

Hot topics, rainy days and cold war

Some of us have had the time for a break, but nevertheless the world turned around and we have to face a new crisis - after the food crisis, the financial crisis, the referendum crisis - now it is the war between Georgia and Russia: but is this really a step towards a new cold war?

As usual, civilians were the most vulnerable targets and need support from NGOs. On a political level, besides the extraordinary European summit next Monday, there is a need to support the emerging democratic civil society on both sides of the conflict. Progress in civil and democratic rights is not only achieved through free trade unions, but also through civil society organisations; both are vectors of democracy in any country of the world. And there is no alternative to dialogue on all levels and the respect of human rights in any region of the world!

SOLIDAR has a long tradition of contributing to civil dialogue on European level and will therefore be present in the European Civic Forum next week in La Rochelle (www.civic-forum.eu/event08) which is an important step forward as several hundreds of representatives of civil society organisations from all over Europe will participate in this high visibility event under the French Presidency. Besides this event, which should not be a one-off happening, civil society organisations will have to raise the question on the place of civil dialogue within the European institutions which will certainly become a topic with the newly elected European Parliament and new Commission in 2009.

On an international level, SOLIDAR member organisations have continued their engagement in the crisis regions of the world. Next week, we will lead a fact-finding mission to Palestine [which you will be able to follow in the day-by-day 'Palestine Diary' on the SOLIDAR website]. Since the beginning of the conflict, SOLIDAR member organisations have cooperated with partners on both sides and we want to get a clearer view of how to contribute to a political solution and how to better support our partners. Together stronger!

Expectations are high concerning Social Europe. We welcomed the social package presented by the Commission in July, but have to make a difference around the crucial questions, in particular Social Services of General Interest (SSGIs) and the new migration pact.

Hosted by MEP Jan Andersson, this Wednesday 3 September, we will collect more signatures in the European Parliament for the call to action for a Decent Work Decent Life. What campaign could better build bridges of solidarity and defend social and civil rights inside and outside of Europe!

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

SOLIDAR was present at an information meeting organised by the European Commission's DG Employment on 6 June in Brussels. The aim of this meeting was to present the results of a feasibility study on incorporating social criteria into public procurement. Social NGOs are concerned by this issue as in an increasing number of countries and in different fields of their activities (social, health, employment, training and education sectors) they already submit offers on a regular basis for the provision of services, including personal social services, to public authorities in the context of public procurement. [Read more...](#)

Continuing on the topic of public procurement, SOLIDAR Swiss member, SAH, have launched a campaign demanding for more transparency in Swiss public procurement. Read more on the [SAH website \(in French and German\)](#)

RESF VISIT DETENTION CENTRE

SOLIDAR Silver Rose Award Winners in 2007, Réseau d'Education Sans Frontières (RESF), give [their account of a trip to a detention centre](#) near Nîmes.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

WTO MINI-MINISTERIAL COLLAPSES

Recently SOLIDAR participated in the lobbying and advocacy around the World Trade Organisation's Mini-Ministerial Meeting in Geneva from the 21-31 July. The meeting collapsed amidst disagreement around key questions related to agriculture, such as the level of protection developing countries could use against sudden import surges (the so-called Special Safeguard Mechanism). Originally not seen as the make or break issue of the talks, with sixty per cent of their population composed of small farmers who have and could again be displaced by import surges, this issue prompted a number of developing countries, most notably India, to refuse to accept the proposed deal on agriculture. Similarly, in the negotiations on industrial tariffs, developed countries - with the EU pushing strongly - sought to have developing countries reduce their industrial tariffs by 60 per cent, whilst they would reduce theirs by 30. The imbalanced nature of this proposal was criticised widely by trade unions and SOLIDAR partners from developing countries. In addition, only

34 out of the WTO's 153 members were present at the meeting, highlighting the lack of democracy and the behind-the-scenes nature of negotiations. [Read more...](#)

TWO ARGENTINE CITIES DECLARE CALL TO ACTION FOR DECENT WORK 'OF MUNICIPAL INTEREST'

Launched in October 2007, the Call to Action for Decent Work is gaining momentum. In the last weeks, two Argentinean cities - Dolores and Bahia Blanca - have declared the Call to Action for Decent Work of municipal interest and have engaged to promote it amongst their populations.

