

NEW HOPE WITH THE US ELECTIONS

Who would have thought it? Hoped it? Yes, we did like all other progressive forces in Brussels, in Europe and worldwide!

Last Wednesday there was high emotion and joy to see the first black US President being elected with a clear majority, 40 years after the murder of Martin Luther King.

The expectations are tremendous and the outcome of Barack Obama's policies, once in position, will have global results on the solution of the financial and economic crisis, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and, moreover, the social security and cohesion within the USA itself.

For SOLIDAR it is also an encouragement as it will enable us to strengthen our international alliances with our partners in the US, from the Unions to progressive civil society within the Global Network.

We have only one message to send to the President-elect, and that is: BON COURAGE!

TOGETHER, STRONGER! Conny Reuter, Secretary General

[Read reactions on Obama's election from the SOLIDAR family...](#)

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Next week at the General External Relations Affairs Council, EU governments will agree on a set of conclusions to take to the Doha Financing for Development Conference. SOLIDAR has been engaged in the process leading up to the conference through CONCORD's Working Group and we have contributed to the advocacy processes towards EU and UN institutions. There is now less than three weeks left and it is a crucial time for us to maximise pressure on governments in order to ensure an outcome document which reflects the severe need for solidarity with developing countries in this time of the food, fuel and financial crisis.

In particular we urge all member states to resist the temptation to water down their Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) commitments - we call on all Member States to support binding timetables in order to ensure the predictability of aid and fulfill the promises we have made. The financial crisis must not be used as an excuse to go back on ODA commitments. In addition, we urge Member States to support innovative sources of funds such as the Carbon Tax proposal in order to enable additional funding for climate change adaptation and to ensure there are strong commitments to ensuring that tax havens and other mechanisms for tax evasion that currently deprive developing country governments of billions of dollars they need to invest in public services and poverty alleviation.

For those who are in contact with their development cooperation ministries we hope you can reiterate these messages.

SOLIDAR will be present in Doha where we will organise in the framework of the Decent Work Decent Life alliance a parallel Civil Society Organisation event on 'Financing for Decent Work'.

A GOOD DAY FOR DECENT WORK IN EUROPE: EP ADOPTS CERCAS REPORT ON WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE

On Tuesday 4 November, with the adoption by the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the Cercas report on the Working Time Directive, the European Parliament marked a good day for Decent Work in Europe.

The adoption of the report by a large majority (35 votes for, 13 against and 2 abstentions) makes clear the Parliament's disagreement with the decision taken by the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council last June. According to the report, the maximum working time in the EU should be 48 hours per week (as foreseen by ILO Convention n. 1) and the possibility for a Member State to opt out should be removed within 3 years after the reformed directive enters into force.

The amendments proposed by the employment committee will be voted on in the plenary session in December. In the same week, the ETUC has called for a demonstration in Strasbourg (16 December) to ask that everybody in Europe is ensured a decent working time for a decent quality life.

[Read the draft Cercas Report \(version 3/10/2008\)](#)

SOCIAL AFFAIRS EMPLOYMENT CREATION, RECRUITMENT, QUALIFICATIONS AND WORKING CONDITIONS IN SOCIAL SERVICES

SOLIDAR contributed to the 2nd Forum on social services of general interest held last week in Paris with a

[presentation](#) exploring patterns of recent employment growth in many European countries, benefiting women and people above 55 in particular, as well as presenting and illustrating a number of challenges such as recruitment, qualifications and working conditions (non-standard/irregular working hours, relatively low wage levels, gender pay gaps, staff shortages, an increasing number of fixed-term contracts, undeclared work and undocumented work carried out mainly by female migrants from Central and Eastern Europe.)

