

**Van:** Solidar <Abigail.Goundry@solidar.org>  
**Aan:** veerle.solia@amsab.be  
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## Social Europe united in reaction to ECJ ruling

After last week's ruling by the European Court of Justice on the Rüffert case, SOLIDAR responded with a media release calling on European decision-makers to reconsider the Posting of the Workers Directive issued by the European Commission in view of better assuring the enforcement of individual and collective labour rights and the possibility to pursue social policy objectives and the interest of society as a whole. Conny Reuter, Secretary General of SOLIDAR commented: *"It is not surprising then that many citizens question whether the Europe we are creating is a social Europe, with decent jobs or a haven for free-market ideologues which seek to undermine the fundamental principle of equal pay for equal work."*

SOLIDAR's position, published in Euractiv, was among other similar concerns put forward by organisations, including the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, whose representative Martin Schulz MEP stated that: *"the freedom to provide services in other countries should not be at the expense of workers' wages and conditions. We cannot allow workers' social rights to be undermined."*

Read the [full Euractiv article](#)

Read the [SOLIDAR media release and sign the call to action for decent work](#)

## Debating a project for a social Europe

The Socialist Group (PES) in the Committee of the Regions (CoR) organised a seminar on 8 April entitled 'New Social Europe' which constituted the Group's contribution to the PES Manifesto for the 2009 European elections. The event aimed to encourage a broad exchange of views on the major challenges for the PES political family in shaping a genuine Social Europe. SOLIDAR was invited to represent the European networks of social NGOs.

The SOLIDAR representative spoke on the question of social and demographic change putting forward the main issues of concern for social NGOs and some specific SOLIDAR positions. Concerning political action at EU level, SOLIDAR, as well as the Social Platform, urges policy makers in national governments and the European Parliament to overcome the constant blockage in the adoption of legislation in the social field, e.g. with regard to pending directives on parental leave and working time. Linked to questions of social and demographic change, we expect concrete advancement in the fields of equality between women and men, the fight against all forms of discrimination, the protection of workers in new forms of employment, access to employment for excluded groups, the integration of migrants and their access to rights throughout Europe and the issue of quality services of general interest for all. The PES Group's CoR seminar offered an excellent opportunity to voice these concerns in a phase of mobilisation and preparation of programmes for the European Parliamentary electoral campaign in 2009.

Link to [PES manifesto website](#)

Read the [Social Platform position on social and demographic change](#)

## More transparency in the European institutions

On the 1 April the European Parliament (EP) adopted a report on lobbying transparency. The report calls for an obligatory registration system for the 10,000-15,000 lobbyists

common to the European Commission, European Parliament and the Council, as well as "full financial disclosure" of public affairs consultancies and law firms, covering their turnover, expenditures associated with lobbying and, in the case of NGOs and think tanks, their budget and sources of funding. The European Commission is not in favour of having an obligatory register, and for the moment is only considering a voluntary registration of lobbyists.

SOLIDAR supports an obligatory register for all lobbyists in all of the European institutions in order to enforce transparency in lobbyist activities in Brussels, in particular those of a business nature. SOLIDAR not only supports the recognition of NGOs defending a particular interest, but also for the acknowledgement of NGOs representing the general interest, related to the pursuit of a society building on fundamental rights, solidarity, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, social inclusions and social cohesion.

### **Rich countries not achieving aid commitments**

In 2005, the world's rich countries pledged to allocate 0.7% of their Gross National Income to development assistance in order to implement the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), which range from halving extreme poverty to providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015. Ahead of the G8 Development Ministers meeting this weekend, which comes at the halfway mark of the programme, the Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee has released final figures on official development assistance (ODA) in 2007. These figures show a fall of 8.4% in overall ODA which is mainly due to the phasing out of the debt relief programmes. The OECD concluded: "Overall, most donors are not on track to meet their stated commitments to scale up aid; they will need to make unprecedented increases to meet their 2010 targets."

