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Onderwerp: SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 18-04-2008

SOLIDAR Secretary General becomes President of the Social Platform

SOLIDAR Secretary General Conny Reuter has been elected President of the Social Platform. The election took place at the Platform's Annual General Assembly held on the 15 April in Brussels. Conny will take over from Fintan Farrell who carried out the role over the last year also for a one year mandate. The call for a more social Europe is at the core of SOLIDAR's activities and therefore being President of the Social Platform, which is the leading Platform for European Social NGOs, just illustrates SOLIDAR's continued commitment to the Platform and its activities.

Conny stated that *"this is a fantastic opportunity for SOLIDAR to show its commitment to the Social Platform and to its core message, that citizens need to be the key part of EU decision making. We need to use the opportunity that the Lisbon Treaty is offering to develop an inclusive social Europe - concerning social, health, employment and education, migration and integration, anti-discrimination and equal opportunities policy fields - by using and strengthening civil dialogue. In this crucial year before the European Parliamentary elections and the nomination of a new Commission, I will work - together with all the Platform members and the Secretariat - to make the voice of social Europe heard even louder throughout Europe."*

EU consultation on active inclusion updates

In SOLIDAR's response to the consultation on active inclusion, SOLIDAR supports the key process and believes that NGO involvement is indispensable as it raises ownership and acceptance of the three policies in question (basic/minimum income support, labour market inclusion and access to quality social services) by citizens due to the direct link that civil society has with them. SOLIDAR also highlights the need to design and implement policies actively addressing inequalities, disadvantages and discriminations as well as an effective participation in society. These common principles should be set up for all three strands of the active inclusion approach respecting the distribution of competencies and responsibilities between EU level and Members States and would need a system to monitor their implementation.

View all responses to the [consultation on the European Commission's website](#)

Visit of delegation from Parliament of Styria

On 17 April, SOLIDAR welcomed a delegation from the Parliament of Styria, Austria, to the office. The delegation was headed by the Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament, Erich Prattes, and included members of the Social Democrat Group (SPÖ) and a representative of the Office of the Regional Government of Styria in Brussels. The delegation had a discussion with Conny Reuter, Secretary General of SOLIDAR, about the work that SOLIDAR is doing, and the social side of the Lisbon treaty.

Social Europe event

On 25 June, SOLIDAR France and the Maison de l'Europe will host a conference on Social Europe. This one-day event, a follow-up to the 2006 and 2007 conferences held in Vienna and Berlin within the framework of the Save our Social Europe campaign, will mainly deal with two topics: services of general interest and decent work and the working poor in Europe. It will involve a number of speakers and participants from the SOLIDAR network, members of the European Parliament and representatives from NGOs from European and

national networks. For both topics, experts will input their opinions during Round Table discussions, followed each time with an audience debate, all taking place in English and French. The programme and more details will appear in the next edition of the Weekly Round Up.

Belgian International Solidarity Week Supports the Call to Action

From 14-19 April SOLIDAR member Solidarite Socialiste will run a whole range of events to raise awareness on Decent Work in the biggest francophone Belgian cities.

Music, theatre performances and the 'Time for Decent Work Decent Life' photo exhibition will be used to draw public attention on Decent Work in Europe and in Developing Countries. Allthrough the week, attendants will be asked to sign the Call to Action for Decent work.

Please read the [full program of International Solidarity Week](#)

Find out [where signatures collections will take place](#)

MDGs in danger due to lack of progress on commitments

In a communication issued last week entitled "The EU - a global partner for development - Speeding up progress towards the Millennium Development Goals", the European Commission outlines a sobering analysis of the lack of progress on key initiatives and commitments undertaken by the Union, which are undermining progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In the lead up to the Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in September and the Follow up International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in December, it is of grave concern that the amount of financial aid given by the EU fell in 2007, a worrying trend given that aid needs to be significantly increased if the targets set by EU countries for 2010 and 2015 are to be reached. On the question of aid effectiveness, the initiatives undertaken so far (ie, the Code of Conduct on the division of labour, Commission-Member State co-financing, and predictability of payments) are yet to be implemented and thus far have yielded little result. The Commission quite rightly points out that unless efforts are stepped up immediately to ensure that the EU maintains its commitments, its credibility in the international arena will be severely threatened.

