

WORLD FINANCIAL CRISIS

Over the last few months, the world financial crisis has gone from bad to worse. What this crisis has taught us is that the financial markets are out of control and that they cannot regulate themselves. National governments have had to step in with massive aid injections of public money in order to cover the mismanagement of private financial institutions. Conny Reuter, Secretary General of SOLIDAR asks, **"if governments can find these huge sums of money to bail out our private financial institutions, should they not also take on their responsibility to find the money to combat poverty, to achieve the Millennium Goals and provide better social and public services?"**

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

COME ALONG TO WORLD DAY FOR DECENT WORK: EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO SIGN CALL TO ACTION FOR DECENT WORK

On 7 October, the day that 110 countries will take action for the World Day for Decent Work, the ETUC's Secretary General John Monks will invite European Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström to sign the Call to Action for Decent Work promoted by the Decent Work, Decent Life campaign in front of the Berlaymont building in Brussels, committing the EC to put decent work at the heart of its economic, social, trade and development policy.

On the occasion of the World Day for Decent Work, trade unions, NGOs and progressive political forces around the world will mobilise to call on leaders of national states and international institutions to protect stable and quality jobs, reform trade and debt policies, fulfil aid promises and respect trade union rights. Campaigners are also calling on leaders to ensure access to social protection and rights for migrant workers worldwide.

When and where: 11.45 am, 7 October, 2008 - In front of the European Council and Berlaymont Building, Rue de la Loi, 1000 Brussels.

Who: Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission and EC Commissioner for Communication; John Monks, ETUC Secretary General and Catalene Paschier, ETUC Confederal Secretary; Guy Ryder, ITUC Secretary General; Josep Borrell, Global Progressive Forum President; Conny Reuter, SOLIDAR Secretary General; Bart Verstraeten, World Solidarity

*SOLIDAR promotes the Call to Action for Decent Work in the framework of the EU funded Jobs Jobs project.

EUROPE SHOULD LOOK AT ITS HISTORY: SOCIAL PROTECTION CAN SAVE PEOPLE FROM POVERTY!

A two day expert's meeting on 'How to strengthen social protection coverage in the context of the European Union Agenda on decent work and promoting employment in the informal economy' was organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Brussels this week. The meeting reinforced the case for a [Global Social Floor](#) demonstrating that today there is enough evidence available so that 'social security provision realises the basic rights to social security, that it is effective in reducing poverty, delivers tangible social and economic benefits to the countries implementing it, and is affordable'. Europe's history can tell us more about that as most countries developed their social security systems when they were poor. [Read more](#).

LET'S MAKE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SOLIDAR was invited as the only NGO to speak at the 'Let's Make Peace in the Middle East' conference, held in Venice from 25-27 September. Conny Reuter, Secretary General of SOLIDAR, put forward that this conference came at a timely moment just as the dramatic situation in the region shows the need for new approaches and action. For SOLIDAR it also comes after a mission to Israel and Palestine at the end of August (read SOLIDAR's diary of the trip [1](#)[2](#)[3](#)).

In his contribution, Conny highlighted the fact that if civil society organisations are not involved, then it will be impossible for a real peace process to be determined in an international conference. Conny stated that **"SOLIDAR defends the rights approach, puts the social dimension at the heart of our support and wants to work with both sides. This is the time for dialogue contributing to a better mutual understanding and a new culture of peace."**

OPERATIONALISING HUMAN RIGHTS AT WORK IN THE WTO

SOLIDAR attended a two day event on "Operationalising Human Rights at Work in the WTO" hosted by the European Trade Union Confederation. The conference was held to coincide with research carried out by Syndex, which looked into possible ways to include mainly Core Labour Standards into WTO processes. The study explores a number of options including legal, economic, political and institutional channels. As an institution, WTO rules are just one of a number of rights and obligations bestowed upon states and in theory should not contradict human and labour standards as set by UN bodies, in this case particularly the ILO.

In practice however, as speakers from the ILO highlighted, 147 member organisations of the WTO are also party to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Rights at Work, which should bestow upon them the responsibility to ensure that their trade policies are coherent with these treaties, in the hierarchy of rules, trade and investment considerations often take precedents over labour considerations. However, panelists pointed to the fact that for the first time ever, in the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation, member states agreed that "the violation of fundamental principles and rights at work cannot be invoked or otherwise used as a legitimate comparative advantage" whereas beforehand the reverse was considered to be the case. [Read SOLIDAR's contribution to the event.](#)

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

CURRENT POLICY PROCESS ON SOCIAL SERVICES

On 18 September, eight European networks of social service providers sent a letter to DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the Chairperson of the Social Protection Committee expressing some key concerns regarding the current European-level policy process on social services of general interest (SSGI).

