



**INTRODUCTION TO ASEM**

**AND EVALUATION OF THE  
4<sup>TH</sup> ASEM LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT  
MINISTERS CONFERENCE (LEMC4)**

**3<sup>RD</sup> SOCIAL PARTNERS FORUM (SPF3)**

**Orientation in ASEM and LEMCs**

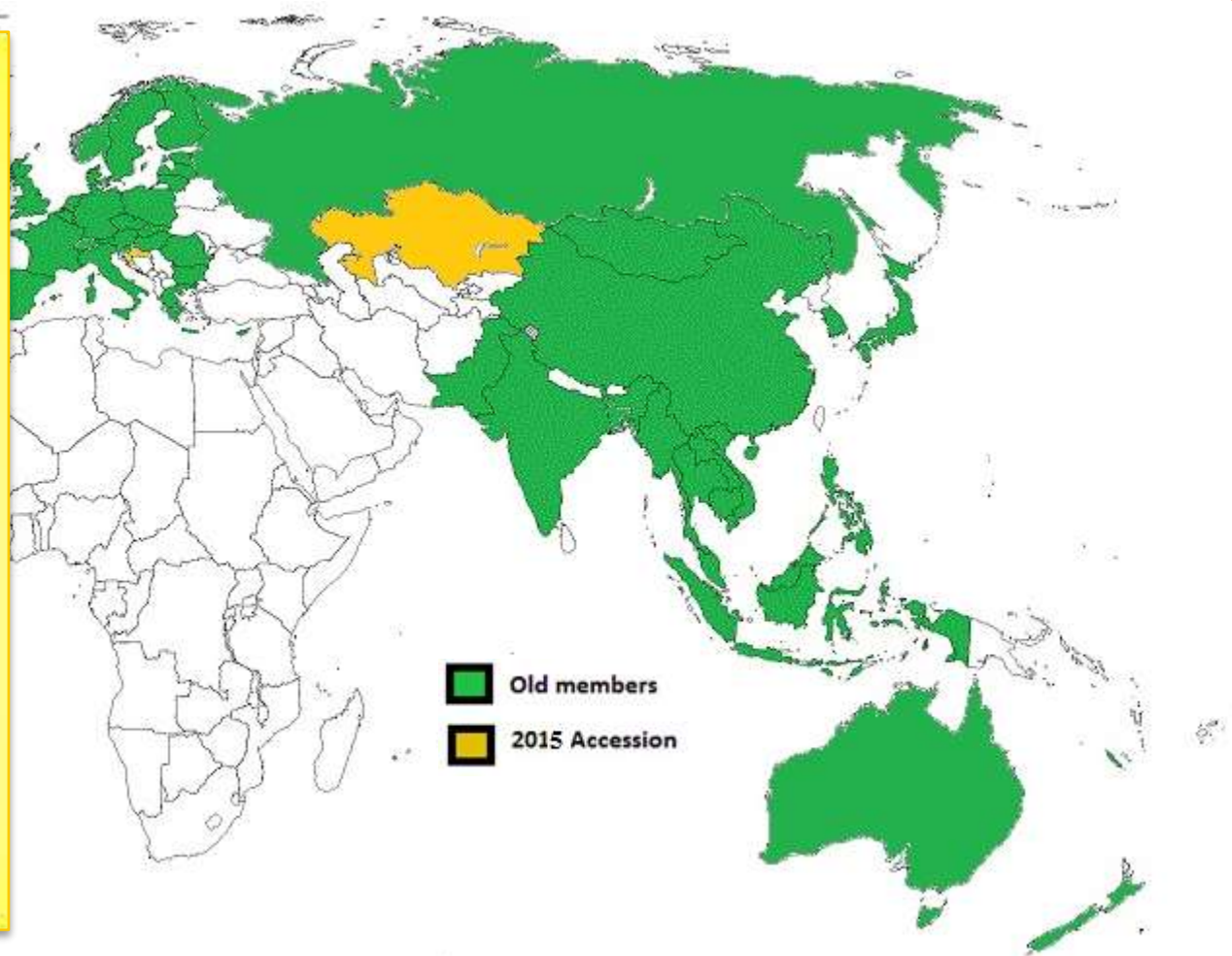
# ASEM BASICS

Political  
dialogue

Security and  
economy

Education and  
culture

Social issues?