Read full [OECD press release](#)

### **Stand Up & Take Action to end poverty**

This year, the campaign which is taking place from 17-19 October, is focusing on country-specific actions in support of the Millenium Development Goals. The scope of actions is broad, ranging from petitions to text message campaigns to a phone call to your local politician to fight to end poverty and see the Millenium Development Goals achieved and exceeded.

Link to [Stand Up Against Poverty website](#)

### **Lessons learnt implementing SGIs and State Aid**

SOLIDAR has documented an example of the application of community state aid rules in the field of social services of general interest involving our German member AWO, based on a recent decision taken by the European Commission's Directorate General for Competition. The AWO SANO case concerns a specific field of personal social services, a family vacation centre, and received a high level of attention from stakeholders in Germany over the last years. The decision is interesting with regard to several issues, such as 'entrustment', 'mandating' and 'public service obligations'. It also helps to understand under which conditions it could be possible to operate with a list of criteria to "prove" the social nature and general interest orientation of an activity. The decision also sheds light on the question of how fiscal advantages, enshrined in "public utility" regulations, can be taken into consideration when assessing the compatibility of public financial support to social service providers related to cost to build and maintain social infrastructures.

Read the [full document](#)

### **ATEE conference call for papers**

The Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) conference "Teacher Education: Facing the Intercultural Dialogue Conference", taking place on 23-27 August 2008, has made a call for papers.

For [more information](#)

15	Social Platform: Annual General Meeting, Brussels
15	European Policy Centre: Sixty-Minute Briefing on EU asylum policy in a securitised world, Brussels
15	European Parliament, PES Group event: Inclusion of Social and Environmental Standards in Free Trade Agreements - New Thinking on Trade Policy and Development, Brussels
16	European Parliament, GUE/NGL Group and Forum Social Europe Conference: Full Employment and 'Good Work': How to reform the European Employment Strategy 2008 - 2010?, Brussels
17-18	European Commission's DG Enlargement exhibition: Civil Society Development in Southeast Europe: Building Europe Together"hosted by European Commission's DG Enlargement, Brussels
21-22	<b>SOLIDAR New Orientation Framework (NOF) discussions - Scandinavia, Stockholm</b>
28-29	<b>ISCOS Project Conference: Transnational Learning for Civil Society organisations in new Member States, Brussels</b>
5	<b>SOLIDAR International Cooperation Committee meeting, Brussels</b>
6	<b>SOLIDAR Balkan Network meeting, Brussels</b>
5-6	European Commission Conference: Responding to new social realities: Developing an EU Agenda for Opportunities, Access and Solidarity, Brussels
7	European Parliament: Presentation of EUROCITIES position on SGI and SSGI, Brussels
7-9	<b>Olof Palme Balkans Study Visit: Building bridges together, Brussels</b>
15	<b>SOLIDAR Board meeting, Brussels</b>
15	European Parliament, PES Group and Social Economy Europe: Conference on Social Economy, Brussels
3	<b>SOLIDAR Social Affairs Committee meeting, Brussels</b>
12-13	European Parliament 2 <sup>nd</sup> Citizens Agora on Climate Change, Brussels
25	<b>SOLIDAR France &amp; SOLIDAR network: For a Social Europe-Pour une Europe Sociale, Musée de l'Europe, Paris</b>
2	<b>Annual General Meeting and SOLIDAR 60 year anniversary</b>
15	<b>Silver Rose Awards 2008, Brussels</b>
28-29	2 <sup>nd</sup> Forum on Social Services of General Interest, Paris

SOLIDAR is a European network of 42 members working for social and economic justice in Europe and around the world. SOLIDAR's Weekly Round Up provides you with the latest information and news from SOLIDAR and our members, as well as other issues of interest and European developments.

If you have any comments or wish to have further information on any of the articles featured in the Weekly Round Up, please do not hesitate to contact SOLIDAR's Communications Officer [Abigail](#)

Tel +32 2 500 1020 Fax +32 2 500 1030  
Rue du Commerce 22, B-1000, Brussels, Belgium  
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[www.solidar.org](http://www.solidar.org)

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