Social services of general interest (SSGIs) are a core element of social protection schemes. They contribute to the realisation of a range of objectives in the interest of our societies, such as a high level of employment, health protection, equality between men and women, and economic, social and territorial cohesion. They help in reducing poverty, social exclusion and various forms of discriminations and in enhancing the capacity of individuals to participate fully in society. [Read about SOLIDAR members' involvement in this issue.](#)

Read more about what was discussed at the event | [Read a synthesis of the presentation](#)

ENCOURAGING PUBLIC AUTHORITIES TO MAKE BETTER USE OF SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN BUYING GOODS AND SERVICES

In 2005 the EU's public procurement markets were worth more than one sixth of the EU's gross domestic product. This clearly underlines their economic importance, but also the need to shape them around social, ethical or environmental considerations and objectives. A study on the legal and policy framework for the inclusion of social criteria in call for tenders in selected Member States, including six case studies, has been recently published.

Yesterday the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities & Internal Market) organised a meeting to inform representatives from trade unions, employers' associations and civil society organisations about the main results of this study. During the seminar Commission staff sketched out the next steps in view of the elaboration of a Commission guide and asked for first comments. Interested parties are invited to make their comments and proposals by the end of this year, and the document should then be ready by late spring 2009. The guide will aim at providing more clarity on the applicable legal framework as to social considerations and at encouraging their usage when public authorities at national, regional or local level buy goods and services. [Read more...](#)

SOLIDAR member Swiss Labour Assistance is running a [campaign on fair public procurement](#) and has prepared information material as well a guide on fair and ethical public procurement for municipalities (in German and French).

Read more about the study and the guide on social considerations in public procurement [1|2](#) | [Read the Green Procurement Guide](#)

SOLIDAR TAKES PART IN VOLONTEUROPE 2008

More than 120 participants took part last week in the 17th Volonteurope Conference on Volunteer Action, held in Genoa from 30 October - 2 November. Organised since 1990 by SOLIDAR's member CSV, UK's largest volunteering and training organisation, Volonteurope consists in a series of workshops organised during an annual conference at which member organisations and their partners meet to discuss their work and to consider new developments in voluntary action and citizenship.

Together with a number of other European and national networks and headed by the European Volunteer Centre (CEV), SOLIDAR is part of an alliance actively supported the campaign "[Towards a European Year of Volunteering 2011](#)".

TRANSPARENCY REGISTER

SOLIDAR has this week [registered](#) on the Transparency Register following the [recommendations of the EU Civil Society Contact Group](#). This voluntary registry aims to provide information to citizens on general or specific interests that are influencing the decision-making process. Following the guidelines, SOLIDAR followed a higher standard of transparency than the current inconsistent and insufficient requirements of the register.

MEMBERS NEWS

Two of SOLIDAR's Belgian members, **Solidarité Socialiste** and **Pour la Solidarité**, are hosting a 'midi de la solidarité' on the subject of Decent Work, at which SOLIDAR will be speaking. The event will be held on Wednesday **12 November 2008** from **12.00-14.30**. To register: pbodinaux@solsoc.be

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

SOLIDAR Italian member **Legacoopbund** has sent out [news](#) that cooperatives from the Alto Adige region will be present at ECOMONDO: the Environmental and Sustainable Development Fair in Rimini.

PARTNERS' NEWS

Egyptian partner of SOLIDAR through the Global Network, the **Centre for Trade Union and Workers' Services** have revised the legislative framework of trade union action in Egypt. [Read more on their blog](#)

Families of the Disappeared (FOD) in Sri Lanka have hosted their [annual Commemoration for the Disappeared for families](#).

A [website](#) space has been launch to raise the visibility of domestic/household workers and their organisations.

SOLIDAR is looking for an office administration assistant - [for more information and to apply](#)

11	SOLIDAR Balkan Network meeting, Belgrade
12	SOLIDAR International Cooperation Committee, Belgrade
13	SOLIDAR Field Trip, Belgrade
17-19	Global Network Regional meeting, Lima
19-20	APEC Ministerial conference, Lima
21-22	European Conference on Social Economy "Building Europe with Social Economy players, Strasbourg
24-25	European Forum on Demography, Brussels
25-26	Civil Society Organisation Conference on Financing for Development, Doha
26-27	CONCORD General Assembly, Brussels
27-30	Salon de l'Education, Paris
27-2	Financing for Development conference, Doha
9-10	Social Platform Annual Conference "Civil Dialogue - How can we shape the Europe we want?", Brussels