

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

### CALL TO ACTION FOR DECENT WORK: SIGNATURE COLLECTION OPENING IN BALTIC STATES

On the 22-23 September in Riga, SOLIDAR member Baltic Platform\* will launch its Call to Action for Decent Work's Signature Collection which will be carried out in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia until 7 October. Josef Weidenholzer, President of SOLIDAR, will be introducing SOLIDAR at the opening of the event. With a high rate of young people leaving their countries to look for better working conditions and decent wages in neighbouring countries (mainly Scandinavian ones), the Baltic States have many reasons in asking for the promotion of stable and quality jobs to become a top European priority.

The Call to Action will be launched in the framework of the 3rd annual public debate on Decent Work jointly organised by SOLIDAR and the Baltic Platform within the structure of the EU funded Jobs Jobs Jobs Project.

\* SOLIDAR's BALTIC PLATFORM joined SOLIDAR as a full member in 2007. It includes the Johannes Mihkelsoni Keskus in Estonia, the Lithuanian Labour Education Society (LLES) and Riga Education & Science Workers Trade Union (LIZDA) in Latvia.

### GLOBALISING DECENT WORK DECENT LIFE - PUBLIC DEBATE

Around 100 people attended the two-day public debate on Decent Work organised by SOLIDAR on 15-16 September at the European Parliament in Brussels. SOLIDAR Global Network partner organisations from South Africa (LRS), India (SEWA), Peru (PLADES), and the Philippines (LEARN) took part in the debate bringing visions and ideas from the Global South to a debate often criticised to be a Northern-driven agenda.

The debate - organised within the framework of the EU funded Jobs Jobs Jobs project - opened on Monday 15 with International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Secretary General, Guy Ryder, the Chair of the Global Progressive Forum (GPF), Josep Borrell and SOLIDAR Secretary General, Conny Reuter, who underlined ***"the importance of this coalition in promoting Decent Work Decent Life in the North and the South based on a partnership between unions and NGOs"***. The debate closed on Tuesday 16 with a Round Table discussion on 'the impact of Chinese investments in Africa and Latin America' hosted by Ana Gomes MEP, EP reporter on that very topic.

A full report of the two days will be available by the end of the year.

### SOLIDAR AT ESF

A SOLIDAR delegation composed of Vice-President Rodney Bickerstaffe, Board member Erich Fenninger, Secretary General Conny Reuter and International Cooperation Coordinator Andrea Maksimovic, together with member organisations- including Workers' Educational Association (TSL) (Finland), Progetto Sviluppo (Italy), AUSER (Italy), War on Want (UK) and Volkshilfe (Austria) - are participating in the [European Social Forum 2008](#) in Malmo.

Two seminars were organised in the frame of the ESF:

- Decent Work and sustainable development: challenges for Europe
- The risk of exclusion and poverty of the elderly: the right of ageing in dignity.

Both seminars illustrated the overarching Decent Work Decent Life strategy based on a partnership between progressive NGOs and trade unions aiming at the right for a life lived in dignity and societies building on solidarity. Together with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), we used the platform to promote the World Day of Decent Work which will take place on 7 October 2008. Decent Work is part of the global agenda of the next World Social Forum taking place in Belem (Brazil) in January 2009.

### ZIMBABWE: DELIGHTED WITH DEAL, WORRIED ABOUT FUTURE

SOLIDAR is delighted for the Zimbabwean people after the signing of the power-sharing deal between Robert Mugabe (ZANU-PF) and Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC). It was necessary to break through the impasse just as Zimbabwe's economy is really running into trouble with an annual inflation rate soaring to 11.2 million percent. Furthermore the country is experiencing acute shortages of fuel, electricity, medicines, and basic food such as corn meal, milk, and bread. Zimbabwe clearly needs a change of policies.

The power-sharing agreement, with 15 ministerial posts for the ZANU-PF and 13 for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), should not end up as a needless fight over power between Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai. With ZANU-PF's wish to hold onto key ministries already acting against the spirit of the new deal, the international community must maintain a strong involvement to ensure that Morgan Tsvangirai, in his new role as Prime Minister, will be able to formulate new policies that will get the economy back on track and prevent the looming humanitarian disaster. SOLIDAR will encourage member organisations to get engaged in Zimbabwe if the political conditions are more stable after the new political agreement.

