chinggis Khaan. These words reflect not his grief over failed attempt to unite the world under his fist, but an awareness that fighting for the sole purpose of conquest in the absence of existential threats was not a fruitful adventure. Indeed, lack of such an awareness often leads to defeat. As for Chinggis Khaan, he and his successors constantly faced that existential threat, so that defense by preemption was the solely appropriate means to engage in large-scale military campaigns. This would be a fair judgment of history. This was the true fate of the Empire Chinggis Khaan founded and his descendants expanded.”⁶

⁵ Cited in Sue Anne Pressley Montes, “Genghis Khan Statue Sought: Mongols Say Leader is Misunderstood,” *The Washington Post*, October 6, 2006, p. 16.

⁶ N.Bagabandi, *Shine zuuny ömnökh bodlogo, zorilt* [“Policies and Goals Toward New Century”], Ulaanbaatar, 1998, p. 121.

One should not, however, underestimate the human casualties and destruction that the Mongol wars brought about in the vast regions of Europe and Asia. But to blame the Mongols for millions of deaths in selected cities, as Marxist and Central Asian historians tend to do, would be unfair to history itself. A million-resident city is a phenomenon virtually unknown until the modernity. Given the remaining fossils of ancient species easily found in the deserts and steppes of Central Asia, human remains from the alleged Mongol “genocide” would also be evident there, had there been such a slaughter in history. Yet no such discoveries have been made. Instead, the Mongol rulers practiced and promoted religious tolerance, unprecedented in the then-world affairs, and allowed for universal freedom of conscience within their realm.

As true for any superpowers, the Mongolian Empire had to rely on benign policies after initial period of warfare, rather than on suppression of the lands under its jurisdiction. Likewise, as common for universalist powers prior and after it, the Empire rather unwillingly stretched its physical and spatial capabilities – a phenomenon that was often forcefully imposed upon the great powers by their own structural problems. In other words, behind a certain line, for any great power there is a limit to its extension; however, the limit is impossible to maintain because of the stressing need for constant extension and expansion as the sole means of deterrence. This “forward defense” strategy ultimately erodes the inner strength of an empire, which exactly had happened to the Mongolian Empire.

Chinggis Khan and his successors have contributed to world diplomatic practices in several unique ways, as the *Great Yasa* legalized nearly all protocol issues relevant to relations and trade among nations. These include the immunity of envoys, and subsequent lack of immunity for false emissaries, provision by the host nation for transportation and food for the holders of diplomatic immunity, and security assurances for trade and commerce.

Furthermore, the Mongol campaigns introduced a new way of warfare in the military history of the world. Besides being brilliant strategists the Mongols, in the words of the French scholar Rene Grousset, were also skilled tacticians, as:

“(..) their tactics was a purely nomadic invention based on the earlier tactics of the Huns and the Turks, coupled with traditional hunting methods, and multiplied with experience accumulated during the raids on frontier regions of sedentary peoples.”⁷

The maneuvering speed of heavy cavalry of sedentary peoples was no match to that of light Mongol cavalry, and their training was far inferior to the lifelong military drills the nomadic Mongols receive since the early childhood. Most importantly, the Mongol troops were superior in quickly adapting new weaponry and responding to related tactical reforms, every time they encountered new adversaries and conquered new lands and urban citadels with differing terrain.

The Mongol conquests resulted in unifying and forging a new identity for both China and Russia. As Pyotr Chaadayev noted, “Russia was in a millennium-long dormition” prior to the Mongol rule, confined to its disintegrated petite principalities. According to Count Nicholas Trubetskoy, the founder of Eurasianist movement and known as “Russia’s Oswald Spengler”:

“Though inarguable the destructive impulses were predominant in Chinggis Khan’s actions, his vision of construction and the will for perfection served as

⁷ Rene Grousset, *Chinggis Khaanykhny mongolchuud* [“Chinggis Khan’s Mongols”], Ulaanbaatar, 2004, p. 56.

carriers of much greater, positive, ideas. Thus, we have nothing to do but to agree that historic Russia is an heir to Chinggis Khaan's Empire."⁸

This view, nowadays supported by the Russian historian R. P. Khachevsky⁹ in his recent writings, can be, with the same logic, applied to the process of nation-building in China.

Surely, undeniable losses of human lives occurred during what Jack Weatherford calls "the Mongol World War"¹⁰. Nonetheless, "after things calmed down, it was a mammoth empire and it was ruled with a lot of precision and care."¹¹ This statement captures the essence of what was the Mongolian Empire for the geopolitical scene of the 13th-14th centuries.

3. The Mongolian Empire gave a huge impetus to world economic development by linking the East and the West with a myriad of ties in trade and commerce.

For the first time in history, a free trade zone covering entire Euro-Asian landmass was forged under the Mongol hegemony. The Mongols introduced such revolutionary ideas and terms as a "single currency," "freedom of trade routes," "exclusive economic zones," "postal express and freedom of information flow" etc. Ironically, these very ideas, that now constitute the core of our contemporary, globalizing value system and which everyone takes for granted, were incepted by the Mongolians whose history was long misperceived as that of barbarism and as an antithesis to civilization. Yet, the global appreciation gradually comes back, and for the first time in history, our ancestors are regaining the recognition they long deserved. *The Washington Post*, in naming Chinggis Khaan as *Man of the Millennium*, refers to this economic system as "forerunner of WTO," and the fast-speed communications system the Mongols have established as "comparable to the role Internet plays today."¹² The same article also provides an interesting and thought-provoking link between once certain negative effects of the Mongol hegemony and its indirect impact on the subsequent developments of world history:

"The Mongols have brought black death to Europe. Its viruses spread from the Far East to Europe through the Mongol conquests. When a third of Europe's population had succumbed to this epidemic, the consequent increase of labor cost has ultimately led to diminishing of feudal society and rise of capitalism."¹³

Hence, we can be proud of saying that the Mongols were at the forefront of cosmopolitanism, and moreover, became the "shock and awe" that forcefully threw the Western world out of its feudal stagnation into an era or Renaissance, of explorations, of discoveries, of Enlightenment

⁸ Nikolay Trubetskoy, *Naslediye Chingiskhana* ["The Legacy of Chinggis Khaan"], AGFAR, Moscow, 2000, p. 237.

⁹ See R.P.Khachevsky, *Voyennaya derzhava Chingiskhana* ["The Military Empire of Chinggis Khaan"], Moscow, 2005, p. 399.

¹⁰ See Jack Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and The Making of the Modern World*, Random House, 2005.

¹¹ William Fitzhugh, cited in Sue Anne Pressley Montes, "Genghis Khan Statue Sought: Mongols Say Leader is Misunderstood," *The Washington Post*, October 6, 2006, p. 16.

¹² Cited in Kim Jeong-rye, *Myangan jiliin tüükhen khün: Khoich üyeiin Chinggis Khaanuidad zoriulav* ["Man of the Millennium: To Future Chinggis Khaans"], Ulaanbaatar-Seoul, 1999, p. 33-34.

¹³ Kim Jeong-rye, 1999, p. 5.

and of the industrial revolution. As well-known Korean writer and historian Kim Jeong-rye notes:

“The shock that the Europeans received from Chinggis Khaan was of the magnitude to reverse the course of history ... Such a success was a result of well-organized teamwork among professional individuals, multifaceted strategy based on the principles of open society, and dominance in information and technology - all similar to the United States’ leadership in the world.”¹⁴

In sum, Chinggis Khaan was a key figure behind “the making of the modern world,” in the words of American scholar Jack Weatherford.¹⁵

4. The Mongolian Empire has pioneered cultural interaction and exchange between the West and the East, contributing to the emerging global culture.

