

## **AEPF Governance and Structure**

*Note: This is an edited, shorter version of the original document, for the full version check the website [aepf.info](http://www.aepf.info):  
<http://www.aepf.info/about/governance-and-structure>*

The AEPF Governance and Structures provide the framework how we strengthen the AEPF and enable greater clarity and transparency in decision making.

The Charter of the Asia Europe People's Forum provides our reference point and the fundamental basis for how we work and what we aim to do.

### **Structure**

The International Organising Committee (IOC) coordinates the activities of the AEPF. It initially consisted of civil society organisations and social movements that organised the first AEPF in Bangkok in 1996. Since then, members have been added, mainly coming from countries where succeeding forums were held.

The IOC works with a National Organising Committee (NOC), which is also composed of people's organisations, in the host country. The IOC and NOC, in cooperation with interested organisations in Asia and Europe, decide on the direction and content of the biennial forum. The AEPF has coordinating organizations in each region - in Asia, Indonesia for Global Justice (IGJ) and Monitoring Sustainability of Globalisation (Malaysia); in Europe, the Stiftung Asienhaus, Cologne. In-between the biennial People's Forums, AEPF is active through geographical and thematic circles.

(...)

The AEPF structure is aimed at enabling places and spaces for all who wish to be part of the AEPF. The AEPF should be a space for open and democratic debate and exchange providing the possibility for networking of people's movements in Asia and Europe for joint actions which include lobbying the ASEM and related institutions and the European Union's agenda in Asia.

The AEPF is not only ASEM-related but focuses on broader Asia-Europe relations. Therefore we are not the ASEM Peoples Forum but the Asia Europe People's Forum.

(...)

### **Principles**

We aim to strengthen solidarity between peoples of Asia and Europe.

- Inclusive. We will enable people and organisations with different and diverse backgrounds to be part of the AEPF. However we will ensure that a pro-people orientation remains fundamental.
- Work is based on and builds on the AEPF Charter and our People's Visions including their fundamental principles. This is our fundamental common ground. A commitment to the principles agreed and stated in our Charter is fundamental to participation in and collaboration with the Asia Europe People's Forum.
- We work on Asia-Europe relations but not exclusively those located in the ASEM process.
- Transparent, democratic and open
- We need to celebrate diversity and encourage and recognize that there are multiple solutions.
- We recognize that Women's access to rights and resources is often still unequal and inappropriate and that this needs to be challenged and changed.
- Linking with networks and movements, being complimentary to the work of others and providing a space for others. The AEPF places importance on membership organisations, networks and movements with democratic decision making processes. This is key.
- Build on collective energies and actions

We note that:

1. There is a need for an inter-regional structure and that this has to be founded, informed and inspired by people's experiences, strategies and visions.
2. The base should be geographical and thematic, building on our strengths and the Asian and European regions.
3. Our structure should bring together organizations and movements and facilitate exchanges of experiences, information, strategies and actions between them.
4. The type of organizational structure most appropriate to the development and strengthening of the AEPF is not pyramid shaped but circular.

5. We do not have the resources for one permanent secretariat.

## **AEPF International Organising Committee**

The AEPF International Organising Committee (AEPF IOC) is the reference body for the AEPF.

### **Membership Criteria**

The IOC has up to sixteen members – six from Asia based organizations and six from Europe based organizations and up to two regional networks per region. (...)

Membership is for organizations and networks supporting the Charter. It is not for individuals. There is no more than one national organization per country on the IOC. Regional organizations like Forum Asia and Focus on the Global South can be IOC members as regional networks. (...)

### **Current members are**

#### **Asia**

1. IGJ (Indonesia Global Justice)
2. Focus on the Global South (Asia Regional)
3. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM Asia)
4. Monitoring Sustainability of Globalisation (MSN, Malaysia)
5. Vietnam Peace and Development Foundation (Vietnam)
6. Institute for Popular Democracy (The Philippines)
7. Indian AEPF Committee

#### **Europe**

1. Stiftung Asienhaus (Germany)
2. Transnational Institute (The Netherlands)
3. FreshEyes – People to People (United Kingdom)
4. French AEPF Collective (France)
5. Finnish AEPF Committee
6. Ecologistas en Accion (Spain)

(...)

### **Criteria for application for IOC membership**

Each prospective IOC member must

- support and be committed to the AEPF Charter
- have a proven commitment to bringing Asia Europe relations and issues to wider audiences in their country and /or regionally;
- have a proven commitment to positive working with the IOC and existing member organisations and networks. This can include within Thematic Circles;
- have a recommendation from their respective regional circle;

### **Responsibilities of the IOC**

The main responsibilities of the IOC are:

1. To take forward commitments made in the AEPF Charter, The People's Vision and the Declarations made at the People's Forum.
2. Taking forward the Charter
3. Strategic planning, assessment of progress and reviewing the direction of the work of the AEPF
4. Coordination, supporting and facilitating the work of the Regional and National Circles, Regional Focal Points and Thematic Circles
5. Organising, with a National Organising Committee from the host country, a People's Forum held just before the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM)
6. Overall responsibility for the finances, fundraising and related reporting whilst delegation agreed activities to the Finance and Fundraising Transparency Committee
7. To discuss and agree or reject requests to establish National and Thematic Circles.
8. Liaise with ASEM and related institutions

(...)

## Focal Points

In principle there are two focal points, one in Asia and one in Europe. These are recommended by regional circles and the recommendation must be approved by the IOC. The Focal points are accountable to the IOC and National Circles.