SOLIDAR Global network partner in Argentina (FOCO) is playing a leading role in pushing other local authorities in the country to endorse the Call to Action by the end of the year. *SOLIDAR promotes the Call to Action in the framework of the EU funded Jobs Jobs Jobs project.*

Sign the Call to Action online at www.decentwork.org

NORWAY-LTTE TIES SOUR OVER THEFT OF NGO VEHICLES

In Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have commandeered heavy vehicles belonging to SOLIDAR members, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). Norway's decision not to hail a truce that the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) declared, seems to have fuelled a crisis that has for the first time soured ties between the rebels and Oslo, the peace facilitator in Sri Lanka. [Read the Indo-Asian News Service \(IANS\) press release.](#)

EDUCATION

EUROPEAN CIVIC FORUM

The European Civic Forum is an event to debate European issues in order to promote a more civic and popular ownership of the European arena. Workshop 13 will be chaired by Conny Reuter, Secretary General of SOLIDAR, and Danguole Bylaite from SOLIDAR's Baltic Platform member Lithuanian Labour Education Society (LLES) in Lithuania will participate. [For more information...](#)

MEMBERS' NEWS

Ado Sah Rom, SOLIDAR's new member from Romania, is organising a Black Sea NGO Forum "Time to Meet" from 31 October - 2 November 2008 in Bucharest, Romania. The aim of this event is to increase the level of dialogue and coordination among NGOs in the wider Black Sea region as well as to strengthen the advocacy capacity of NGOs in the Black Sea region in order to influence development strategies in the region. [For more information...](#)

ASB Germany has started a project in Croatia clearing mines. For more information, [visit their website \(in German\)](#)

Read **Legacoopbund's** [newsletter on cooperation issues](#) (in Italian and German)

Read **Solidaridad Internacional's** [bulletin](#)

OTHER NEWS

LIGHTS SWITCHED ON ANEW IN CTUWS OFFICES

SOLIDAR is pleased to announce that following the CTUWS' long struggle, the organisation has finally been officially recognized by the Egyptian government and the offices are up and running. The CTUWS is a member of the SOLIDAR project the Global Network. [Read more.](#)

SOLIDARITY FOR RECENT FLOODING IN NEPAL

Following the recent flooding eastern and southern Nepal, Nepal Trade Union Congress- Independent (NTUC-I) is requesting solidarity and funds to support relief efforts for the people affected.

3	Decent Work Recruitment Day, EP, Brussels
4-6	European Civic Forum - mobility, dialogue, participation: towards an active European citizenship", La Rochelle, France
12-13	Global Network meeting, Brussels
15	SOLIDAR Final Jobs Jobs Jobs/Decent Work Conference, Brussels

16	SOLIDAR Round Tables 'Chinese investments in Africa and Latin America: What Challenges for the Decent Work Agenda?', EP, Brussels
19-21	SOLIDAR delegation at European Social Forum, Malmö, Sweden
22-23	SOLIDAR and SOLIDAR Baltic Conference on Decent Work, Riga
2	FIC/SOLIDAR Seminar on flexicurity & labour market inclusion, Copenhagen
3	SOLIDAR Social Affairs Committee, Copenhagen
7	World Day For Decent Work - Call to Action handover, Brussels and International
8-9	Social Platform Annual Conference "Civil Dialogue - How can we shape the Europe we want?", Brussels
15	SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards 2008 and 60 Years Anniversary, Brussels
15-16	Round Table on the Fight against poverty and social exclusion, Marseille
17	Conference on promoting social terms in public procurement contracts, Paris
28-29	Forum on Social Services of General Interest, Paris
30-2	Volonteuropa 2008, Genoa, Italy
21-22	European Conference on Social Economy "Building Europe with Social Economy players, Strasbourg
24-25	European Forum on Demography, Brussels
27-30	Salon de l'Education, Paris