The Mongols have served as a catalyst for cultural exchange in Eurasia for two centuries in a row. It was during the Mongol rule that the Western world was introduced to printing press, compass, abacus and gunpowder, whereas the East became acquainted with steel, glass and zinc. For the first time in human history, the peoples of the Orient and the Occident were able to commute their scientific and cultural riches to one another. In the 13th century the Mongols have written a priceless epic saga – *The Secret History of the Mongols*, which stands out among the literary masterpieces of the medieval era, as hailed by the great Russian historian B. Y. Vladimirtsov:

“Just as no other nation of the Middle Ages has captured the minds of historians as did the Mongols, no other nomadic nation has left such a clear description of the real life, as did the Mongols with their Secret History ... This is a masterpiece of history and chronicles, abundant with the pleasant scent of their vast steppes.”¹⁶

Likewise, another Russian historian, V. V. Bartold, similarly glorifies *Jamiu't-tawarikh*, written in the early 14th century and accredited to a Persian scribe Rashid-ul-din Fazlullah, a Grand Vizier of the Mongol dynasty. He calls *Jamiu't-tawarikh* a great historical encyclopedia that no other nation in either Asia or Europe has left.¹⁷ As we know of now, this masterpiece was compiled under the direct guidance of Gazan Khan, the Mongol ruler of Persia, and with involvement of Mongol scribe Bolod Chingsan. He was the envoy plenipotentiary of the Grand Khaan of the Mongolian Empire, who likely provided the author with a copy of an ancient Mongolian chronicle - *Altan Debter*.

In the latter period, inspired by the imperial renaissance, the Mongol scribes were among the first to translate the immortal teachings of the Lord Buddha into their language. These jewels of Indian civilization have since been rooted into Mongolian culture and seen as pearls of our indigenous culture.

¹⁴ Kim Jeong-rye, 1999, p. 35.

¹⁵ Weatherford, 2003.

¹⁶ B.Y.Vladimirtsov, *Obshchestvennyi story mongolov. Mongol'skii kochevoy feodalizm* [“The Social Structure of the Mongols. Mongolian Nomadic Feudalism”], Leningrad, 1934, p. 8.

¹⁷ V.V.Bartold, *Sochineniya*. Tom I: “Turkestan v epokhu mongol'skogo nashestviya” [“Essays, Vol. I: Turkestan During the Mongol Conquest”], Izdatel'stvo vostochnoy literatury, Moscow, 1963, p. 94.

The Mongolian Empire was home to the largest university in the 13th century world, established in 1287 by Khubilai Khaan's edict and under his patronage.¹⁸ It is known that during the reign of Khubilai Mongolian astronomers have ultimately exceeded the sophistication of their counterparts from the Sinic, Indic and Arabic civilizations. Another brilliant Mongol of the Middle Ages, Togtokh, compiled the history of three successive dynasties – the Khitan Liao Empire, the Jurchen Jin Empire and the Chinese Song Empire. It has been translated in many languages and is still revered as a masterpiece of historiography.

Perhaps the Mongols are the only people on Earth to have invented, adopted and used nearly ten different writing systems, the Classical Mongolian script, the Phags-P'a square alphabet, the Todo script, the Soyombo script, the 'Ali-Gali transliteration code, the Vaguindra script, to name a few. In addition, the 20th century saw the adoption of first the Roman, and then, of the Cyrillic alphabets. Classical Mongolian and the Cyrillic alphabet are widely used in official capacity today and an ever-increasing usage of the Roman alphabet in some aspects of daily life is taking place. This unique phenomenon, coupled with a record literacy rate that our nation boasts, is a fruit of the cultural and literary renaissance during the imperial period.

During and following the imperial period, a number of world-class artists were born to Mongolia, rivaling the talents of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Rembrandt. The Mongolian Empire facilitated the convergence of artistic styles, motifs, architecture and design from both East and the West. This fine tradition was followed during the late medieval-early modern period – an era of Saint Zanabazar, “the grand master of Oriental fine art.” His masterpieces, such as *Bodhisattva Vajratara*, are registered into world heritage and are a vivid example of international recognition of the Mongolian cultural legacy. It has been made possible by the overarching prominence of the Great Mongolian Empire.

Thus the legacy of the Great Mongolian Empire is an enduring one – both for our home country and for the entire world. Following its demise, the world began to search for the speed and mobility, for political stability, ideological tolerance, scientific achievements, cultural exchange and economic freedoms that the Empire provided for over two centuries. And in this quest the world entered a new era, an era of modernity. In the contemporary era, many believe that our globalizing world needs to vie for that precision, speed and openness that Chinggis Khaan and his descendants brought to the medieval world. And especially for our nation, we see the convergence of our national idea and pride with the paths of political democratization, economic liberalization and globalization we pursue these days.

¹⁸ See Morris Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*, University of California Press. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London.

EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN STUDIES: LUNCHEON - BRIEFING
ON EU-MONGOLIA RELATIONS

Brussels, 23 November 2006

**From Chinggis Khaan towards Democracy – Mongolia's Role
in Euro-Asian Affairs**

**Ambassador I. Ochirbal
Ambassador S. Onon**



1. Some Hints on the Historical Past

Mongolia is one of the oldest Asian nations. Since time immemorial Mongols and people akin to them inhabited the vast steppe grasslands of Asian heartland. Many and varying statehood formations alternated and succeeded one another. However the Great Mongol Empire founded by Chinggis Khan represented an outstanding historic landmark of world magnitude.

For many centuries the life and deeds of this great leader remained a mystery, subject of shameless misrepresentation and misperception. Despite the efforts of many prominent scholars in the East and West, who carried out intensive scientific research to reveal the historical truth about Chinggis Khan and his empire many white spots still remain. Even in Mongolia the name of Chinggis Khan remained a taboo during the 70 years of Communist rule. It is interesting to note that despite the fact that China was a major target of Mongol invasion and occupation the ancient Chinese historical chronicles contain more data about the events of that period - arguably in more reliable and balanced manner - than those available in Arabic or Persian sources, including those from Medieval Europe.

In this connection we welcomed with great satisfaction the declaration of Chinggis Khaan as a Man of Millennium by the Washington Post and the adoption by the UN General Assembly resolution on the Commemoration of the 800 years of the Mongolian Statehood.

I take this opportunity to thank wholeheartedly the European Commission, the European Institute for Asian Studies and the Embassy of Mongolia in Brussels and all colleagues involved in convening this Luncheon Briefing and for inviting me to participate in it. This event itself is a sign of growing worldwide changes and expanding ties between the European Union and my own country.

As you are well aware Mongolia traversed a long and strenuous road to independence. After the disintegration of the Great Empire the country splintered into fragments of small feudal principalities. This development made it an easy prey for foreign domination. More than two centuries under the Manchu rule were the bleakest period for Mongolia. During this period Mongolia lost its role of a center of international politics and trade. It became a peripheral province of Manchu Qing Dynasty. This development resulted in the nation being thrown back to the edge of extinction, misery and poverty. Thus Mongolia missed the benefits of cultural and economic renaissance in the world, particularly in Europe, an age of great

geographical discoveries and 19th century industrial revolution. Despite the fact of Mongolia's total isolation from world affairs, prevailing backwardness and destitution of the people, Mongolians both of noble and common origin, continued to aspire for the country's independence, consistently seeking for ways and means of restoration of its national statehood bringing under one common roof all peoples of Mongolian stock.

Following the fall of the Manchu rule in China proper Mongolia declared its independence in 1911. The Government of Bogdo Khan sought to pursue an independent foreign and domestic policy. However, this effort was short-lived due to interference of its two powerful neighbors and ended up in granting to Mongolia a status of autonomy under the Chinese suzerainty.

The year of 1921 was a real turning point in the history of Mongolia. Not only did it mark a rebirth of Mongolia's independent statehood (though limited to only Outer Mongolia then) but also triggered a wave of far reaching changes to reverse the several centuries decline and promote economic and social renewal and development. Notwithstanding the attainment of its independence Mongolia had to struggle for international recognition for decades. It was mainly the Chiang Kai-Shek regime that attempted in every manner to delay recognition of Mongolia's independence and its admission to the United Nations. Due to the protracted lack of international recognition Mongolia had no other option but to rely on the Soviet Union alone as ally and economic and trade partner.

The dependence on a single country and establishment of so called "Big" and "Small" brother relationship had varying consequences. Willingly or unwillingly Mongolia had become a site of social experiments. Under the Moscow instructions Mongolia had first to eliminate its noble class, followed by lamas or monks of the Buddhist religious social group and destroy more than 700 temples and monasteries. The Mongolian national leadership, including at least four Prime Ministers, thousands of Government and military officials as well as representatives of the intelligentsia perished in the Stalinist repression in the 30s of the last century.

By citing this and other dark and bitter lessons of our past relations we should give due assessment to the major contribution of the Soviet Union in bringing backward Mongolia to a modern level of development. Yet, the years 1921-1990 were a period of Marxist-Leninist ideology dominance. Monopoly of one party with its ensuing autocratic and totalitarian features determined the trend of thought. The Soviet Union as the bulwark of communism was the guiding star for the domestic and foreign policy activities of Mongolia. It is against this background that the foreign policy of Mongolia for that particular period needs to be seen and evaluated.

