

European Social Forum, London October 2004 – developing the programme

Agreed by the UK ESF Organising Committee on 13 April

1) Days on which the ESF is held

The European Preparatory Assembly of the European Social Forum has agreed that the next ESF will be in London in October.

The UK ESF Organising Committee is proposing that the ESF starts with a rally on the evening of Thursday 14, continues on Friday, Saturday and Sunday of 15-17 October and ends with a rally on Sunday afternoon.

2) Plenaries

a) Definition: A plenary is a session at the European Social Forum the themes and speakers for which are agreed by the whole European Assembly preparatory process. Plenaries introduce the issues that bring us together at the European Social Forum. Speakers are chosen to present different perspectives on these issues. Where possible, debate will be encouraged. The UK ESF Organising Committee recommends that plenaries last two hours, that at least 50 per cent of speakers are female and there is a strong representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic speakers. There will be simultaneous translation at plenaries.

b) Numbers of plenaries: It is proposed that in London more time be allowed for self-organised activities like seminars and that there should therefore be no more than 13 plenaries.

c) Plenary themes:

The Istanbul European Assembly marks the beginning of a process of consultation on the themes of the European Social Forum 2004 and organisations are invited to present proposals for seminars. The following list of suggested themes was drawn up by the UK ESF Programme Working Group. It is a work in progress, not definitive, and is presented to the European Assembly for discussion. These are general suggestions, not exact titles, which will take time to work out and finalise

- Anti-war and for peace plenary - challenging permanent war (including issue of no new nuclear weapons and opposition to pre-emptive war)
- World and European responses to the new American Imperialism
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic self-organisation in the fight against racism
- Stop Euro-fascism
- Freedom for Palestine
- A Sustainable Planet
- Trade unions in the global economy
- Public services – resistance to privatisation
- For equal rights – another world without discrimination is possible (to include speakers on lesbian and gay rights and human rights for disabled people)
- Social forums, social movements, trade unions and political parties
- Trade, dependency and debt
- Achieving women's liberation
- Economics of global justice
- EU/EU constitution: *consensus still to be reached on the actual focus.*

d) Speakers at plenaries: to suggest the following principles in developing speakers and platforms for plenaries:

- to have at least three organisations from at least three different countries, at least one of whom would be in the host country, working together to propose four speakers from four different countries. No organisation works on more than one plenary.
- To have 50% women representation in speakers
- To ensure strong representation of black, asian and ethnic minority speakers
- To strongly encourage representation of young speakers on plenaries
- To work to ensure speakers from outside Europe are represented in plenaries.
- To work to ensure speakers from Central and Eastern Europe are represented in plenaries
- plenaries would not necessarily have a reserved speaker slot for UK representatives

e) Chairs of plenaries: to have 2 co-chairs/moderators of plenaries, one of whom would be from the host country.

2) Seminars

Definition:

'Seminars have equal weight to plenaries. A seminar is a meeting resulting from proposals from participating grass-roots social movements and organisations. Seminars will range in size, some may be larger than plenaries. Seminars should be proposed by more than one organisation. Once organisations have proposed seminars there will be an indispensable merging process. Organisations will be encouraged to work together to merge and an online facility for direct contact between organisations will be provided. At the end of the process a priority list is established: priority is given to seminars which have merged; one organisation seminars will come last and be accommodated only if there are venues available.'

Organisation: Seminar sessions will be allocated two hours programme time.

Cost: In line with previous ESFs, there will be a charge to organisations for the cost of organising a seminar. This will be at least at the level set at the previous ESF and may have to be somewhat higher.

Translation: Seminars will have simultaneous translation. This is very important to ensure that seminars do act as real international exchanges.

3) Workshops

A workshop is a meeting hosted by at least one organisation. No simultaneous translation is provided by the ESF process. Participating organisations can propose workshops. There will be a charge to organisations for the cost of organising a workshop.

4) Accessibility

All measures possible will be taken to ensure that all venues are fully accessible to disabled people and that sign language translation and other access needs are provided for at ESF sessions.

5) Overall theme: Another world is possible [more discussion to take place on developing additional themes]