

7th Asialics International Conference – 15-17 April 2010

With the aim to continue building good linkages with the Asian innovation policy research community JIIP Director Jos Leijten participated in Asialics 2010 held in Taipei (<http://asialics7.cier.edu.tw>). It was titled: Global Recession and Reform of Innovation Systems in Asia. He contributed with a paper which explores the shape of the next (growth) wave after the 2008-2009 crisis.

The two-day conference included many very interesting paper presentations and discussions directly or indirectly dealing with the topic of the conference. It was a pity that for unclear and by now rather exceptional reasons researchers from mainland China were discouraged to participate. Even so, a couple of observations can be made:

In 2009 the overall feeling was that the crisis is something from the US and Europe, but apparently this has changed. Several people reported that the crisis also really starts to be felt in many Asian countries (e.g. South Korea, Taiwan).

One of the responses can be seen in the announcement of a proposal to establish an Asian Research Area between Japan, China and South Korea in a ministerial meeting later this year. The plan very much reflects the ERA goals. For the starting phase Japan has already allocated 400 mln. USD.

A returning element in the discussions was the discussion of catch-up strategies (to cite one of the participants: “the national innovation system is a consequence of the growth strategy a country chooses”). And this also led to the question what will happen once the catch-up phase of economic growth is over, a situation faced in Japan for quite some time already and soon to be faced by South-Korea and Taiwan (China was given another 25 years).

This turned into a very strong interest in the US as the scientific frontrunner and in several talks Asian countries achievements were compared with US scientific achievements.

But interestingly, the discussants also showed a strong interest in Europe, not so much because of its scientific advances, but for learning about how to manage a “mature economy” in which most of the immediate needs of people are satisfied. In this respect the future of countries like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and maybe even China, was seen as being much closer to the future of Europe than to the future of the US.

All in all these are good reasons for JIIP to continue to develop the contacts with the Asian innovation policy research community.