Our relationship with the West during that period has never been notable for its intensity or magnitude. As it was noted by one Western resident Ambassador our relations with the Western countries were "cordial but uneventful." Until 1987 Mongolia had no diplomatic relations with the USA. The major behind-the-scene reason for such a situation was understandably the reluctance of the Soviet Union to let the US have a presence in a strategically significant location.

A breakthrough in Mongolia's international relations came with its admission to the UN in the year 1961. It represented a unique act of political horse-trading. Two years later the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was the first major Western country to establish diplomatic relations with Mongolia and exchange Embassies was. Thereafter

began a spell of recognition and establishment of formal ties by other Western countries. However, the economic and trade ties were confined to a handful of companies in the West interested in trading Mongolian cashmere, camel wool, furs, casings, hides and skins, etc.

The characterization of Mongolia's relationship with the West as "cordial but uneventful" was based on several factors. Among them I underscore two main points: Because Mongolia belonged to the so-called 'socialist community of nations' it was supposed to be guided by the principles of the 'proletarian internationalism'. Mongolia had to give priority to its relations with the USSR and other socialist countries. The second most formidable obstacle for development of economic and trade relations with the countries outside of the communist block was the participation in the so-called Long-Term Program of Economic Integration of the COMECON member-states. According to the Program all participants were supposed to coordinate their economic and social development plans, including mutual commodity supplies regularly on a five-year basis. This policy decisively limited Mongolia's trading potential with the outside world.

2. Democracy and Reform-Building

The years of 1989-1990 constitute a watershed in Mongolia's historical development. The collapse of the administrative and command system in the Soviet Union triggered a tidal wave of democratic changes, above all in the countries of the communist block. Mongolia, world's second socialist country, was destined to become a first Asian nation to shed the old system. Although without violence and bloodshed the change has been dramatic in nature and scope. The new constitution of 1992 instituted a solid legal framework for genuine democratic reforms. Pluralism and a multi-party system became a reality. Free market rules were introduced to govern the economic life of the country. Mongolia joined the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the World Trade Organization. It was a breakthrough in the process of integrating Mongolia into the world economy.

Furthermore, because of the profound democratic transformations a new family of Mongolia's friends, supporters and partners was formed. They were the leading democracies of the East and the West. At the initiative of the Japanese Government the World Bank and the UNDP launched Mongolia's International Aid Group meetings that would assist and promote developmental efforts. Mongolia's International Aid Group has held nine meetings so far, securing 3.2 billion US dollars in loans and grants from bilateral and multilateral donors.

Mongolia's foreign policy underwent fundamental changes. The end of the "Cold War" with its ideological confrontation and political wrangling opened up a new horizon and much wider opportunities for Mongolia to pursue a genuinely independent foreign policy. Today, consideration of securing the vital national interests and universal human values of democracy through undertaking open, multi-pillar and pro-active actions determine Mongolia's foreign policy strategy. In implementing its foreign policy, Mongolia is guided by the following directions:

- maintaining friendly relations with the Russian Federation and People's Republic of China;
- developing friendly relations with highly developed countries of the West and East;

- strengthening Mongolia's position in Asia and securing a constructive participation in the political and economic integration process in the region;
- promoting cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies as well as with the International financial institutions;
- developing friendly relations with countries of the former socialist community, as well as the newly independent states;
- developing friendly relations with developing countries and cooperating with them in the solution of common objectives.

For a country like Mongolia, located between the two great powers Russia and China, it is natural that these nuclear-weapon states and permanent members of the UN Security Council have a high priority on Mongolia's foreign policy agenda. Bearing this in mind Mongolia wholeheartedly commits itself to maintaining and developing good-neighborly and mutually beneficial relations with both of them.

The international aid and assistance of the Western and Eastern industrially developed economies play a vital role and contribute to the successful transition to democracy and market economy in Mongolia. It is viewed that further development of the close political interaction and economic partnership with the European Union member states is a balancing factor for the smooth development of relations with our two neighbors and a strong assurance of Mongolia's national security. In this context Mongolia follows the 'third neighbor' and the 'strategic partner' concepts. These are addressed to a group of Western and Eastern democracies, Mongolia's international aid contributors and stakeholders who support democracy building and have shown vested interests in Mongolia.

We view our participation in Asia-Pacific multilateral cooperation as crucially important in promoting Mongolia's partnership with the countries of the region and strengthening regional security and stability. We are interested in taking active part in economic integration processes, particularly in North East Asia, including the execution of the Tumen River Project, the Euro-Asia Railway and Highway Networks, Air Cargo Transportation schemes etc. Due to its historical and geopolitical background North East Asia is probably the only sub-region that lacks intergovernmental mechanisms in which issues of partnership could be discussed collectively. Various ideas and proposals to this effect have been floating around for some time, but no serious consideration was given so far at the Track-1 level. Bearing this in mind, Mongolia proposes to explore a possibility of establishing a habit of dialogue for exchange of views among the North East Asian stakeholders.

Mongolia as a latecomer wishes to become a full participant in the process of Asian regional integration. Up to now Mongolia is accepted as a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum. Yet, Mongolia also seeks ASEAN Dialogue Partner status. We are looking forward to joining APEC and the East Asian Community.

3. Mongolia and the European Union

Mongolia attaches a strategically vital significance to its relations with the European Union and the EU's Member States. We note with great satisfaction that at the very start of Mongolia's transition to a new social order the European Union was amongst the first who extended its helping hand, offering material and financial assistance. Before 1990's Mongolia established friendly relations with most European countries.

The groundwork for the fruitful cooperation between Mongolia and the EU has been laid down by the Mongolian President and Prime Ministers as well as by the return visits to Mongolia by the EU Commissioner and other high-ranking officials. The signing of the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation as early as in 1992, the Agreement on Textile Trade (1995), the General Cooperation Agreement with European Investment Bank (1997), the admission of Mongolia as member of European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (2000) and of further agreements serve as a milestone legal framework.

Since 1994 the EU has extended about 70 million euro package assistance under the TACIS and ALA Programs and executed about 90 aid projects in Mongolia. It is gratifying to note that in terms of per capita share of assistance (8.3 euro or 9.49 \$) Mongolia ranked highest among other recipient developing countries. An important part in promoting and expanding bilateral cooperation between Mongolia and the EU is played by regular meetings of the Joint Committee held alternatively in Ulaanbaatar and Brussels. During the recent 9th meeting of the Joint Committee held in Ulaanbaatar on 7 June 2006 Mongolia re-affirmed the importance it attaches to further enhancing the relations and cooperation between Mongolia and the European Union and welcomed the positive developments in their bilateral relations. In particular, the Mongolian side underlined the importance of the Mongolia-EU Troika Meetings held on 8th of June 2006. This was the first ever-held Mongolia-EU Troika Meeting.

Having in mind the most effective and efficient record of cooperation between Mongolia and EU, we look forward with optimism and amply rightful expectations to the further successful development of bilateral cooperation with the EU as one of the decisive factors of Mongolia's advancement towards progress and prosperity. Developing broader relations and cooperation with the European Union and its Member States is one of the priorities of our foreign policy.

Mongolia is interested in strengthening its political and economic ties with the EU and in taking part in the EU's multilateral cooperation initiatives. Gaining a status of partnership of cooperation at the OSCE by Mongolia, supporting its principles and objectives, clearly demonstrates our policy line.

Mongolia today is still facing multiple socio-economic challenges such as ensuring economic growth, reducing poverty and creating new job opportunities. All these issues urge us to create a favorable external environment for increasing our export volume and intensifying economic cooperation with the outside world. Therefore, enhanced economic and development cooperation with the EU, one of the world's largest economies, is a vital factor for our prosperity.