In order to ensure that maximum pressure is brought upon the Member states to respect their commitments, a letter will be sent by SOLIDAR in due course for members to use when lobbying their governments prior to the June Council Meeting.

Read the [communication](#)

Interim Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs): where is the development dimension?

Following a recent study published by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and European Center for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) entitled "The new EPAs: comparative analysis of their content and the challenges for 2008", SOLIDAR participated in a stocktaking meeting which looked at what is currently on the table in the interim agreements and the full EPA negotiated with CARIFORUM (the negotiating block of Caribbean countries) Africa-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) countries signed before 31 December 2007.

EPAs were meant to ensure that ACP countries do not lose their duty free quota free access to EU markets following the expiry of the waiver from the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on 31 December 2007, ie that the new trade regime which replaces the Cotonou Partnership Agreement is WTO compatible. They were however also meant to be instruments for development and regional integration both in their tariff regime and the other issues such as development assistance. The analysis clearly shows that the interim agreements are severely lacking this development dimension and if implemented could threaten regional integration.

There are many questions being raised about the continuing negotiations, and SOLIDAR will, together with its Global Network partners in the African region, continue to advocate for a development-focused outcome and promote alternative models of trade regimes, such as the GSP+ system, for consideration by the European Commission.

Read [further analysis on the study](#)

Read [executive summary of study](#)

Support to MEP De Rossa

SOLIDAR is deeply concerned after hearing about the assault on Labour MEP Proinsias De Rossa in Dublin yesterday. The assault happened after Proinsias had spoken in a public meeting on the Lisbon Reform Treaty, which the Irish Labour Party is strongly supporting. As Ireland is the only country in Europe where a public referendum on the Treaty must be held, the topic is under hot discussion. Apparently opponents to the Treaty present at the meeting, in the words of leader of the Irish Labour Party Eamon Gilmore, *"were not interested in any rational discussion and were present only to disrupt."* A gang of four or five of these opponents then followed Proinsias outside and the assault occurred. Proinsias is said to have suffered minor abrasions and is badly shaken as a result of the attack.

"These anti-democratic tactics cannot be tolerated", said Conny Reuter Secretary General of SOLIDAR, *"an elected representative of the people must be able to express his opinion freely, without the fear of being set upon by people who simply do not agree with the viewpoint that he supports."* Conny continued *"in this crucial period in the lead up to the referendum in Ireland on the Lisbon Reform Treaty, SOLIDAR continues to support Proinsias and the Labour Party with advancing the ratification of the Treaty."*

Concerns from AEDH on new Framework Directive

The European Association for the Defense of Human Rights (AEDH) has issued its concerns on the intention of The Council of the European Union to speed up the approval process for its proposal for the Framework Decision amending the Framework Decision dated 2002 on combating terrorism.

For [more information](#)

ILGA campaign for a new European anti-discrimination legislation

The International Gay and Lesbian Association(ILGA) has launched a new campaign to make sure that everyone is protected equally across the EU against discrimination based on sexual orientation, age, disability, religion and belief, not just in employment, but in all areas of life.

For [more information](#)

21-22	SOLIDAR New Orientation Framework (NOF) discussions - Scandinavia, Stockholm
28-29	ISCOS Project Conference: Transnational Learning for Civil Society organisations in new Member States, Brussels
5	SOLIDAR International Cooperation Committee meeting, Brussels
6	SOLIDAR Balkan Network meeting, Brussels
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 EURO CITIES position on SGI and SSGI, Brussels
7-9	Olof Palme Balkans Study Visit: Building bridges together, Brussels
15	SOLIDAR Board meeting, Brussels
15	European Parliament, PES Group and Social Economy Europe: Conference on Social Economy, Brussels
3	SOLIDAR Social Affairs Committee meeting, Brussels
12-13	European Parliament 2 nd Citizens Agora on Climate Change, Brussels
25	SOLIDAR France & SOLIDAR network: For a Social Europe-Pour une Europe Sociale, Musée de l'Europe, Paris
2	Annual General Meeting and SOLIDAR 60 year anniversary
4-6	European Civic Forum - mobility, dialogue, participation: towards an active European citizenship", La Rochelle, France
15	SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards 2008, Brussels
28-29	2 nd 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](#)

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