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**Onderwerp:** **SOLIDAR May Day Message 2008**

Dear friends,

The 1 May celebrates the social and economic achievements of the labour movement. This year is particularly special as it is also SOLIDAR's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - 60 years of struggle and campaigning by an organisation whose foundations lie in the labour and social movements. And despite the fact that the world was a very different place 60 years ago, we still face the same struggles.

At the end of last week, teachers marched through the streets in the UK to highlight their declining pay rates and unacceptable workload. Earlier on this week, a march in Brussels, this time for the legalisation of undocumented migrants. Outside of Europe, the situation in Palestine is critical with continuing violence in and around the Gaza Strip causing terrible suffering to men, women, elderly people and children, Palestinian as well as Israeli civilians. And in Zimbabwe, SOLIDAR lends our support to Morgan Tsvangirai who continues in his struggle for justice in the face of the blatant collapse of democracy.

Everyday we see the results of the **lack of an integrated European social policy** highlighted by the increasing numbers of the working poor, the existence of the gender pay gap and the growing gap between the rich and the poor. To add to this, the recent European Court of Justice rulings on the Rüffert, Laval and Viking cases show a Europe that is moving away from being a social Europe with decent jobs to simply being a haven for free-market ideologies. 60 years have passed since our beginnings and we are further away from a Social Europe than ever before.

SOLIDAR embodies the values on which the international labour movement is based - **empowerment, democracy, solidarity and equality**. Every year we and others committed to the same ideals work to try and bring about economic and social justice for all. Labour Day is an international day of solidarity and our colleagues in the Global Network situated all over the world are also committed to the same struggles, be it in Egypt, Peru or India. Together with our partners\*, we are campaigning for **Decent Work Decent Life** to become a reality for people all around the world and to ensure that it is placed at the core of development, economic, trade, financial and social policies at national, European and international level.

Seizing on the symbolism of 1 May, the Decent Work Alliance has launched a series of **e-postcards** to encourage people to sign the Call to Action for a Decent Work Decent Life. I urge you to join this **growing Decent Work movement** by signing and forwarding these cards to your mailing lists to make Decent Work Decent Life a reality for all people.

SOLIDAR will continue to work towards economic and social justice for all in Europe and worldwide, just as it has for the last 60 years.

Together, we are a force for change!

Conny Reuter

Secretary General of SOLIDAR

#### **Selected actions and messages from SOLIDAR members**

- May Day message from Dave Prentis, General Secretary of **UNISON**, the public services trade union in the UK: ***"UNISON sends May Day greetings to our***

*sisters and brothers throughout the world. In the UK, millions are voting today in local elections. As the scourge of racism rears its ugly head again across some parts of Europe, I urge our members to use their vote and keep out the racist British National Party. There is no place in a civilized society or the work place for racists."*

- **Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund** (DGB) in Germany, is having a **May Day action**
- **Solidarité Socialiste** in Belgium, is showing the Decent Work Decent Life photo exhibition and collecting signatures **in Brussels and Liège**.
- **Sawt el-Amel/The Laborer's Voice**, Israel, sends **May Day greetings**

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\* The **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)**, **Global Progressive Forum**, **Social Alert** and the **European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)**

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