We highly appreciate the support of the European Union extended from the outset of the democratic and market economy reforms of our country and the EU's willingness to further expand its relations and cooperation with Mongolia. A considerable number of steps have been taken in recent years towards broadening Mongolia-EU relations and cooperation. These provide us with the grounds to be satisfied with the development of our relations. For example Mongolia has been included into the EU Asia and Latin America Programme since January 2004 thus giving us an opportunity to carry out long-term and broad scale development projects. Since July 2005 the European Union included Mongolia into the GSP plus scheme, which enables Mongolia to export more than 7000 types of export items free of import duties to the EU market until the end of 2008. We do hope that Mongolia will be able

to continue benefiting from this scheme for the period beyond 2008. Furthermore, the opening of the EU Technical Cooperation Office in Ulaanbaatar in June this year is another clear example of the willingness of the EU to enhance the cooperation with Mongolia.

Mongolia is keen to develop a wide-ranging cooperation with the European Union covering all possible areas. In particular, we are looking forward to establishing a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU. As a concrete step towards further strengthening and broadening the bilateral ties with the EU we have been proposing to the European Parliament to issue a new Resolution calling for deeper cooperation between the EU and Mongolia, with a view of supporting Mongolia's political and socio-economic reforms more intensively.

Another welcome event has been Mongolia's admission to the Asia-Europe Meeting process as a partner which opens new avenues for promoting Euro-Asian integration. Mongolia considers the ASEM process as an important mechanism that greatly contributes to the enhanced cooperation and mutual understanding between Asia and Europe. Therefore, Mongolia had sought to join this unique dialogue and cooperation process for several years. Mongolia's bid to join ASEM was finally endorsed by the ASEM Leaders at their Summit meeting in Helsinki, in September 2006.

Mongolia sees its admission to ASEM as an important step in implementing its foreign policy to get broadly engaged in the political and economic integration and multilateral cooperation processes in the Asia-Pacific region. Similarly, the participation in ASEM will provide Mongolia with more opportunities for increasing its involvement in regional and global affairs as well as for strengthening friendly relationships with countries across Asia and Europe. Currently, we are taking preparatory measures to participate in ASEM activities while waiting for the Asian side to complete the internal procedure for accepting new members. Mongolia is willing to work closely with all ASEM partners and will strive to make its own contribution to the advancement of the ASEM process.

EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN STUDIES: LUNCHEON - BRIEFING ON EU-MONGOLIA RELATIONS

Brussels, 23 November 2006

EU-Mongolia Relations Today and New Prospects through the ASEM Process



Geoffrey Barrett, ASEM-Coordinator, European Commission / DG External
Relations*

Frank Schmiedel, Mongolia-Desk, European Commission / DG External
Relations*

1. Recent Players in International Politics

The nineties saw the emergence of the EU as a political actor on the international scene. Previously the European Communities (EC)¹⁹ had external relations mainly in their traditional areas of competence, such as development aid or trade questions. However, after receiving new competences through the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam and with the nomination of a High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy the EU is increasingly seen as an international political actor - not just a development agency or a trade negotiator.²⁰ In this sense, the EU as an entity is still a recent player on the international scene and its role is evolving.

Some unexpected similarities with Mongolia's development are noteworthy. After long periods of domination by the Chinese Empire and then by the Soviet Union Mongolia re-emerged as a sovereign state in the nineties – this re-emergence is paralleled by similar developments in Eastern Europe with which Mongolia traditionally has good relations. Mongolia's transition to democracy and market economy has been fast and relatively successful, particularly if compared to other Central Asian countries. Since 1990 Mongolia has striven to develop an independent foreign policy. Given its geographical situation one constant challenge is to keep a good balance between Russia and China. Under its so-called

The authors wish to thank Mr Vic Yau Cheuk Hang, National Expert from Hongkong in the Asia Department of DG External Relations, for his valuable input and assistance in writing this article.

¹⁹ For the purpose of this article EU (European Union) and EC (European Communities/Commission) can be understood as synonyms referring to the EU as an entity.

²⁰ Cf. for example first results of a research project on perceptions of the EU in the Asia-Pacific region – see <http://www.europe.canterbury.ac.nz/app/>

‘Third Neighbour Policy’ Mongolia is developing and deepening relations with other partners such as the EU, the US and Japan. The country also has friendly relations with both Koreas.

Furthermore, Mongolia engages actively in international fora and is very interested in reinforcing its integration into regional and global structures. In 2003 Mongolia hosted the 5th Conference of New or Restored Democracies which was attended by delegations from 118 countries (and the EU which also co-sponsored the event). Mongolia is an observer in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). At the 2004 ministerial meeting of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Sofia Mongolia was admitted as an OSCE ‘Partner for Cooperation’. The July 2005 conference of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) welcomed Mongolia’s accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). However, Mongolia did not participate in the East Asia Summit in December 2005. The 2006 ASEM 6 Summit invited Mongolia to become a member and the country will officially join ASEM at the 2008 ASEM 7 Summit. These are all clear signs that Mongolia is back on the international scene after centuries of relative isolation.

2. EU-Mongolia Relations so far – Focus on Development Assistance

While several Member States have relations with Mongolia dating back to the communist period, the EC/EU and Mongolia established diplomatic relations only in 1989 (cf. annex). Relations between the EU and Mongolia focussed initially on development cooperation and pressing humanitarian needs caused by the transition process and the harsh climate. In 1994 Mongolia was included in the TACIS programme (Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States). Since then the country has received about EUR 70 million in EC development aid, mainly under TACIS and since 2004 under the ALA programme (for Asian and Latin American developing countries). Aid initially focussed on the transition towards market economy, including human resources, support to SMEs, institutional and infrastructural development and alleviating the social consequences of transition. Since 2000 EC cooperation has concentrated on rural development which represents over 80% of financial assistance.

A number of complementary actions have been undertaken under regional programmes, such as TEMPUS for university cooperation or the co-financing of NGO activities.²¹ In addition, the EC’s Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) repeatedly provided emergency aid to alleviate the consequences of harsh winters (dzuds) and drought. The latest ECHO aid (EUR 1 million grant in 2004 and EUR 0.9 million in 2005) focusses on disaster-preparedness by supporting small-scale projects, for example kitchen gardens, cash-for work, water system restoration and hay preparation. Since 2004 Mongolia is also eligible for calls for proposals under the Asia-wide programmes that have taken over from the respective regional programmes under TACIS, in particular AsiaLink (university cooperation), AsiaInvest (cooperation among business associations) and AsiaProEco (environmental cooperation).

70 million EUR in EC grant aid to Mongolia since 1992

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006*	TOTAL
TACIS /ALA	8		8		9.5		11		6		6		1	0.5	9.2	59
ECHO		1.8	2						1.9	1		1	1	0.9		9.6

²¹ See detailed list of projects in National Indicative Programme 2007-2013 (annex). Cf. also http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/index_en.htm

Note: Million ECU/EUR. Since 2004 programmed expenditure under the new ALA programme. TACIS allocated funds in bi-annual Action Programmes, whereas ALA takes specific financing decisions on each project. Figures do not include multi-country projects with Mongolian participation and projects financed from global budget lines such as NGO co-financing. *2006 figures = provisional.

By focussing on one sector, i. e. rural development, the EC has improved the impact and visibility of its aid to Mongolia and acquired through the TACIS programme a measure of recognition. In 2004 the implementation of cooperation projects was decentralised from Brussels to the EC Delegation in Beijing which is also accredited for diplomatic relations with Mongolia. Since then the Delegation has been playing a very active role in the management of ongoing and upcoming cooperation projects.

3. Trade and Investment Relations

Bilateral trade volumes have been modest due to the size of the Mongolian economy and its distance from European markets. However, the EU is Mongolia's third largest trading partner. EU exports to Mongolia (machinery, chemicals, food) originate mainly from Germany – Mongolia consistently maintains a trade deficit towards the EU. Russia is still the first exporter to Mongolia, mainly of energy. The UK and Italy are the principal EU importers, mainly of raw cashmere and also gold. China is the biggest importer of Mongolian products, mostly raw materials, such as copper and cashmere. 2004 and 2005 saw a promising increase in Mongolian exports to the EU – see the following table:

Development of bilateral EU-Mongolia trade (in million EUR/ECU for EU25)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
EU imports from	40	53	40	32	23	43	50
EU exports to Mongolia	60	78	88	78	96	105	99
Balance	20	25	48	46	73	62	49

Source: European Commission / Eurostat.