At present the Stiftung Asienhaus is the Europe Focal Point and, following a recommendation and agreement by the Asia IOC members, Indonesia for Global Justice are currently co-sharing the focal point responsibility with MSN

The Focal Points have the responsibility for

- Facilitating and coordinating agendas for regional discussions and meetings
- setting meetings
- co-ordinating within the respective regions
- co-ordinating between the regions
- fundraising
- lobbying and advocacy coordination in region and between regions
- receiving requests to establish a National Circle and, - after assessing them against the AEPF criteria, submitting them to the IOC

## Circles

The Circles are the foundation of our structures. There are two main types of circles: Working Circles to enable the development and strengthening of the AEPF, and Thematic Circles – for policy and lobbying work

- Circles are created and made up of people who are representatives and activists from organizations and are people committed to working on the issue or activity that is the focus of the circle.
- Circles are open and not closed.
- Circles can agree on their most appropriate ways of working.
- Circles should develop and agree plans for their work and share these as appropriate.
- Circles will intersect.
- Circles, when formed, will elect a link person(s) to link to other appropriate circles.

(...)

Thematic circles could also be developed for specific areas of policy and lobbying work. Some of these might be of a short duration and related to an activity others may be on-going. This is an open ended list. If there is the commitment and energy to establish and contribute to a circle then its establishment should be considered.

It is proposed to build these around the four themes of activity

- Participatory democracy and human rights
- Peace and security
- Social and economic rights
- Environmental justice and sustainability

(...)

One of the most important parts of the structure is the way in which circles link together. Each circle will elect a member to be the link person to other appropriate circles. This could be between two different thematic circles or between a thematic and geographical circle. The linking has many roles and responsibilities. It is key to enabling the AEPF to be more comprehensive and to making sure that the geographic and thematic circles share their ideas and activities. The links can also enable us to join and co-operate with other movements and networks.

Many individuals and organisations involved in the AEPF across the world are already involved in specific advocacy work. The AEPF aims not only to generate credible people centred alternatives but also to recognise, collate and endorse such alternatives that emerged before and after the Asia Europe People's Forums and that will emerge in the future. Some are linked to the AEPF and others are independent. The structure ensures that they have a place for this to continue, to be able to share this better with other activists and to link with other people and organisations engaged in complementary activity.

(...)

Thematic Circles are not necessarily fixed or with a fixed membership. They should work respecting the AEPF

Principles stated earlier and respect the AEPF Charter.

To establish a circle, a group, organisation or network should elect a focal link person/organization as outlined above. The Thematic Circle will need to apply to the IOC for recognition. Share who the focal link person/organization is and agree to report regularly to the IOC.

(...)

## **AEPF National Organising Committee (NOC)**

AEPF National Organising Committee (NOC) should be established by the host country of a People's Forum. The NOC has the responsibility to work in partnership by consensus with the IOC to host the People's Forum. The People's Forum must respect the AEPF Charter and contribute to the fulfilment of its principles and respect its stated ways of working.

The NOC should be constituted by a range of organisations and networks that can ensure that the People's Forum takes place on the basis of the principles and ways of working agreed in the AEPF Charter. The NOC should be open to cooperating and collaborating with local organisations that support the AEPF Charter.

The NOC is required to

1. nominate a representative to be a member of the IOC in the preparation of and during the People's Forum.
2. nominate four representatives to be members of a People's Forum core group to work with four representatives of the IOC. (The IOC representatives will normally include a representatives from each of the Focal Point organisations)
3. Agree an appropriate basis for the secretariat for the organisation of the People's Forum
4. Work in partnership and through decisions made by consensus with the IOC to agree the process in the preparation for and building up to an AEPF which includes the respective roles for the IOC and NOC in

- drawing up the thematic statement about the aims and focus of the forum, including a working name;
- agreeing timing, location, venue(s), accommodation;
- Agreeing processes for developing a programme including its structure (Plenaries/workshops/public events etc.), number of days and main content;
- agreeing a process for Workshop subjects and then, who proceeds to organize them and how and with what accountability to both the IOC and NOC;
- agreeing a working budget and related fundraising strategy and division of labour to raise funds;
- invitation of participants both national and international, relation to resources. This will include process for agreeing a timetable to ensure visas for international speakers and participants.

The IOC and NOC will agree lines of communication and decision making, including levels of decision making, between the NOC and IOC.

## **The People's Forum**

Every two years there shall be a People's Forum held just before the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) in the town or city which is hosting the ASEM summit. The IOC has co-organized this with a National Organizing Committee (NOC) formed in the hosting country. The individual People's Forums are organized jointly by the IOC and the NOC with decision making between the IOC and NOC taking place on the basis of consensus and where necessary negotiated consensus. From then up to and including the Forum the NOC will nominate one representative to be a member of the IOC. (...)

Although organising People's Forums held in parallel to official Summits is neither the beginning nor the end of the network's activities and agenda, the holding of these alternative summits does provide key opportunities for strengthening and consolidating the work of the network and for making it visible.

The People's Forum is

An event that precedes the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM)

It will be held in the ASEM town/city of the host country as close in time to the ASEM as possible

It focuses on Asia-Europe relations but does not limit itself to either the ASEM agenda or ASEM member countries

It is open to social movements, organisations, networks and individuals who support the AEPF Charter and who are committed in taking it forward

It welcomes participants from ASEM member countries and non-ASEM member countries in Asia and Europe

It can invite speakers to contribute to discussions and reflections on the themes of the Forum from anywhere.

*Governance and Structures of the Asia Europe People's Forum*

*Agreed by IOC*

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