

OUR COMMON SOCIAL FUTURE



SOCIAL COMMONS SOCIAL JUSTICE SYSTEM CHANGE

A PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABILITY



ASIA-EUROPE PEOPLE'S FORUM
BARCELONA | 8-10 | JUNE 2018



Asia Europe People's Forum

Social Justice Cluster

Our common social future: Commoning and sharing for society, the environment and the economy. A programme for a democratic, participatory and transformative social protection –

Barcelona – 8-9-10 June 2018

Social justice is at the centre of all our concerns and of all our efforts to work for another world. Democracy is not possible if people do not have the feeling they have equal worth, they can have their voices heard, they can take part in decision-making with the same capacities as all others. It is not just about formal equality but about real equality through social and economic citizenship and just taxes in order to fight inequality. This is even more important since the level of inequality continues to grow.

Social justice strongly remains at the heart of all civil society's concerns and demands. For the Asia-Europe People's Forum it is crucial for a just and fair relationship between Europe and Asia. **All problems are interlinked** and solidarity between peoples is not a matter of diplomacy, it is a matter of justice and of participation, with common concerns and aspirations for more equality, economic security and social protection. For climate justice – one cannot ask people to respect nature if their basic needs and livelihoods are not protected and if we allow extractive corporations to violate human rights. Social justice is also at the heart of fair trade, where the aim is to avoid rules and standards that violate people's rights, that dismantle social services and put competitiveness and economic freedom above social and economic rights. Gender equality is integral to social justice. Finally, peace will never be possible without social justice, as was stated very clearly when the Peace Treaty of Versailles with the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation was adopted in 1919.

There are shared concerns and demands in the European Union and Asia. The level of development is very different from Europe to Asia, but also within Europe and within Asia. Nevertheless, at the level of social justice and more particularly social protection, labour law and social services, the recent developments are very similar and are dictated by the same neoliberal philosophy. While most Asian countries have limited systems of social protection and some European countries have very highly developed collective insurance systems and universal public services, they are both faced with attempts to reform and/or dismantle them. A new social paradigm is being introduced, all over the world, where social protection serves the interests of growth, markets and the economy, and where the principles of collective solidarity and social justice are steadily eroded. Social protection should be about the inalienable rights of all people, everywhere in the world, to have their needs met so that they can flourish. Even if better social protection is good for the economy, this can never be the ultimate goal. The agenda must be broadened and transformed.

Social protection, social rights and reducing inequality are again on the agenda of global development. The Sustainable Development Goals offer leverage to strengthen our advocacies for social protection and our fight against inequality, in favour of human rights and universality. ILO's Social Protection Floors offer comprehensive though limited systems of social protection. We have to remain vigilant not to allow policymakers and corporate interests to hijack the discourse in order to perpetuate failing practices.

Our objective is to put into place social protection as commons, in the first place because it is ours, in the second place because we want to democratize it and reflect on the linkages between social and economic rights – health care, education, pensions, housing, child care ... - on the one hand, with democracy, ecology, trade, culture and gender relations on the other hand.

We want to shift the global debate about social justice and social protection on to a new level, by embracing theory and practice that suit the needs and conditions of today, rather than harking back to the last century. By *social*

protection we mean access to social resources that enable every individual to survive, to manage risks they cannot cope with alone, and to flourish. We also want to look at labour law and public services. By *commons*, we mean resources that are life's necessities, to which everyone should therefore have an equal right of access and for which we all share responsibility, for both current and future generations.

The idea of *natural* resources as commons (especially land, but also air, water and energy) has deep roots in history. The idea of *cultural* resources as commons (such as information and digital platforms) features increasingly in current debates. **The aim of this conference is to explore the conceptual and practical implications of claiming social resources as commons and clarify the connection with natural and cultural commons.**

How does this approach differ from conventional social protection systems? This question is central to our agenda. It concerns democracy and participation, self-determination, models of ownership and control; inclusion and solidarity; governance and relationships between public authorities and locally generated initiatives. Ideally, people do not wait for public authorities or private corporations to take initiatives, but seize opportunities within their own localities to decide for themselves what they need, and take action together to ensure that their needs are met. This approach overrides the market/state dichotomy and carries with it the potential to transform both. Also, in establishing social protection as commons, in promoting cooperation between citizens and public authorities, we not only want to protect people but society as such, against the current overriding individualism.

In Europe as well as in Asia, social protection should be a collective insurance mechanism that contributes to **an equitable distribution of incomes and wealth** and to equal opportunities for all. **Social protection should be universal and transformative, that is, contribute to the political, social, environmental and economic transformation we need.** Universalism does not mean identical systems everywhere. In order to answer the real needs of people, systems can be different at the local, the municipal and the national level. Basic human needs are, however, the same everywhere, across place and time. Rights should

therefore be the same. Social protection should be a way to achieve social justice and emancipation. Social commons are a mechanism for broadening social protection, anchoring it within the control of those who need it and ensuring that it contributes to social justice in a transversal way.