In December 2005 Mongolia was given special preferences under the new EU General System of Preferences (GSP+) scheme. These preferences had been provisionally applied already since July 2005 and grant duty-free access to the European market for 7200 products covering over 90% of the country's exports. Stressing the vital importance of enjoying the preferential conditions of the scheme for the country's economic development, Mongolia has expressed interest in being included in the GSP+ scheme continuing to the year 2015.²²

²² This would, of course, imply that Mongolia ratifies and effectively applies also in the future all international conventions as laid out by the GSP+ rules (see COM (2004)461 final and Council Regulation (EC) No 980/2005 of 27 June 2005).

Mongolia's trading partners in 2005

The major import partners			The major export partners			The major trade partners		
Partners	Mio euro	%	Partners	Mio euro	%	Partners	Mio euro	%
World	993	100.0	World	691	100.0	World	1,684	100.0
1 Russia	357	36.0	1 China	389	56.3	1 China	645	38.3
2 China	256	25.8	2 Canada	108	15.7	2 Russia	374	22.2
3 EU	108	10.8	3 USA	102	14.7	3 EU	141	8.4
4 Japan	63	6.4	4 EU	34	4.9	4 Canada	131	7.8
5 Korea	59	6.0	5 Russia	17	2.4	5 USA	127	7.6
6 USA	25	2.6	6 Uzbekistan	13	1.9	6 Japan	68	4.0
7 Kazakhstan	23	2.3	7 Ukraine	8	1.2	7 Korea	66	3.9
8 Canada	23	2.3	8 Korea	6	0.9	8 Ukraine	24	1.4
9 Ukraine	15	1.6	9 Japan	5	0.7	9 Kazakhstan	24	1.4
10 Singapore	14	1.4	10 Switzerland	3	0.5	10 Singapore	14	0.8
11 Australia	9	0.9	11 Lebanon	1	0.1	11 Uzbekistan	13	0.8
12 Israel	7	0.7	12 Kuwait	1	0.1	12 Australia	9	0.5
13 Hong Kong	6	0.6	13 Saudi Arabia	1	0.1	13 Israel	7	0.4
14 Malaysia	5	0.5	14 Kazakhstan	1	0.1	14 Hong Kong	6	0.4
15 Belarus	4	0.4	15 Moldavia		0.0	15 Malaysia	5	0.3
16 Indonesia	2	0.2	16 Hong Kong		0.0	16 Switzerland	4	0.3
17 Vietnam	2	0.2	17 Argentina		0.0	17 Belarus	4	0.2
18 Argentina	2	0.2	18 Qatar		0.0	18 Argentina	2	0.1
19 Bulgaria	2	0.2	19 Norway		0.0	19 Indonesia	2	0.1
20 Turkey	1	0.1	20 Egypt		0.0	20 Vietnam	2	0.1

Source: European Commission / DG TRADE based on IMF DOTS. Figures do not fully coincide with previous EU-Mongolia trade statistics due to different sources and methodologies.

European direct investments in Mongolia have so far remained very limited, partly due to the lack of information about local business opportunities. The Mongolian Government wishes to promote information on the business environment and has submitted an application for market economy status to the EC. Mongolia is eligible for loans from the European Investment Bank and since 2006 also from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). These EU-related institutions intend to build new business links with Mongolia, but so far their activities have been limited. In September 2006 the EBRD opened an office in Mongolia, provided a first loan of EUR 4 million and is set to issue its country strategy by end-2006.

4. The Political Dialogue

Mongolia has repeatedly expressed interest in strengthening its relations with the EU and in going beyond the current focus on traditional development cooperation. Within the limits of available resources, competences and strategic priorities on both sides the EC has been open for such suggestions and relations have indeed widened considerably over recent years. Official exchanges have intensified as documented by the much broader thematic scope of recent EC-Mongolia Joint- and Sub-Committees as well as a higher frequency of official visits. Exchanges should now be enlarged to a wider spectrum of interlocutors both within the Government and in civil society, including social partners. Relevant stakeholders from civil society could also be associated to the implementation of EC cooperation with Mongolia.

Furthermore, several EU Member States have undertaken initiatives in areas such as culture, education and archaeology.

However, one has to take into account the limited resources on both sides: Mongolian ministries are generally understaffed with some 130 officials or less. The EC now has a very small technical office in Mongolia, whereas diplomatic, political and economic relations are still driven by its Delegation in Beijing and the Brussels headquarters. This being said, Mongolia and the EC try to work together more closely - joint efforts need to be very focused and adapted to the respective constraints. Of course, efforts should also be undertaken to lift some of the constraints that limit cooperation at present - the recent establishment of a technical office in Ulaanbaatar was certainly a step in the right direction.

The EU can be a privileged dialogue partner for Mongolia, not so much because of profound mutual knowledge, but rather because of the relative distance that has prevailed so far. In fact, the EC-Mongolia dialogue is characterised by a refreshing openness. The EC will continue to encourage democratic accountability, greater transparency of public affairs and sustainable development.

The coming years will be crucial for Mongolia. There are many encouraging developments: a dynamic mining sector, an increasingly active civil society, more pluralism in politics and administration, macroeconomic stability and a wider availability of products and services. However, some worrying tendencies need to be addressed: governance problems and corruption, the persistent lack of a focused development strategy and its firm implementation, the appearance of extreme poverty which was so far unknown in Mongolia, increasing prostitution, weakness and insufficient supervision of the financial sector, desertification and environmental degradation. In this critical period Mongolia needs the support of the international community, including the EU.

Support does not only mean financial support and new donor-financed projects. Perhaps more important than funding is an honest and constructive dialogue with Mongolia's decision makers about the way forward, for example on the right development strategy and practical steps to implement it. An open and efficient dialogue with all relevant partners, including civil society, increases the chances that the right measures are taken. In this perspective Mongolia's blossoming democratic system also deserves further encouragement, as well as the efforts to play an active and responsible role in the international community.

The ASEM process provides an ideal forum for such dialogue and the EU has warmly welcomed Mongolia as a new partner.

5. The ASEM Process

At its sixth Summit in September 2006, ASEM celebrated its 10th anniversary. Founded in 1996, ASEM has developed into a prime channel of multilateral communication between Asia and Europe.

ASEM is valuable because it offers an informal yet high-level dialogue forum for partners to exchange views on almost every issue of common concern and interest. In doing so, ASEM has helped build consensus, and has given an impetus to the development of bilateral relations and progress in other multilateral fora such as the UN and WTO.

The dialogue and experience-sharing among ASEM partners is important in itself. ASEM provides a framework for officials, experts, business communities and civil society groups to discuss topical political, economic and cultural issues. It is also a forum which allows Europe to share with its Asian partners its experience of integration, and to gain a better understanding of the regional development and community building process in Asia. Mutual understanding has been enhanced through these exchanges.

Much of the value of ASEM lies in its ability to bring into play all relevant stakeholders in civil society in Asia and Europe. The Asia-Europe Business Forum, Asia-Europe People's Forum and Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership all meet regularly. Complementary to this is the work of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) which seeks to promote mutual understanding through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

While ASEM is primarily a dialogue platform, it does allow for substantive cooperation. A recent remarkable example is the Second Phase of the Trans-Eurasian Information Network (TEIN2) which provides a dedicated, high-capacity network linking the research and education networks of Asia and Europe, making possible many inter-regional and intra-regional collaborative projects.

The first decade of the ASEM process has generated useful lessons for the future. For ASEM to realise its full potential, it will need to address a number of challenges. First, while retaining its flexible and multi-dimensional nature, ASEM should focus on key areas where it can add value in other multilateral settings. The ASEM 6 Summit identified a number of areas for future action, namely strengthening multilateralism and addressing global threats, globalisation and competitiveness, sustainable development, and intercultural and interfaith dialogues. ASEM partners are encouraged to take the lead on issues in which they have a particular interest and to drive initiatives to produce tangible outcomes.

Second, ASEM needs to achieve greater visibility and attract more public and media attention. The ASEM 6 Summit has called for a public communication strategy to be developed as a matter of priority.

Mongolia: A Welcome Addition to ASEM

The participation of Mongolia and the other new partners will give new impetus to ASEM as it steps into its second decade. Enlargement will enrich ASEM's diversity and dynamism and add to the collective weight of ASEM in promoting multilateralism and pursuing its global agenda.

Mongolia is as committed as the other ASEM partners to ensuring peace and stability in the North East Asia region, which has recently seen heightened tension. The friendly relations Mongolia enjoys with both Koreas provide ASEM with a new asset in its long-term effort to promote peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula.

