



The Asia Europe People's Forum

The Asia Europe People's Forum (AEPF) is an interregional network of progressive civil society organisations from across Asia and Europe. Since 1996, the AEPF has consistently been a network linking Asian and European NGOs and social movements. It is committed to fostering people's solidarity for a socially and economically just, inclusive, peaceful, sustainable and ecologically sensitive development, within and across the two regions. The AEPF's vision and practice are to advance people's voices and visions within Asia-Europe relations.

The AEPF provides a space for social actors in each region to:

- Strengthen network building at the national and regional levels in order to undertake cross-regional initiatives and campaigns;
- Analyse issues of common interest such as social justice, peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, democracy and Rights, and neo-liberal globalization and their impacts on peoples in each region and develop and take forward visions and strategies for alternative futures for a more just, equal and inclusive Asia and Europe;
- Provide people's organisations and networks with a channel for constructive engagement with the institutions and policies of ASEM-member countries and especially to their parliamentarians and policy makers at national and regional levels;
- Advocate ideas generated at AEPF meetings through social media.

The AEPF has organised significant biennial People's Forums since 1996. These precede and contribute to the meeting of the Asia Europe Heads of States Meeting (ASEM). AEPF thematic clusters provide an input during these forums into the development and strengthening of a People's Agenda that is presented to the ASEM leaders.

This is developed by the clusters continuously in between the forums.



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There are currently six Thematic Clusters which bring together activists and scholars from Europe and Asia for collaborative campaigns for a more just, equal and inclusive Asia and Europe:



Climate Change and Just Transitions



Peace and Security



Social Justice and Reclaiming affordable and quality Public Services



Food Sovereignty and Resource Justice



Trade Justice and Corporate Accountability



Participatory Democracy, Reclaiming Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

BACKGROUND, VISION & STRATEGY

The AEPF emerged in the mid-1990s from a common desire and need among people's organisations and networks across Asia and Europe to open up venues for dialogue, cooperation and solidarity. It started in 1996, ahead of the first Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) held in Bangkok. It has organised 12 Peoples Forums that have involved coalitions of farmers, urban poor and women's organisations, trade unions, regional campaign networks and NGOs, progressive think-tanks and scholars, parliamentarians and journalists. For example, the Forum in Ulaanbaatar had 750 participants, including local volunteers, from 42 countries. In Ghent, Belgium there were participants from 48 nationalities.

The Forums highlight the diversity and wealth of experience of civil society groups through the plenary sessions, workshops and other events. AEPF continues to critically and constructively engage the ASEM whose countries account for about two thirds of the world's population, and more than 50% of the world's output. ASEM has the potential to become a strategic vehicle for the fundamental re-orientation of globalization by advancing treaties and policies that will respond to the major challenges we face today.

AEPF works in the background of a climate crisis, growing inequality, the threat to democracies brought about by spreading authoritarianism and right-wing nationalisms in both Asia and Europe.

The International Organising Committee hopes that it can continue to create spaces to link current struggles, emerging grassroots movements and alternative visions regionally, inter-regionally and globally – for another world based on social, economic and ecological justice, peace, human rights and participatory democracy.



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