The economic and social crisis we are currently living in, is in the first place **a crisis of social re-production**, in a world where employment increasingly fails to support subsistence. The privatisation of public services is a new enclosure, where the livelihoods of people are taken out of their hands and are turned into profit-making mechanisms. We want to defend our rights, make them concrete and contribute to new rights and policies in which people take back control.

This conference is the second in a series of three, covering the whole range of social protection aiming for social justice. In February 2018, we discussed public services in Manila, The Philippines. In 2019, we will discuss labour rights in Asia. In between, the Asia Europe People's Forum will take place in Ghent, Belgium, from 19 to 21 October 2018.

PROGRAMME

Friday 8 June

Session 1: 10 am – 14 pm

Opening of the conference: *The political challenges for Europe and Asia*

- Brief presentation of AEPF and Transform, Tina Ebro and Roberto Morea
- Federica Fantini, European Commission (DEVCO) (tbc)
- Laura Perez Castaño, City Councillor, Barcelona
- Charles Santiago, MP, Malaysia

The case for commons and social commons:

- Dario Azzellini, Italy
- Francine Mestrum, Belgium
- Anna Coote, United Kingdom
- Dinesh Devkota, Nepal
- Shalmali Guttal, Thailand
- Bru Laín Escandell, Barcelona

Discussion

Facilitation : Tina Ebro and Koen Detavernier

Session 2: 16 - 20 pm

The new commons debate: The importance of commons in the process of social transformation

- Chantal Delmas, France
- Peter North, United Kingdom
- Sandeep Chachra, India
- Marco Berlinguer, Barcelona

Discussion

The new commons debate: The importance of commons in the process of political transformation

- Roberto Morea, Italy
- Dong Huy Cuong, Vietnam
- Birgit Daiber, Germany
- Koen Detavernier, Belgium

Discussion

Facilitation: Ghulam Mustafa Talpur and Elisabetta Cangelosi

Saturday 9 June

Session 3: 10 am to 14 pm

Conditions for social commons

- *What we already achieved: report on the conference in Manila on public services*
- Tina Ebro, Philippines

- *Macroeconomic policies, development, the changing world of work, gender*
- Núria Lozano Montoya, Barcelona
- Alessandra Mecozzi, Italy
- Khalid Mahmood, Pakistan
- Federica Giardini, Italy
- Alex Scrivener, UK

Discussion

- *The environment, inequality, taxes*
- Lidy Nacpil, Philippines
- Ghulam Mustafa Talpur, Pakistan
- Ah Maftuchan, Indonesia
- Vedran Horvat, Croatia

Discussion

Facilitation: Lucia Bárcena and Sandeep Chachra

Public event: 18 pm to 20.30 pm
Social commons as a tool for transformation
and systemic change

- Camil Ros, UGT
- Laura Roth, Barcelona en Comú
- Marisa Matias, MEP, Portugal
- Ernest Urtasun, MEP, Barcelona
- Charles Santiago, MP, Malaysia
- Toni Mora, CCOO
- Federica Fantini, European Commission (tbc)
- Chantal Delmas, France
- Ana Maria R. Nemenzo, Philippines

Facilitation : Pablo Sanchez Centellas and Francine Mestrum

Sunday 10 June

Session 4: 10 am to 14 pm

Implementing social commons:

- *The centrality of economic and social rights*
- German Jaraiz Arroyo, Spain
- *The centrality of culture for social commons*
- Julie Ward, MEP United Kingdom
- *Practical implications of adopting a commoning approach to social protection – options for activism and policy development*
- Labour (Dario Azzellini), gender (Elisabetta Cangelosi), Land and food (Sandeep Chachra), health (Enric Feliu), housing (Santi Mas de Xaxás), care (Anna Coote)*

Discussion

- *Concluding remarks and adoption of the Declaration of Barcelona*
- Francine Mestrum and Roberto Morea

Facilitation: Kris Vanslambrouck and Lidy Nacpil

Co-organisers of the Conference

*AEPF Social Justice Cluster - Global Social Justice – Transform! Europe –
Institute for Political Ecology – Fundació l'alternativa - Barcelona en Comú -
Fighting Inequality Alliance – Tax Justice Alliance Asia – Asean Parliamentary
network for Human Rights – UGT (Union General de Trabajadores) – CCOO
(Comisiones Obreras) – Network for Transformative Social Protection*

Venue of the Conference:

Comisiones Obreras, Via Laietana 16, 08003 Barcelona

Venue for the public event on Saturday evening:

*UGT (Union General de Trabajadores), Rambla de Santa Monica 10, 08002
Barcelona*

www.aepf.info / www.transform-network.net