# ASEM STRUCTURE

**ASEM is an informal process**

no Secretariat, only meetings and Conferences

**Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)**

promoting cultural, intellectual and people-to-people contacts between the two regions

**ASEM summits on the level of Heads of State**

*Bangkok 1996*

*London 1998*

*Seoul 2000*

*Copenhagen 2002*

*Hanoi 2004*

*Helsinki 2006*

*Beijing 2008*

*Brussels 2010*

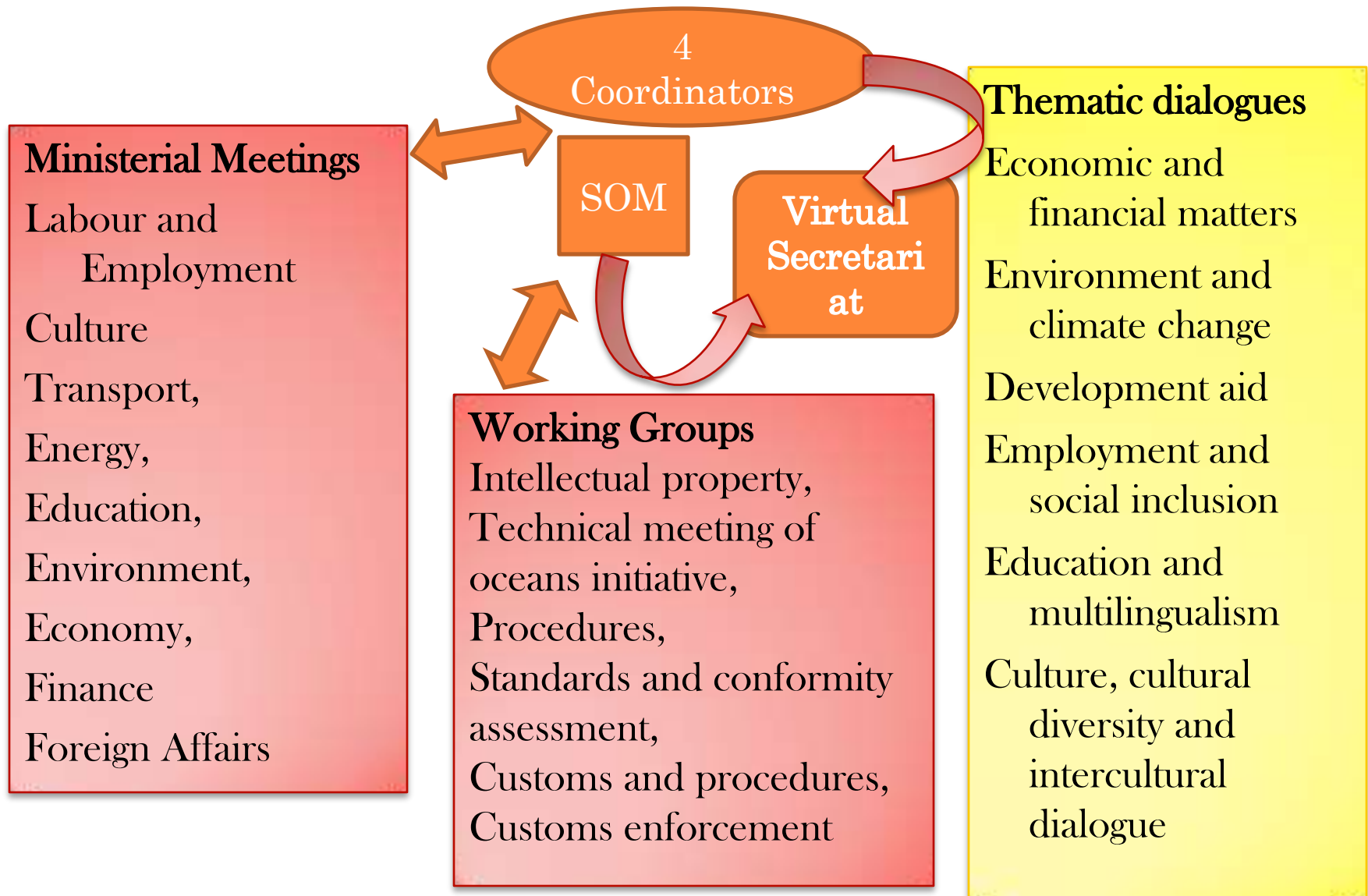
*Vientiane 2012*

*Milan 2014*

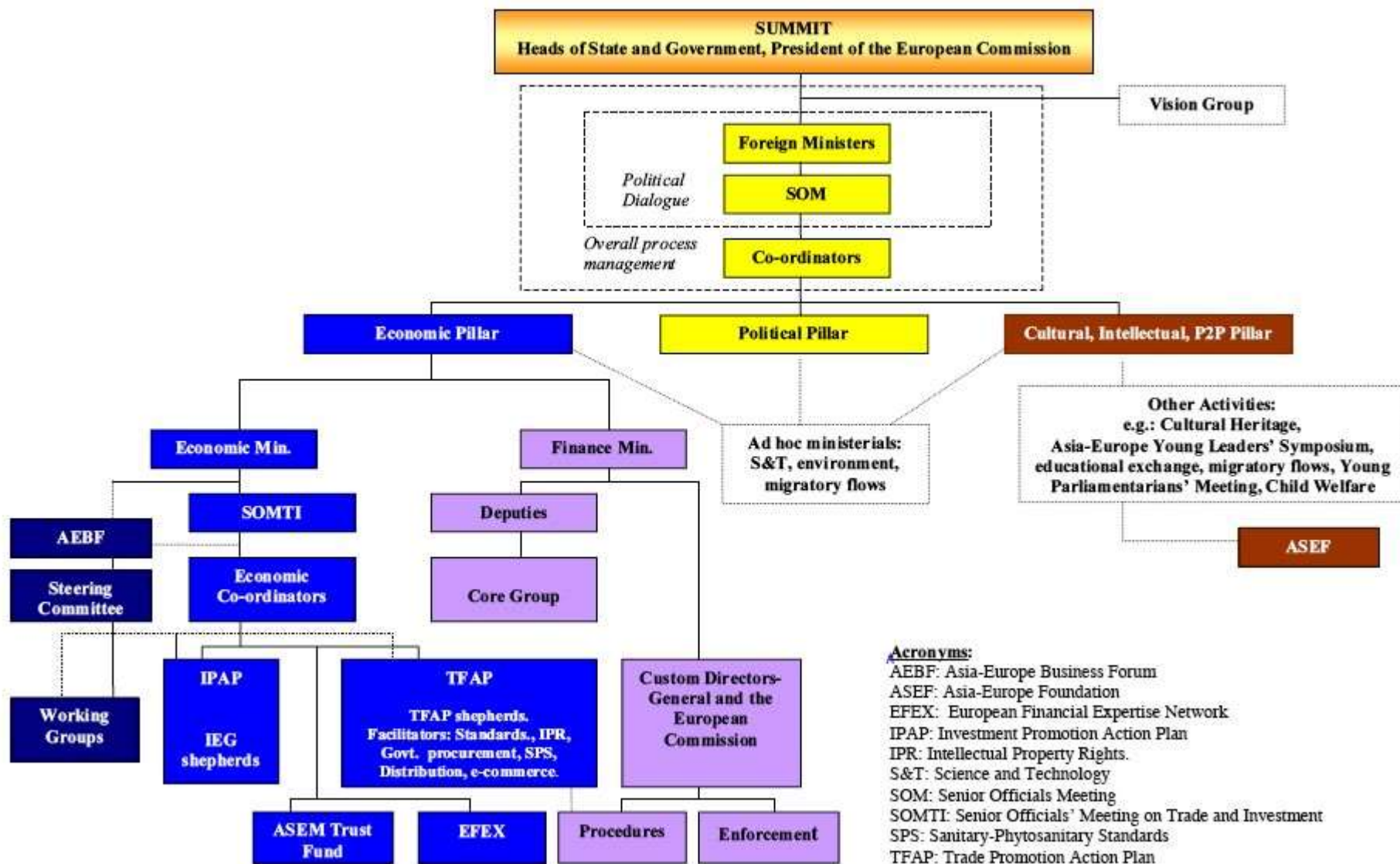
