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## Alliance of Social NGO's meets Barroso on eve of renewed social agenda

12 June 2008. The Social Platform, the alliance of European Social NGO's, met with President Barroso in Brussels yesterday shortly ahead of the unveiling of the Commission's revised social roadmap for Europe. A delegation of members, headed by Social Platform President Conny Reuter, put forward concrete steps to make social progress a key priority on the renewed agenda. At the meeting, the Social Platform repeated its call for enhanced legislation to protect millions more EU citizens suffering from discrimination and intolerance. The European Immigration Pact, proposed by France, was also discussed, as well as the role played by the third sector in the provision of social services. One of the demands raised with the President was; *to make it more explicit that access and opportunities is not only about education, training and jobs but to show the essential role of services of general interest, adequate minimum income scheme and targeted measures for vulnerable groups to build a cohesive and inclusive society.*

See here the website of the [Social Platform](#)

- [The Social Platform's letter to President Barroso of April 23 on the Social Agenda](#)
- [The Social Platform common position on equality and non-discrimination](#)

## SOLIDAR and European parliament citizens initiative

12 - 2 June 2008. The second [AGORA](#) was held in the European Parliament involving 450 people from all over Europe to debate about "Climate Change". Conny Reuter moderated a workshop on solidarity, focussed on the social consequences of climate change and on policies that should be pursued to provide social back-up to protect the most vulnerable people. At the workshops on governance, Tamara Flanagan from SOLIDAR member CSV (UK, Director of European and Statutory Funding) spoke on how the EU can ensure a broad participation of citizens. 5 SOLIDAR members participated in the AGORA.

## EU Members States' vote on Working Time Directive takes social Europe back to early 1900s

On Monday 9 June in Luxembourg, 22 out of 27 EU Member States voted for a revised version of the Working Time Directive. With the exception of Spain, Belgium, Greece, Cyprus and Hungary, the Employment Council has agreed to:

1. Raising the maximum working week from 48 hours to 60 hours (65 in the case of certain professional categories such as the doctors);

2. Leaving national legislation or collective bargaining to determine if 'on-call' time is to be counted as working time or not.

SOLIDAR's Secretary General Conny Reuter reacted strongly to the decision, "*this vote takes social Europe back 90 years. In 1919 the ILO Convention 1 agreed a maximum 8-hour working day and a maximum working week of 48 hours.*" He added that "*since then, lots of work has been done to ensure that decent working time arrangements are in place to preserve health and safety, family-friendly jobs, gender equality, and to facilitate workers' choices and influence on the hours that they work. Raising the maximum weekly hours to 60-65 hours puts at stake all the advances that have been made.*" [Read more...](#)

According to the co-decision procedure, the directive will have to be submitted for a second reading to the European Parliament before it is ready to be transposed into national legislations. In 2009 the European elections will take place - and workers will vote too.

SOLIDAR is campaigning for decent work decent life to be a reality for all. Sign the Call to Action at [www.decentwork.org](http://www.decentwork.org)

### **SOLIDAR at the ILO annual conference**

SOLIDAR attended the 97<sup>th</sup> session of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) International Labour Conference in Geneva this week. The topics on this year's agenda included the promotion of rural employment for poverty reduction and skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development. Additionally, the conference adopted a declaration on "Social justice for a fair globalisation" and a resolution on "Strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its members' efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalisation". Both documents will now be presented to the ILO's Governing Body for implementation and provide an important tool for pressuring national governments to implement the commitments made under the Decent Work Agenda. [Read more about the food crisis.](#)

### **President Barroso on the Social Agenda**

Representatives of the Social Platform, in a delegation headed by Conny Reuter, Secretary General of SOLIDAR and President of the Social Platform, had a meeting with Commission President Barroso on 12 June. Ahead of the meeting SOLIDAR sent a letter to the President repeating our call for a renewed Social Agenda that sets the EU as an actor of social justice, solidarity and progress. [Read more...](#)

- [Summary of social reality consultation contributions received by the Commission](#)
- [Social Platform letter on EU Social Agenda](#)
- [European Commission Website on Conference on Social Agenda "Responding to new social realities - Developing an EU Agenda for Opportunities, Access and Solidarity"](#)

## Promoting the quality of personal social services

In line with the current focus on the quality of social services of general interest (SSGI) in debates and policy processes at European level, the Social Platform has updated their position paper on quality of social and health services. The paper highlights nine quality principles which are further detailed and underpinned by different criteria for monitoring purposes. One section is devoted to various (politically defined) preconditions for the delivery of quality social services close to the expectations and needs of users, such as adequate financing, sufficient staffing and decent working conditions.

The European network of big cities, EUROCITIES, has also published a position paper to analyse and comment on the Communication by the European Commission on Services of General Interest (SGI) and Social Services of General Interest (SSGI). It takes into account the discussions at a seminar at the European Parliament organised by EUROCITIES in partnership with the European Parliament's Urban & Housing Intergroup to which SOLIDAR contributed. [Read more...](#)

## Social considerations and their usage in public procurement

SOLIDAR was present at an information meeting on 6 June to present provisional results of a feasibility study on the incorporation of social criteria into public procurement. Building on this analysis, to be published during summer 2008, Commission Services will elaborate a guide by the end of 2008. Back in 2007 DG Internal Market had commissioned a study to obtain a better overview on the legal framework under current Community law and on the actual usage of social considerations across all economic sectors in different countries of the EU, ranging from agriculture to construction work. The study was presented in the context of DG Employment's activities to advance the concept of 'corporate social responsibility', not least within public authorities commissioning work and services from commercial enterprises or not-for-profit organisations. [Read more.](#)

## Thousands join Long March in Pakistan

SOLIDAR is fully supporting the thousands of lawyers, trade unionists and social movement activists who are on their way to Islamabad. This Long March was called by the lawyer's movement to push the Pakistan Peoples Party government to restore the top judges after the newly elected parliament failed to restore them within one month of coming to power, as promised before the general elections.

## Public Hearing on Access to Education for Disabled Persons

EUCIS-LLL is organising a public hearing on 1 July on Access to Education for Disabled Persons. [Read more...](#)

## NEWS FROM MEMBERS

### Europe, Energy and the social economy

SOLIDAR's Belgian member, Pour la Solidarité, has released a book on 'Europe, Energy and the social economy'. [Read the press release](#) (in FR)

### **Solidarity Day with Latin America**

On June 21, SOLIDAR Belgian Member FOS will host, in cooperation with the Belgian trade union ABVV/FGTB, a Solidarity Day with Latin America in Brussels. The event will see the presence of trade unionists from Cuba, Colombia, Peru, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Venezuela. For more information about the event, you can send an email to [Ivette](#)

### **Auser event**

Auser, an Italian association representing older people, will hold a series of workshops in Milan on 25-27 June 2008 in the frame of the event 'Festa della città che apprende' (Celebrating a city which is learning). The workshops will discuss topics on the role of older people within the 2008 EU year on intercultural dialogue, the experiences of the association with intercultural dialogue and about education for older people. [For more information](#) (in IT)

### **Job opening**

SOLIDAR's UK member, War on Want, are looking for a Campaigns Director.

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