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Fong-AEUNIC

ASIA-EUROPE FORUM SUPPORT AEUNIC

KUALA LUMPUR, March 18 (Bernama) -- The Asia-Europe University Forum today expressed support for the creation of a Asia-Europe University Centre (AEUNIC) in Malaysia to bridge the gap in Euro-Asian academic relations.

The forum participants, comprising scholars from Asia and Europe, concurred that the centre would provide the infrastructure towards enhancing Asia-Europe university relations.

Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said the two-day forum, which ended today, concluded that existing international cooperation on education needed to be promoted further for greater advancement of the Asian region.

They felt that initiatives must be taken to increase student mobility and access to education for all and that the establishment of AEUNIC on a more global and international basis would serve as a positive step in that direction, he told reporters after opening the Asia-Europe Fair.

The forum was opened by Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak yesterday and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim were among the speakers.

The idea for a closer Asia-Europe cooperation beyond traditional ties was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during the inaugural Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Bangkok two years ago.

Dr Fong said the forum participants felt that the best way to realise Dr Mahathir's idea was through the AEUNIC which could foster closer linkages between academics of the two regions.

Najib announced the setting up of the centre after opening the forum yesterday. He had said ministers attending the second Asem meeting in London next month are expected to endorse its inception.

Dr Fong said the forum also discussed AEUNIC's role as a referral centre to facilitate distance learning. -- BERNAMA

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