*Ulaanbaatar 2016*



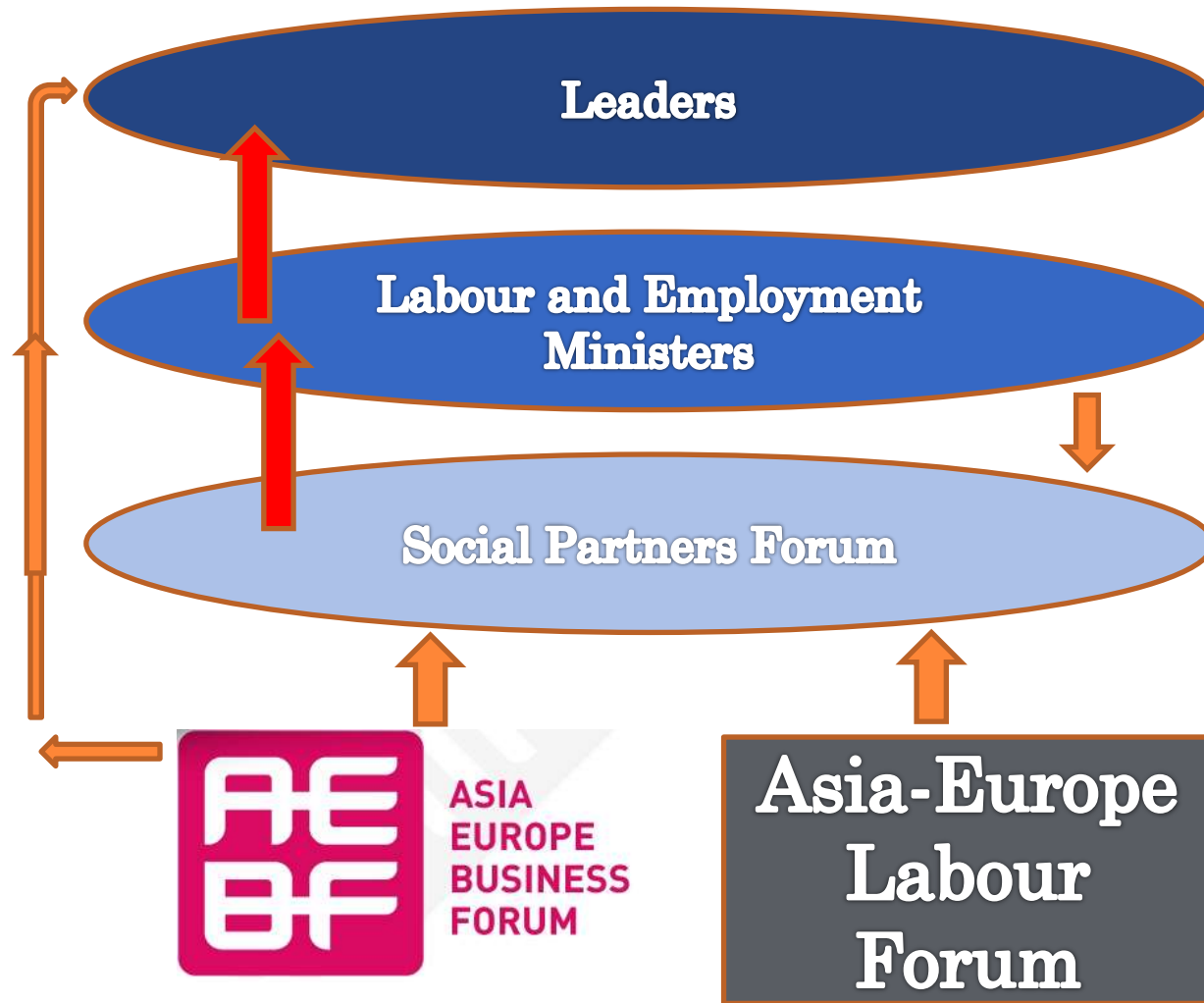
# ASEM STRUCTURE AND SCOPE



# ASEM STRUCTURE AND SCOPE



# WHAT IS THE SITUATION NOW?



# OVERVIEW OF ASEM ACTIVITIES THE LAST YEARS

4<sup>th</sup> Labour and Employment Ministerial Conference,  
Hanoi, October 2012

