

**BUILDING NEW SOLIDARITIES:
OUR EMANCIPATORY STRUGGLES
WITHIN A NEW GLOBAL CONTEXT**

**ASIA EUROPE
PEOPLE'S
FORUM
~ 12 ~**

**SEPTEMBER 29-30
& OCTOBER 1, 2018
GHENT, BELGIUM**

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ASIA EUROPE PEOPLE'S FORUM (AEPF) 2018

INTRODUCTION TO AEPF

The Asia Europe People's Forum (AEPF) has been holding the biennial People's Forum since 1996 when it began as a parallel initiative to the first ASEM Summit held in Bangkok. It was established as a platform and Forum to amplify people's voices on the need to respect and fulfil social, economic and human rights for all across Asia and Europe, and to highlight the importance of developing just, equal and inclusive approaches to regional integrations. For over twenty years, the People's Forum has consistently worked for meaningful civil society, Trade Union and peoples' movements' participation in the discussions and processes of ASEM and its members countries. The 12th ASEM-summit, the Heads of State and Government meeting will be held in Belgium, on October 18 and 19, 2018. Following the positive practice since 1996, the AEPF will organise a parallel interregional civil society meeting from September 29 till October 1.

OBJECTIVES AND AIMS

The overall aim of the AEPF 12 is to understand and learn from struggles and resistances over the past two decades in Asia and Europe that have confronted and challenged neoliberalism, corporate led globalisation and global capitalism in its various phases. Peoples' groups in many Asian and European countries have developed critiques, strategies and actions to dismantle the power of corporations, realise and uphold the rights of people and communities, and reclaim the commons. They are at the forefront of movements for justice; equity; land and resource rights; peace; dismantling/ending nuclear and chemical weapons; working to fulfil the rights of migrants and other displaced peoples, defending rights, freedoms and democratic spaces. Our objectives are to analyse the challenges, the current socio-economic situations and develop and share people's alternatives. Bringing together representatives from social/peoples movements, journalists, academe and elected bodies in Asia and Europe, this Forum will reinforce regional and international solidarities, and move forward our collective agenda.

Having the Forum in the weekend will also allow us to realise one of our objectives, make a direct link with the public and citizens' initiatives in Ghent. The discussions and exchanges will result in an AEPF-Statement to be presented by AEPF-representatives at the beginning of the 2018 ASEM-summit.

DATES AND VENUES

The Forum will be held in **Belgium** from Saturday, 29 September to Monday, October 1, 2018 .

The main venue is in the city centre of Ghent: **Het Pand, Onderbergen 1, Ghent.**

Some of the workshops will take place in venues within walking distance of Het Pand.

More details will follow.

Participants can subscribe by filling the registration form on the AEPF-website <https://www.aepf.info/aepf12-registration>.

PROGRAMME

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 2018

9.30 – 10.30AM	<p>Welcome Session</p> <p>Words of welcome by the mayor of Ghent, Mr Daniel Termont</p> <p>Speech by Shui Meng, wife of Sombath Somphone; an internationally acclaimed community development worker who was abducted from a police checkpoint in Laos in 2012 and is still missing. Sombath was one of the main organisers of AEPF9 in Laos (2012).</p>
10.30 AM – 12.30 PM	<p>Meet Ghent</p> <p>Meet and exchange with local citizens/volunteers/activist initiatives in Ghent</p>
2.00 – 6.00 PM	<p>Plenary sessions with round table discussions. Two panels will tackle current trends:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Authoritarian regimes, Populism and Racism as the new normal–Shrinking spaces for active citizenship and political activism – Migration and forced displacement2. Facing the ecological and economic crisis – Impact of the digital era on labour and trade – How do we promote and support just transition – Role of social movements in a changing context.
Speakers	<p>Christos Giovanopoulos (Greece – Komvos) – Agnes Gagy (Hungary-Univ of Gothenburg) and many more, ...</p>
7.30 PM – 9.30 PM	<p>Ghent Night on New Narratives</p> <p>A public interactive AEPF-discussion on the new narrative, in the context of the new geopolitical realities of Asia and Europe. New narratives will bring forward ideas, theories and formulations rising from the grass roots and from other alternative sources, that challenge the dominant narrative.</p>



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 2018

9.30AM – 12PM	Open space workshops
12PM – 1 PM	Migration: Responses and Public Actions (in coordination with 11.11.11-campaign)
2.00 PM – 6.00 PM	Cluster workshops (part 1)
8 – 10PM	Open Solidarity Night
	Programme in collaboration with the City of Ghent who recently won the EU Fair and Ethical Trade Award.
	Venue: Handelsbeurs

MONDAY, OCTOBER 1 2018

9.30 AM – 12 PM	Cluster workshops (part 2)
	Final session of the thematic clusters: launching calls to actions and engaging in campaigns
1.30 – 3.30 PM	The Clusters will report their calls and demands to a group of progressive Parliamentarians from Asia and Europe in a plenary session.
4 – 6.00 PM	AEPF-Statement and ways forward
	The AEPF-statement will be developed through a participative process between all AEPF-members and their constituency before the AEPF-conference and will be presented to a representative of the EU.

Version July 2018



GAME-CHANGING CHALLENGES IN OUR GLOBAL CONTEXT

Everyday millions of women, men and children across Asia and Europe are living in conditions of growing inequalities, and precarious livelihoods. They experience a more aggressive, divisive, exploiting and excluding neo-liberal globalisation that is systematically destroying livelihood and ecological systems. Forced migration is also a growing reality for millions of people.

Statistical economic growth has been founded on the growing desecration and destruction of our Commons, our resources, our environment, our climate. Our Climate crisis has demonstrated a quick destruction of many species, as historical injustices on climate policies continue. Our governments' have erased progressive calls to protect the planet and protect the people. We expect an urgent and people centred collective and national responses for framing our futures.

The new phase of neo-liberal globalisation based on control of intellectual and material resources has hastened the pace of corporate capture of legal and political processes. 'New technologies', 'new economics' and 'new ways of communicating' are more of the same, marked by the continuous destruction of many public services and their privatisation. This has led to a crisis in the ability of elected representatives, governments, to fulfil their supposed responsibilities to their citizens, which has polarised people and created an atmosphere of partisan politics that threatened to tear societies apart.

We are in a world of insiders and outsiders, of a concentration of power and wealth and of the regime of the corporations. Divided and dividing economies have increasingly consolidated dividing and divisive politics.

A growing number of countries across Asia and Europe are experiencing more authoritarian and excluding politics. In many countries, the space and freedom of people to express their concerns to their elected representatives at local and national levels is being systematically limited, restricted and threatened. Summarised as shrinking democratic spaces, this translated as an exclusion and suppression of Fundamental Human Rights, Voices, and the Rights to organise, mobilise and demonstrate. This trend that already existed in some authoritarian states has now traversed into managed democracies.

AEPF12 provides a unique space to share and discuss these lived experiences and how people, communities and social movements are responding by developing and taking forward alternatives essential for more just, equal and inclusive communities, countries and even regions.

For more information about AEPF:

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