## SOCIAL AFFAIRS

## MORE WOMEN FOR BRUSSELS

The European elections and the Reform Treaty offer new opportunities to ensure that women and men are equally represented at European level. Currently, less than one third of the Members of the European Parliament are women and the heads of the European Commission are made up of 9 women and 18 men. A mere 23% of women are represented in single or lower houses of national parliaments in EU member states and accession countries. This has to change.

If the Lisbon Treaty comes into force, 4 new 'top' functions will be created: the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission, the President of the European Parliament and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Brussels needs a better representation to bring Europe closer to its citizens, to shape the future of Europe together.

If you agree that at least two of these functions should be available for women, you can [sign the Send2women petition](#). The European Women's Lobby's is also calling for equal representation in the European Parliament, sign the [50/50 Campaign for Democracy](#)

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIAL PLATFORM ON CIVIL DIALOGUE

The Annual Conference of the Social Platform will take place on 9-10 December 2008 in Brussels. This event will be organised around the annual theme for 2008 "Shaping an effective civil dialogue at national and European level - Policies for people with people". The aim is to help the social NGO sector obtain a clear understanding of what we mean by civil dialogue, participatory democracy, active citizenship, etc. As a final outcome, a European scoreboard of the social sector, civil dialogue and participatory democracy at European level should be developed in 2009.

SOLIDAR is planning to co-organise a workshop, together with Mental Health Europe, on how to most effectively organise civil dialogue at European and national level and what could be done to build up and improve capacities of national member organisations to get involved in European debates. Our aim is to have a particular focus on experiences and needs in New Member States, building on concrete cases from the Czech Republic and Poland.

[Please contact us if you would like to participate or for more information](#)

## PATIENT MOBILITY AND HEALTH CARE IN THE INTERNAL MARKET

The proposal for a Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare is one key element of the Renewed Social Agenda adopted by the European Commission at the beginning of July. For several years now we have been witnessing an increased interconnection between health systems' health policies, raising many issues, including quality and access in cross-border care; mobility of health care professions within the EU; information requirements for patients, health professionals and policy-makers; the scope for cooperation on health matters; and how to reconcile national policies with Community rules. [Read SOLIDAR's assessment...](#)

## EUROPEAN PACT ON IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM

The Justice and Home Affairs Council will meet on 25 September to discuss the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum with the aim of achieving political agreement on the text. Should such an agreement be reached, the Pact will be put forward for adoption at the European Council on 15-16 October.

The Social Platform has recently drafted a first reaction to this proposed Pact in the form of a letter addressed to the Presidents of the EU institutions and the French EU Presidency, stressing the need for a positive approach to migration, fully respectful of the human rights of all migrants and not treated within the prism of security and law enforcement. [Read SOLIDAR's view...](#)

## MEMBERS' NEWS

SOLIDAR partner in the Global Network project, the **Centre for trade Union and Workers' Services (CTUWS)**, have issued a [statement](#) on the time being right for Egyptian workers to claim the right of organisation and the freedom of association which they lacked for several decades.

SOLIDAR UK member, War on Want, is looking for a [Senior Campaigns Officer](#)

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| 19-21 | SOLIDAR delegation at European Social Forum, Malmö, Sweden                               |
| 22-23 | SOLIDAR and SOLIDAR Baltic Conference on Decent Work, Riga                               |
| 24    | Thematic Review Seminar on preliminary outcomes of the Mission for Flexicurity, Brussels |

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| 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                     |
| 15    | SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards 2008 and 60 Years Anniversary, Brussels                                  |
| 15-16 | 7th Round Table on the Fight against poverty and social exclusion, Marseille                        |
| 17    | Conference on promoting social terms in public procurement contracts, Paris                         |
| 28-29 | 2nd Forum on Social Services of General Interest, Paris   |
| 30-2  | Volonteurope 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   |
| 9-10  | Social Platform Annual Conference "Civil Dialogue - How can we shape the Europe we want?", Brussels |