- 3rd Social Partners' Forum
- 7<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Labour Forum

Asia-Europe Labour Forum, Strategy Meeting,  
October 2013, Cambodia

10<sup>th</sup> ASEM Leaders' Summit (ASEM10), October 2014,  
Milan

- 8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Labour Forum, October 2014

5<sup>th</sup> Labour and Employment Ministerial Conference,  
Sofia, 3-4 December 2015

- 4<sup>th</sup> Social Partners' Forum
- 9<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Labour Forum, December 2015



# WHAT IS THE AELF? WHAT GOALS?

- The Asia-Europe Labour Forum (AELF) consists of trade union centres that engage the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process in order to make social justice and development central in the agenda of ASEM Ministers and Heads of State.
- The Asia Europe Labour Forum is supported by the [FES](#).

The Asia-Europe Labour Forum aims at:

- making social development central on the ASEM dialogue agenda;
- getting ASEM decisions to reverse the current trend of increasing inequality with policies based on social justice, including the promotion of freedom of association, collective bargaining, establishment of minimum living wages, building social protection and the care economy;
- addressing the need for a just transition to a low carbon economy and the need for industrial transformation that would create decent green jobs;
- As a means to achieve these goals, the Asia-Europe Labour Forum must achieve its official recognition, and thereafter, establish an official meeting between ASEM Leaders and the Labour Forum.





More on the history of AELF since 1996 can be found at:

[www.ituc-csi.org/aelf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/aelf)

No live documents yet but it's coming.



The Asia-Europe Labour Forum (AELF) consists of trade union centres that engage the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process in order to make social justice and development central in the agenda of ASEM Ministers and Heads of State.

In this webpage you can find information on who we are, what we aim at, a brief history of our long engagement with the ASEM process, documentation and news.

"The Asia Europe Labour Forum is supported by the [FES](#).

## WHAT ARE OUR AIMS

---

The Asia-Europe Labour Forum aims at:

- making social development central on the ASEM dialogue agenda;
- getting ASEM decisions to reverse the current trend of increasing inequality with policies based on social justice, including the promotion of freedom of association, collective bargaining, establishment of minimum living wages, building social protection and the care economy;
- addressing the need for a just transition to a low carbon economy and the need for industrial transformation that would create decent green jobs;

As a means to achieve these goals, the Asia-Europe Labour Forum must achieve its official recognition, and thereafter, establish an official meeting between ASEM Leaders and the Labour Forum.

## TRADE UNIONS IN THE ASEM PROCESS FROM 1996 TO TODAY

---

1996-2000

---

2000-2004

---

2004-2008

---

2008-2014

---

## WHAT IS ASEM

## WHO ARE WE?

---

[Terms of Reference](#)

---

[List of Unions](#)

---

# 3<sup>RD</sup> SOCIAL PARTNERS' FORUM

## Employment, decent jobs and growth

- **employers:** defended deregulation and flexibilisation
- **trade unions:** the reinforcement of redistributive mechanisms is the solution

## Skills development

- **employers:** investment in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills and skills mismatches a policy priority
- **trade unions:** sectoral/enterprise training funds, quality apprenticeships and involvement of social partners in the programmes

## (CSR)

**the social partners:** UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, disagreement on the voluntary or obligatory nature of CSR.