Culturally, Mongolia also has a lot to offer. The country has a tradition of religious tolerance and relations with Europe going back many centuries. Its participation will undoubtedly enrich ASEM's intercultural and interfaith dialogues.

Mongolia is interested in a number of issues which have featured prominently on ASEM's agenda, including good governance, protection of human rights and poverty reduction. It is

expected to play a particularly active role in these discussions. With a growing economy, and as a member of the WTO since 1997, Mongolia's participation can strengthen and broaden ASEM's cooperation on economic and trade issues.

How ASEM can help Mongolia's International and Regional Integration

Mongolia's overall involvement in regional processes has hitherto been limited. ASEM will stand Mongolia in good stead as it seeks to reinforce its links with regional and global partners. Mongolia is entering a forum embracing the European Union and now virtually the whole of Asia, which can help shape the global agenda and advance shared interests in international fora such as the UN and WTO. Indeed, following the latest enlargement ASEM accounts for nearly 60% of the world's population and world trade in goods and over 50% of the world's GDP, thereby forming a critical mass capable of driving global change. ASEM is also an ideal platform for Mongolia to strengthen relations with the EU and to further advance its "Third Neighbour Policy".

Sectoral dialogues and exchanges of experience and best practices within the ASEM framework can facilitate Mongolia's domestic development, particularly in priority areas such as governance, education and the promotion of trade and economic cooperation with other countries. ASEM's strong cultural pillar, particularly its people-to-people programmes, can help foster the development of civil society which is becoming increasingly active in Mongolia.

The above outline only some of the potential benefits of Mongolia's participation in ASEM based on an analysis of the present situation.

The year 2006 is therefore an important one for Mongolia and EU-Mongolia relations. As Mongolia celebrates the 800th anniversary of its statehood, EU-Mongolia relations are developing positively, marked by the first EU-Troika mission to Mongolia and the opening of a technical office in Ulaanbaatar in June, as well as the decision taken at ASEM 6 to invite Mongolia to join the forum. Bilateral and multilateral ties between the EU and Mongolia have been growing over the past years, laying a solid foundation for the further deepening of relations in the years to come.

ANNEX

Developing Relations between the EU and Mongolia

- 1989 Establishment of diplomatic relations between EC and Mongolia. Accreditation of Mongolian Ambassador to Brussels in 1990. Accreditation of EC Head of Delegation in Beijing to Ulaanbaatar in 1991.
- 1992 Commissioner F. Andriessen pays an official visit to Mongolia. Mongolia's Prime Minister D. Byambasuren visits Brussels.
- 1993 Trade and Cooperation Agreement enters into force. The President of the Mongolian Parliament N. Bagabandi visits Brussels.
- 1994 Mongolia becomes eligible for TACIS Programme (Technical Assistance to Community of Independent States and Mongolia) which has since then provided the major part of EC project grants (which altogether exceed €60 million)
- 1995 Mongolia's President P. Ochirbat visits Brussels.
- 1996 Commissioner H. Van den Broek visits Mongolia.
- 2001 Mongolia's Prime Minister N. Enkhbayar visits Brussels.
- 2001 European Commission adopts first Country Strategy Paper (CSP) which outlines the priorities for EC cooperation with Mongolia between 2002 and 2006: rural development, support to the private sector and for alleviating the social consequences of transition.
- 2002 The President of the Mongolian Parliament S. Tumor-Ochir visits Brussels.
- 2003 European Commission sponsors 5th International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in Ulaanbaatar. Commissioner P. Nielson visits Mongolia and speaks at the Conference.
- Jan. 2004 Mongolia becomes eligible for the ALA Assistance Programme for Asian and Latin American Developing Countries.
- May 2004 EC adopts National Indicative Programme which concretises priorities for cooperation with Mongolia between 2004 and 2006: continued focus on poverty alleviation through rural development. Devolution/"Deconcentration" of project management to Beijing Delegation.
- Sept. 2004 Seminar on "Opportunities for Cooperation between Mongolia and the EU" in Ulaanbaatar: Asia-wide programmes, science & technology under the 6th Framework Programme, trade-related technical assistance.
- June 2005 Mongolian Prime Minister T. Elbegdorj visits Brussels.
- Dec. 2005 Practically all Mongolian exports are granted tariff-free access to the EU under the reformed Generalised System of Preferences (GSP+).
- June 2006 9th EC-Mongolia Joint Committee meeting and first ever EU-Troika visit to Mongolia. The European Commission opens a Technical Office in Ulaanbaatar.
- Sep 2006 The ASEM 6 Summit decided to invite Mongolia along with India, Pakistan, the ASEAN Secretariat, Bulgaria and Romania to become ASEM partners.

More info → see http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/mongolia/intro/index.htm

3. Synthesis Report of the Luncheon Briefing

by Sebastian Bersick

The EIAS Luncheon Briefing ‘Mongolia: From Chinggis Khaan to ASEM’ offered its participants a unique opportunity to reflect upon EU-Mongolia relations from a comparative point of view. Because the implications of the latest development in Euro-Mongolian relations, that is the coming membership of Mongolia in the ASEM process, were discussed against the background of Europe’s and Asia’s common historic links the fundamentals of their relationship became all the more apparent in the wake of the discussions: Whereas many perceptions of Chinggis Khaan’s approach to integration indicate that it was based on conflict, the contemporary world order allows the Euro-Asian relationship to be based on cooperation. Against this window of opportunity the importance of bilateral cooperation between the EU and Mongolia as well as of multilateral cooperation within the ASEM regime and in the Asian context were analyzed by the seven Mongolian and European panelists.

In his presentation ‘The Mongolian Empire and its Contribution to World History’ Professor Boldbataar of the National University of Mongolia emphasized that Chinggis Khaan has been the “creator and maker of the modern world” who has “connected the orient and the occident with a myriad of political, economic and cultural ties”. The speed with which the Mongols acted made them the “hegemon of heir time”. In addition to Professor Boldbataar’s introductory remarks his interpreter Mr Munkh-Ochir, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Strategic Studies in Ulaanbaatar, pointed to the need to “assess and reassess” the role of Chinggis Khaan and analyze the national pride and values of Mongolia in order to define the national contribution of Mongolia to the ASEM process. Munkh-Ochir highlighted four main findings of Boldbataar’s research: (1) The deep impact that the Great Mongolian Empire has left on the political scene of the medieval world has been carried into modernity; (2) The Mongol Empire had a pioneering impact on international relations and the balance of power; (3) Because it linked to the East and the West by trade and commercial ties the Mongol Empire gave a huge impetus to the world economy; (4) The Mongol Empire contributed to the emerging global culture because it pioneered cultural interaction and exchange between the West and the East. In conclusion Munkh-Ochir underlined Mongolia’s firm interest to bring the “various Mongolian traditional values that are convergent with the European values” into the ASEM process.

The following speaker, Ambassador Ochirbal, who, as a Senior Diplomat, had been accredited as Ambassador to several European countries, presented the paper ‘From Chinggis Khaan towards Democracy – Mongolia’s Role in Euro-Asian Affairs’. By describing the historical context and its shaping influence on contemporary Mongolian internal and external politics Ambassador Ochirbal underlined the changes of the Mongolian political system that came with the collapse of the Soviet Union. They brought with them a new constitution in 1992 that instituted a legal framework for democratic reforms and the introduction of a pluralistic multi-party system. As a result Mongolia’s foreign policy underwent fundamental changes, particularly in its relations with China and Russia. In this new strategic set up Mongolia has a particular interest to “strengthen its position in Asia and securing a constructive participation in the political and economic integration process in the region”. The government seeks, for example, to become a Dialogue Partner of ASEAN and to join the APEC forum. He furthermore stressed the “strategically vital significance” of Mongolia’s relations with the EU and its Member States and the interest of the Mongolian government to take part in “EU's multilateral cooperation initiatives”. According to Ambassador Ochirbal the

government's interest in the ASEM process stems from the process's ability to serve three functions which are regarded as vital for Mongolia, namely (1) to promote Euro-Asian integration and enhance cooperation and mutual understanding between Asia and Europe; (2) to get broadly engaged in the political and economic integration and multilateral cooperation processes in the Asia-Pacific region; (3) to provide Mongolia with more opportunities to engage in global affairs.

