

ESF process: Update from Scandinavia

Thursday 31 May 2007, by [ANDERSSON Sara](#), [Initiative Committee for ESF Scandinavia](#) (Date first published: 31 May 2007).

Dear fellow ESFers!

Just thought it would be appropriate to give you a short update on the process up here in the north! We want to use this list for information on what is happening in the preparation process, and get feedback from you on ideas and proposals, in order to build this 5th ESF together and in a more inclusive way.

We are currently working on preparing the proposals for the different venues, in order to take a decision at a joint scandinavian meeting on the 20th of June in Copenhagen. We are looking into the financial side and what the costs would be for the different venues, and what kind of financial support is available in both countries, as well as mobilising potential, and yes; the Visa issue!

Our internal deadline for finishing these proposals is 15th of June, in order for everyone to be able to form an opinion on the proposals at hand. We think we have two very good proposals, and we would also like some input from you on this decision, and therefore we will send the two proposals to the list, detailing their pro's and con's. Just a short update now, more info will come on the 15th:

On the Swedish side, the venue has changed from what we presented in Lisbon, we are now looking at an area in central Malmö, centered around and in Folkets Park ("the peoples park") which we think is a lot better than the formerly suggested more sterile environment of the harbour area. In the new venue, we have all possibilities of organising a forum highly visible to the general public in Malmö, and it is situated in a part of the city well known for its political and organisational life. In Copenhagen, the suggested venue is the one presented in Lisbon, Bella Center, situated a very short trainride from the airport. This venue has the big advantage that everything can take place in the same place, even the free accommodation will be inside the center.

The dates we were looking at are 4-7, 11-14 and 18-21 of September. Please give us feedback on the dates as well!

Apart from that, we are also expanding the group of organisations in the initiative committees, in Sweden several unions have joined, like for example the "TUC" of Skåne, which is the co-ordinating committee in the Skåne Region (the Southern region of Sweden where the forum venues on the Swedish side are) for all the blue-collar unions affiliated to

LO (TUC) Sweden, and talks are going on with more union representatives as well as with other organisations, among the youth, immigrant and environmental organisations. So far, we've had nothing but positive feedback! In Copenhagen, they recently had a meeting where they formed a more formal structure around the ESF-work, which reportedly was an inspiring and successful meeting.

In Stockholm a group is working on preparing the EPA, looking into all the details about that, and a venue is already booked. More info will come from them later.

On the political side here in Sweden, 1st of May mobilised more people than in many years, and resistance against our conservative governments' policies is growing. They are doing very badly in the polls, and would lose big if there were elections today... People are protesting against the new law allowing privatisation of the healthcare and hospitals and against cuts in the welfare system such as unemployment benefits, and last week there was a big demonstration and many smaller actions in Göteborg against the NATO marine exercise taking place here. The participants were voicing strong concerns about the fact that this exercise is taking place in a neutral country, and even in a city which has a nuclear free zone policy even though the ships taking part did not want to declare if they had any nuclear weapons on board or not.

All in all, we have good hopes for ESF-mobilisation! See you in Rostock!

Sara Andersson

on behalf of the Initiative Committee for ESF Scandinavia