# 3<sup>RD</sup> SOCIAL PARTNERS' FORUM

## Social protection

**employers:** social protection tuned in budgetary constraints

**trade unions:** social protection a human right, enhances productivity and stimulates economic growth, reduces income inequality

## Occupational health and safety (OHS)

**social partners:** strong need to promote OHS standards with comprehensive legislative frameworks, employees' trainings and government inspections

**employers:** a business case because of the costs of accidents

**trade unions:** a human right



# LEMC 4 - PREAMBLE

- “the important role of **employment and social protection** in ensuring social cohesion and in promoting economic growth”
- global financial crisis -> weaknesses of labour markets,  
**promotion of decent work**, labour market participation **to recover from the crisis** and stimulate sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- worsening youth employment crisis -> sadly, only **supply side measures**



# LEMC 4 - EMPLOYMENT

Solutions for youth employment (**lack of imagination**):

- skills matching labour market needs
- vocational training
- quality apprenticeships
- active labour market policies
- improve the effectiveness of employment services
- youth entrepreneurship - social enterprises owned by and focused on employing young people – support them to create decent work

“Legal” migrant workers:

- when skills of workers and demands in labour market match
- “call for the exchange of experience on development of effective policies in ensuring the **rights of migrant workers**”



# LEMC 4 - EMPLOYMENT

Fair transition to a green economy:

- opportunity to reduce poverty and generate decent jobs
- training systems, active labour market policies, development of new skills and promotion of occupational health and safety in jobs created or transformed
- creation of quality jobs and social protection

Employment:

- a **central objective of economic policy** (dialogue and cooperation among different relevant government agencies)

Social dialogue:

- mutual trust and shared objectives
- more stable and inclusive path for the global economy
- building up social cohesion.
- acknowledged the outcome of the ASEM Social Partners Forum
- “we took note of **proposals to enhance consultations with social partners in ASEM** on employment and labour issues”



## LEMC 4 - OUR JOINT DECENT WORK AGENDA

- ILO's Decent Work Agenda has proven to be an important tool to achieve a more decent life for all.
- reaffirmed “that the internationally recognised ILO **core labour standards** should be fully respected and effectively implemented”
- underlined “the importance of working toward implementing national laws **consistent with ILO's labour standards.**”





# LEMC 4 - SOCIAL PROTECTION

- a just share of the fruits of progress for all -> **reduce poverty and inequality**
- powerful **anti-crisis measure**
- a durable investment in social justice, stability -> provide **income security**
- promote **social inclusion** and dignity both in formal and informal economy

“We are committed to implement nationally defined social protection floors at **our own development pace.**”

“we welcomed and supported the discussions and unanimous adoption of the ILO Social Protection Floors **Recommendation**”

Sustainability of social protection systems (financing)

- investment by both employers and workers
- **No state?**

Effective governance and management mechanisms

- promote gender equality
- urban and rural areas,
- vulnerable groups
- **no social partners?**



# LEMC4 - CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the creation of **decent jobs (!?)**
- **voluntary instruments**
- the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation in 2008 “which states that the violation of fundamental principles and rights at work cannot be invoked or otherwise used as a legitimate **comparative advantage** and that labour standards should not be used for **protectionist** trade purposes”
- principles of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy



# LEMC 4 - HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

- a good OSH performance improves the well-being of workers
- a positive impact on productivity, employability and competitiveness
- No Human Right?

Committed to:

- establish and sustain platforms for sharing of information in order to anticipate emerging OSH risks and challenges
- maintain, enhance tripartite partners' consultations
- strengthen the collaborations between OSH inter-regional and international networks
- improve co-operation in the area of research, development and capacity building among ASEM partners



# LEMC 4 COOPERATION

- active involvement of social partners in the ASEM employment and social policy cooperation including technical projects
- strengthening dialogue with regular Senior Official and technical meetings
- “We recommended that ASEM Leaders continue to discuss labour, employment issues ... in order to improve the... coherence of our economic and social policies and to strengthen the social dimension of globalisation.”



# PROJECTS OF LEMC3 AND LEMC4

LEMC3 mandated:

- Social protection (Finland/Vietnam) - 2011
- Youth Employment (China/Spain)
- Health and Safety at Work  
(Singapore/Indonesia/France) – 2011 and 2012
- Skills Policies (Philippines/EU country)

LEMC4 mandated:

- Social protection (India/Netherlands)
- Youth Employment (China/Poland – EC jumped in)
- OHS (Malaysia/Korea/France)
- Skills development (Philippines/Finland)
- Social Dialogue on working conditions  
(Belgium/Indonesia) (two events)