In this letter Caritas Europa, CEDAG, EASPD, EPR, Eurodiaconia, FEANTSA, SOLIDAR and Workability Europe state that some crucial issues on policy frameworks and objectives are not clear. The networks observe a continuous shifting away from the political character of the debate on social services of general interest towards a debate about 'pure' legal and technical issues, which does not adequately take into account the specific characteristics of SSGI and their users. [Read more.](#)

PES GROUP RESOLUTION ON SOCIAL PACKAGE

On 25 September the European Parliament debated [the Social Package](#) adopted by the European Commission at the beginning of July. The Socialist Group in the European Parliament's spokesperson for social and employment affairs, Stephen Hughes MEP, said: "There is now a clear political breach in this parliament over social Europe. This Parliament remained silent in a face of a woeful social package from the European Commission." He declared that there is an urgent need to implement policies, at European and national levels, to protect a decent standard of living for all and a decent minimum wage for the poor and socially excluded.

Read the [Motion for a Resolution by the PES Group on the Social Package](#)

EP REPORT ON THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMBATING POVERTY ADOPTED

The final version of the own-initiative report "Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, including child poverty, in the European Union" was voted on by the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee. The final vote in the plenary will take place on 9 October, after its presentation to the Commission and the plenary on 8 October. SOLIDAR contributed to the draft report in discussing the main lines of the document in a meeting with rapporteur Gabi Zimmer (GUE/NGL, Germany), which built on SOLIDAR's reply to the consultation on active inclusion. The EP rapporteur thanked SOLIDAR this week for the enriching contribution.

Read more on main issues dealt with in the report

Read the final version of the report

NEW EUROPEAN 50/50 CAMPAIGN LAUNCH TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY AND INCREASE WOMEN'S PRESENCE AT THE TOP OF EUROPEAN POLITICS

The European Women's Lobby 50/50 Campaign 'No Modern European Democracy without Gender Equality' was launched in mid-September and will run until June 2009. The Europe-wide campaign aims to increase the presence of women at the highest level of European politics and to encourage women and voters in general to cast their votes in the next European elections.

The Campaign is already personally endorsed by almost 200 well known personalities across Europe such as European Commission President and Vice President José Manuel Barroso and Margot Wallström. The EWL invites people from across Europe to support the 50/50 Campaign by signing the petition and by taking part in lobbying actions: <http://www.5050democracy.eu/>

EDUCATION

The European Commission has launched a [consultation on 'Migration & mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems'](#) with a deadline of 31 December 2008. EUCIS-LLL is organising a public hearing in December 2008 in order to exchange on SOLIDAR members organisations' experiences and practices and to share them with the European Commission. EUCIS-LLL would also like to receive any suggestions for experts who could take part in the panel.

The Public Hearing will be followed by a workshop to work on a possible common position that could be adopted by the platform. EUCIS-LLL invites you to send in any papers, positions or projects produced on the subject to see if there are common links between EUCIS-LLL and your organisation's approach. EUCIS-LLL's position will be built on the basis of your contributions and will focus on lifelong learning.

[Contact EUCIS-LLL](#) with your suggestions

SILVER ROSE AWARDS & SOLIDAR's 60th ANNIVERSARY

On 15 October, SOLIDAR is holding the Silver Rose Awards and SOLIDAR 60th Anniversary celebrations. This event will award the achievements of exceptional individuals and organisations who have contributed to the struggle for social justice and also celebrate SOLIDAR's 60th Anniversary. With the support of the Socialist Group in the Parliament and hosted by Harlem Désir MEP and Ileke van den Burg MEP, the event will take place in the European Parliament in Brussels.

The winners this year are Globetree, a Swedish NGO working to promote children's rights and a sustainable future for children, and the Syndicate of Workers of Teheran and Suburbs Bus Company (Syndica Sherkat-e Vahed), an Iranian Trade Union leading a courageous struggle for the respect of workers' rights and social justice.

If you would like to attend, please contact silverrose@solidar.org

MEMBERS' NEWS

SOLIDAR's Egyptian partner in the Global Network project, **CTUWS**, has launched a [campaign on the Right of Association](#) and [a blog](#)

SOLIDAR Belgian member, **Pour la Solidarité**, is holding a [conference](#) on the energy and the social economy on 16 October.

Read SOLIDAR member **IFWEA**'s [newsletter](#)

2	FIC/SOLIDAR Seminar on flexicurity & labour market inclusion, Copenhagen
3	SOLIDAR Social Affairs Committee, Copenhagen
7	World Day For Decent Work - European Commission signing of Call to Action, Brussels
8	"Integrated pathways to active social and economic inclusion" Open Days 2008 CoR and DG REGIO, Brussels
15	SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards 2008 and 60th 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