Dr Frank Schmiedel, Desk Officer Mongolia at the European Commission, provided an overview of the content and policy focus of current EU-Mongolia relations as well as of the institutional and diplomatic structures of the bilateral relationship. When the European Communities established diplomatic relations with Mongolia in 1989 the focus of the relationship was mainly on development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. According to him the need to help boost the economic and investment opportunities between the EU and Mongolia which have been "relatively weak" has been answered since then. In 2005 Mongolia became eligible for almost duty free access for most of its products under the General System of Preferences (GSP plus) and in 2006 the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development opened an office in Ulaanbaatar. Mongolia is now eligible to its funds. Furthermore the European Commission has opened a technical office in Ulaanbaatar and the first ever EU Troika mission visited Mongolia in June 2006. Against these developments the political relations have been taken to "a higher level than in the past". Because of their historic relations with Mongolia the new Member States of whom many have Embassies in Ulaanbaatar have also contributed to this development. Currently the EU is working on a 9 million Euro project for the Mongolian meat sector to help Mongolia to increase the quality of its products and make them internationally more competitive. A new Country Strategy for Mongolia that will cover the years from 2007-2013 is under preparation and will soon be published. According to Schmiedel the EU and Mongolia need to be "realistic" about the availability of resources on both sides. However the structures for bilateral cooperation are now in place and represent a good base to build on.



In her intervention Ambassador Onon, Head of the Mission of Mongolia to the European Union, emphasized the importance of the recent opening of the EU Technical Cooperation Office in Ulaanbaatar and of the recent EU Troika Visit. She furthermore pointed out that, from the view of the Mongolian government, the future of EU-Mongolia relations should bring (1) a new resolution of the European Parliament on Mongolia; (2) Market

Economy Status for Mongolia by the European Union; (3) and the start of negotiations on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.



Ambassador Lehtinen of the Finnish Foreign Ministry and representative of the current Presidency of the Council of the European Union presented an overview of the recent ASEM Summit in Helsinki and stressed the inter-regional nature of the process which has the potential to "combine the global weight" of its members, "shape policies together" and "make a quite substantial impact" on the global level. As the most important

outcome of the ASEM 6 Summit she underlined the high turnout (35 out of 39 leaders participated in the Summit), the declarations that have been adopted in Helsinki (Joint Declaration on Climate Change, Declaration on the Future of ASEM) and the decision of the ASEM partners to enlarge the process by inviting Mongolia, India, Pakistan and the ASEAN

Secretariat as well as Bulgaria and Romania to join them on the occasion of the 7th ASEM Summit in China in 2008 officially. As of 1 January 2007 these future members will start to participate effectively in ASEM Senior Official Meetings (SOM). According to Ambassador Lehtinen, who is the Head of the ASEM 6 Secretariat, the ASEM Summit in Helsinki has deepened and widened the overall process which is now “more powerful and stronger than ever”. Consequently, ASEM will not only provide an opportunity to strengthen the trade links between Europe and Asia but it will also facilitate identity building processes in Asia.

Mr Geoffrey Barrett, ASEM Advisor of the European Commission, analyzed the impact of Mongolia joining the ASEM process and called it an “important point in Mongolia’s foreign affairs options” that “opens a whole new perspective for Mongolia”. Barrett, who had just returned from a visit to Mongolia, emphasized the “extremely proactive” approach that the Mongolian government has taken vis-à-vis ASEM. He had been particularly impressed that the government had organized a seminar on ASEM that brought together different parts of the Mongolian administration only weeks after the announcement that Mongolia would join the process. According to his assessment the country now needs to appoint a Senior Official who will represent Mongolia in the first ASEM SOM at the end of January 2007 in Berlin under the German Presidency of the European Union. In conclusion Mr Barrett emphasized the importance of the enlargement for ASEM’s capacity “to really steer the international agenda. Given the size of its population its combined GDP, its contribution to world trade this is basically a world beating combination of nations. (...) If they chose to push a particular agenda, be it climate change, be it the social dimension of globalization or be it the promotion of inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue ASEM can make a difference”. Because “ASEM was reaching now to South Asia” it offered Europe an opportunity to engage with the whole of Asia. Yet, ASEM remains “an opportunity waiting to be taken”.

The Question and Answer session was opened by Dr van der Geest, Director of the EIAS, who asked for the significance that Mongolia attaches to the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the chances for a diversification of Mongolia’s trade which is highly dependent on China. In his reply Ambassador Ochirbal underlined the importance of the SCO, of which Mongolia is an observer, and which will, “play a vital role to keep peace and stability in the region”. In his assessment Mongolia will not “rush” to become a member of the organization because of the implications of Mongolia’s “difficult position” between its big neighbors China and Russia. As regards to the diversification of its trade Ambassador Onon replied that though the variety of Mongolian products are still limited there is a great potential in diversifying the products, for example with the help of the new EU’s project on live stock. It will enable Mongolia to start exporting meat and meat products – besides its traditional products like copper, gold and cashmere. Ambassador Ochirbal added that within the next 5 years or so Mongolia's trade performance will have enhanced significantly, for instance because of huge investments in the mining sector and because of the inflow of Russian investments. A question by Daniel Guyader, DG External Relations of the European Commission, asked for an assessment of the future of the bilateral relations with China and Russia and the role of Europe as a counterbalance. In reply Ambassador Ochirbal called both bilateral relationships as “one of the most vital questions for Mongolia” and stressed that the Mongolian foreign policy strategy has developed a special concept that allows Mongolia to keep “balanced good neighborly relations” with both Russia and China. According to Ochirbal “The Third Neighbor” concept is very important in this context because it can provide help “in case of a crisis situation” in the region. Furthermore the Mongolian government has declared the country as a non-nuclear zone. The overall relations with Russia and especially with China are “developing rapidly”. For “at least the foreseeable future the

relations between Mongolia and Russia and China will be quite normal”. In his intervention Mr Munkh-Ochir pointed out that “politically” Europe is important to Mongolia because Mongolia is a democracy and a liberalizing economy and the Western European countries can provide Mongolia with much expertise. Furthermore Europe is important for Mongolia because it can help to diversify Mongolia’s trade. The SCO offers Mongolia with the opportunity to connect to Central Asia and its energy resources. He stressed that India and Mongolia are the only democracies among the group of 10 members and observers of the SCO. From this it follows that “a certain cautiousness justifies Mongolia’s position to remain an observer of the SCO”. Within this strategic framework “Europe is essential” as a further component of Mongolia’s Western orientation and The Third Neighbor concept – as it does “not only mean the USA”. At this point Ambassador Ochirbal elaborated that a different understanding of the notion of The Third Neighbor concept exists in Mongolia. Some analysts view the USA as “the only solid guarantee of Mongolia’s independence” while others conceive that “all developed Eastern and Western countries, including the EU and Japan” serve this function of supporting Mongolia if a crisis occurred. According to him the second interpretation is “closer to reality” though US President Bush has repeated during his visit of Mongolia this year that the US will be a Third Neighbor of Mongolia.

In reply to a question of Mr Richard Gupwell, Secretary General of the EIAS, about the relations between the Mongolian’s who live in Inner and in Outer Mongolia Professor Boldbataar replied that the population of Mongolia today constitutes 2.7 million people. An estimated 3 million ethnic Mongols live in China. If those people of ethnic origin in the Russian Federation, in Afghanistan and in Northern parts of India are added up “the Mongol world almost constitutes around 9 to 10 million people”. Though a pan-Mongolia movement existed in the 1920s this movement has not been successful because of the assimilation of the Mongols in their respective territories. Quoting Chinggis Khaan who had already warned his descendants “to always be concerned about the state that lies in the South” Professor Boldbataar referred to a concern in Mongolia that the increasing cultural exchange between Inner Mongolia and (Outer) Mongolia “allows for more opportunity for Chinese penetration of their ideas and for their attempt to gain influence in Mongolia”. In a follow up question Dr van der Geest asked for the approach to migration that Mongolia foresees between Inner Mongolia and Mongolia. In his answer Professor Boldbataar pointed to the possibility that the demographic situation in Mongolia might change in the future. According to him there is an increasing influx from ethnic Chinese to Mongolia and there is a concern that with increased investment from China more immigration from China will take place. This is a possible challenge to the “demographic security”. The last question by the audience was posed by Willy Fautré, Human Rights Without Frontiers International, and related to the actual number of Russian speaking people in Mongolia and their rights. According to Ambassador Ochirbal the number of Russians in Mongolia has decreased considerably and they are today no longer prevalent as a linguistic or ethnic group. Those Russians who still live in Mongolia are not discriminated against.

In her final remarks Ambassador Lehtinen emphasized that with the coming enlargement of the ASEM process the new Asian partners will give a “completely new dimension” to ASEM whereas the membership of Bulgaria and Romania would not bring big changes because they have already been linked to the cooperation in ASEM since they have signed the accession treaty to the EU. She stressed the necessity and opportunity to engage the “whole ASEM community” which also includes the Parliaments and NGOs. She furthermore underlined that “first and foremost” the ASEM process offers in particular smaller partners, like Finland for instance or Mongolia, who have not traditional deep ties with at least all of the ASEM

partners, “an extraordinary tool to learn about other countries, to cooperate and to network on all levels” including the civil society, the academics, business etc. According to Ambassador Lehtinen it will be the biggest challenge for the new ASEM participants to engage the whole ASEM community and not “only the official side”.

In her conclusions Ambassador Onon underlined the importance of the Luncheon Briefing to disseminate information on Mongolia and to underline the interest of the Mongolian government in the ASEM process. ASEM represents a forum and dialogue process that will enable Mongolia to engage further and deeper in regional and global affairs. In that respect Mongolia is particularly interested in becoming progressively involved in the economic and political cooperation and integration processes in the Asia Pacific as well as in the inter-regional link to Europe that ASEM provides. The coming participation within the ASEM process will thus provide Mongolia with the opportunity to actively engage in the promotion of mutual understanding between Asia and Europe.

4. Bios of the Panelists

Mr. Geoffrey Barrett

Mr. Geoffrey Barrett has spent most of his career working in different positions in the European Commission. In 1996, after fifteen years spent on the Central Africa desk and on trade and development issues in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, he was posted to the EU Delegation in Riga, Latvia, to help prepare for that country's accession to the European Union. In 2001, he was appointed Head of Delegation to Serbia and Montenegro where he contributed to the full restoration of ties with the European Union following the departure of the Milosevic regime. Since autumn 2004, he has been working at the Commission Headquarters in Brussels where he is currently an Adviser in the Directorate General for External Relations responsible for the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and related regional policy and security issues.

Ambassador Sodov Onon

Born in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia Ambassador Sodov Onon holds a Master of Arts degree in Foreign Languages from Moscow State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages and a Master of Science degree in NGO Management from the London School of Economics and Political Science. She joined the Labour Administration of Mongolia in 1974. Over the next 18 years, she served as officer, then senior officer in the International Relations Department of the State Committee on Labour and Social Security (1974-1992), Head of the International Relations Department of the Ministry of Population Policy and Labour (1992-1995) and Director of the National Poverty Alleviation Programme Office under the Mongolia's Prime-Minister (1995-2001). Over the course of her career she has represented the Government of Mongolia at numerous conferences and meetings organised under the aegis of international organisations such as the World Bank, the ADB, the UNDP, the ILO, the ECOSOC, the ESCAP, and the UNICEF. She is accredited as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to BENELUX countries, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Head of Mission to the EU since 2001.

Ambassador Hanna Lehtinen

Ambassador Hanna Lehtinen obtained an MBA from the Helsinki School of Economics in 1983 was appointed to office for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland that same year. She worked at the Permanent Representation of Finland to the EC in 1986-88, before being posted to the Permanent Mission of Finland in Geneva, Switzerland between 1988-91. Within the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Lehtinen worked at the Department for External Economic Relations in 1992 and the EU-secretariat in 1993-95. She returned to Brussels to work at the Permanent Representation of Finland to the EU in 1996-2001. In 2001-2004, Ambassador Lehtinen worked for the European Commission, Directorate General for External Relations. Presently, she is back with the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Department for the Americas and Asia.

Ambassador Ishtsog Ochirbal

Born in Uvs province, Mongolia, Ambassador Ishtsog OCHIRBAL is a graduate of the Moscow Institute of Foreign Relations (1953-1960) and the Diplomatic Academy in Moscow (1977-1979). He joined the Foreign Service of Mongolia in 1960. In his 37-year career, he devoted 25 years to the Foreign Service of Mongolia serving in various capacities at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia as well as abroad. Ambassador Ishtsog Ochirbal has been accredited to the United Kingdom, concurrently to Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Iceland (1987-1991), to Egypt and concurrently to Kuwait, Israel, Oman and UAE (1995-1997). He has attended major international conferences as a member of the Mongolian delegations, in particular the UN General Assembly sessions (XVI-XVIII, XX-XXVI, XXX-XXXI), UNCTAD I-III (Geneva 1964, New Delhi 1968, Santiago 1972), sessions of ECOSOC, second UNIDO in Lima 1976, UN committee on Outer Space, Science and Technology, Conference on Consular Relations, Vienna 1963, Asian Ministerial Meeting, Amman 1996. He retired with the title of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in 1997.

Prof. Jigjid Boldbaatar

Prof. Boldbaatar is a Full Member of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and an Associate Justice of the Constitutional Court of Mongolia. He is also the Director of the Institute of History, National University of Mongolia. He has a B.A. in History from the National University of Mongolia (NUM) and a Ph.D. in History from the Academy of Social Science, Moscow, USSR where he also became Doctor of Science (History) in 1990. From 1971-1979 he was a Lecturer/Senior Lecturer at the Department of History, NUM. From 1979-1991 he was Professor and Head of the department of History and the Institute of Political Science, also at NUM. Between 1991-1994 he acted as Deputy Chairman of the MPRP (Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party) and was a Member of the State Great Khural (Parliament of Mongolia) between 1992 and 1996. Presently, he is Professor, Head of the Department of History and Director of the Institute of History at the National University of Mongolia where he specialises in Mongol Oral History, the History of State and Legal traditions, Political History of Mongolia and Biographical Studies. Prof. Boldbaatar has written over 100 research articles, books and monographs on the topic of Mongolian history.

Mr. Dorjjugder Munkh-Ochir

Mr. Munkh-Ochir Dorjjugder is Senior Analyst of the Institute for Strategic Studies, National Security Council of Mongolia and Lecturer of History and Political Science at the National University of Mongolia (NUM). A graduate of NUM with a B.A. degree in History (1996) and an M.A. in Political Science (1999) and of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California with an M.A. in National Security Affairs (2003), Mr. Munkh-Ochir has professional experience in both academia and public service and is an active duty officer in the Mongolian Army. He serves on board of several research and policy think-tanks, such as the National University of Mongolia-based Center for Contemporary Political Research and Mongolian National Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP). In 2006, he became a member of the foreign policy taskforce of the Academic Advisory Council to the President of Mongolia.

Dr. Sebastian Bersick

Dr. Sebastian Bersick is an expert in International Relations specialising in the politics of intra- and inter-regional relations. As Senior Research Fellow, Dr. Bersick heads the EIAS research department on 'EU-Asia Inter-Regionalism and New Regionalism in Asia' as well as the department on 'Political and Security Developments in Asia'. He also holds the position of co-Editor of the 'EIAS Briefing Paper' series, an in-house publication providing in-depth analysis on issues in contemporary European-Asian studies. Having studied Political Science, Economics, Sociology and Sinology at the University of Cologne and Free University of Berlin, as well as Mandarin at Xiamen University in the PR China, Dr. Bersick went on to receive a PhD in International Relations from Free University of Berlin. His doctoral research, on the politics of inter-regional relations and the ASEM process, was awarded the 'Ernst-Reuter Preis 2003' for outstanding doctoral dissertations. He has worked and lectured at the 'Centre for Chinese and East-Asian Studies' at the Free University of Berlin and in the Department of Economics at Bremen University of Applied Sciences.

Dr. Frank Schmiedel

A German national, Dr. Schmiedel studied economics and political science at Cologne University and holds a Ph.D. in economics from Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur le Développement International (CERDI/CNRS - Université d'Auvergne) in France. He is a Marie-Curie fellow of the European Union and also studied business administration at Ecole de Hautes Etudes Commerciales (HEC) in 1993. Before joining the European Commission in 2001, Mr Schmiedel worked in multinational companies (Bayer, Michelin) and as a management consultant. In the Commission he has worked in the Internal Market Directorate-General (2001-2003) and since 2003 in the External Relations Directorate-General as Desk Officer for Mongolia and Co-Desk for China.