

SOLIDARITE LAIQUE EMPLOYEE FREED!

SOLIDAR is overjoyed to announce the release of Dany Egretéau, a staff member of Solidarité Laïque, held hostage in Afghanistan since 3 November!

Solidarité Laïque say this on their website: "Dany Egretéau, employee of Solidarité Laïque held hostage since November 3, was released at the end of long and delicate negotiations conducted by our organisation. There was no payment of ransom. The kidnappers agreed to release the hostages because of his status as a humanitarian worker and the deterioration of his health. Solidarité Laïque pays tribute to the young Afghan who lost his life on November 3 while trying to intervene in the kidnapping of our colleague Dany Egretéau. Solidarité Laïque wishes to thank the French authorities and Afghan services, both in Paris and Kabul, for assisting in these painful circumstances."

2009 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS: POLITICAS SOCIALES PROACTIVAS

Last Monday and Tuesday, SOLIDAR participated in the Council of the Party of European Socialists in Madrid. All Social Democratic party leaders and Prime Ministers or Presidents gathered to adopt the Election Manifesto for the Socialists, to which SOLIDAR and other NGOs also contributed. The new [manifesto](#) says "*Decent work must become a global objective to which all countries as well as international institutions and organisations are committed*", the Socialists want to "*establish a European framework for public services, guaranteeing universal and equal access for citizens*" and promise "*full and equal access to lifelong learning, with special attention paid to 'second-chance education and training'*". [Read about SOLIDAR's participation...](#)

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

DOHA OUTCOME NOT BOLD ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH MAGNITUDE OF CRISIS

On Tuesday, governments under the UN Financing for Development progress agreed a final Doha Outcome Document, taking stock of commitments on financing for development agreed at Monterrey in 2002, and looking forward to the future. The conference was greatly held back by the reluctance of the outgoing US administration to allow any commitments on UN involvement in the process of reforming the global financial architecture and ensuring there is a strong follow up mechanism. "*It is time that decent work and gender equality took center stage in the debate on financing for development and the fact that the outcome document refers to these concepts is a step forward in this direction. At the same time, civil society and trade unions, which are development actors in their own right, must be given a voice in the process,*" argued Conny Reuter, the Secretary General of SOLIDAR.

SOLIDAR, together with World Solidarity participated in the ITUC delegation and engaged in advocacy and lobbying around the document with trade unions and other civil society organisations present. In addition, under the Decent Work, Decent Life umbrella we held a side event at the Civil Society Forum held prior to the conference entitled "Financing Decent Work".

[Read CONCORD's briefing](#)

[Read media release from the Decent Work, Decent Life alliance \(which SOLIDAR was involved in\)](#) | [CONCORD press release](#) | [Final comment of the Doha NGO Group \(which SOLIDAR was involved in\)](#) | [Civil Society Organisation Final Declaration on FfD](#) | [ILO's comment](#) | [ITUC demands](#) | [See SOLIDAR in an interview on BBC Arabic News](#)

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT AND MARY ROBINSON SIGN THE CALL TO ACTION FOR DECENT WORK

During the Financing for Development Conference in Doha (29 November - 2 December 2008) the Decent Work Decent Life Campaign organised a debate on Financing for Decent Work at the Civil Society Forum, at which President of UN General Assembly Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann and Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and head of the Ethical Globalisation Initiative, signed the Call to Action for Decent Work.

[See the list of the political and institutional supporters of the Call to Action](#)

GLOBAL EUROPE

SOLIDAR participated this week in a conference organised by the European Parliament Globalisation Intergroup and Friends of the Earth on the impacts of Global Europe on Sustainable development. 'Global Europe: Competing in the World' is the centerpiece of the EU's external policies, focusing on ensuring European companies have access to developing country markets and resources. It promotes a globally-oriented Europe and the expansion of the realm of "free trade" rules according to the imperative of "competitiveness". [Read more...](#)

ZIMBABWE TRADE UNIONISTS ARRESTED

SOLIDAR supports the ITUC in their condemnation and protests against the arrest of more than 69 and

assault on a large number of ZCTU (Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions) leaders and members, including the arrest of Secretary General Wellington Chibebe. [Read the ITUC's press release](#)

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

HEALTH SERVICES, PATIENT RIGHTS AND PATIENT MOBILITY AT THE EP

On 2 July 2008 the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (one of the three legislative initiatives of the social package), accompanied by a Communication on the related Community Framework. The final vote in the European Parliament is expected for April 2009, with debates currently entering into the decisive phase.

MEPs share many of the concerns expressed by SOLIDAR. This became clear in a meeting organised by the PES Group to inform on key issues currently debated in EP Committees to discuss how best to coordinate work inside and outside of the EP. Participants also exchanged on strategies for raising awareness on the issues at stake in the context of the EP electoral campaign in the first half of 2009, as well as on activities to mobilise trade unions and civil society organisations around the issue of accessible and affordable health services. [Read more...](#)

[Read SOLIDAR's comments on key elements of the draft directive and communication](#)

SWEDEN BECOMES 23rd COUNTRY TO RATIFY LISBON TREATY

As of 4 December, 25 Member States have approved the Treaty with 23 of them having **concluded the ratification process**. **Sweden** became the last one to approve the Lisbon Treaty after its parliament voted to adopt it on 21 November, and the ratification officially deposited in Rome this Wednesday as the final step required.

Germany, Poland and the **Czech Republic** are still waiting on final approvals. The **Irish Government** is expected to report back to Heads of State and government during the European Council on 12-13 December on how to advance in the ratification process, Ireland being the only country that has so far [voted against the Treaty](#).

[Map with ratification situation in different Member States](#) | [Official website of the European Union on the ratification process](#)

SOLIDAR PRESIDENT URGES MEPS TO VOTE AGAINST REVISED EU WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE

On 16 December 2008 Members of European Parliament will discuss and vote on the revised working time directive. This directive rules a maximum of 48 working hours per week, but a number of important exceptions gained by Member States could allow them to extend this to 78 hours per week!

In his capacity as President of SOLIDAR, Josef Weidenholzer, President of Volkshilfe Österreich, stated that "*I absolutely cannot understand why the EU Commission and the EU Labour Ministers have interpreted the sign of the times so wrong*". He argued that in a period of growing unemployment, this would imply "*giving a wrong political signal in view of economic policies*". Josef Weidenholzer warned that "*the fear of losing their jobs will make people accept unhealthy or indecent working conditions. We need a fair distribution of jobs, and healthy and motivated staff*". [Read more...](#)

[Read the Volkshilfe Press Release \(in German\)](#) | [Read SOLIDAR's article on Members States' vote on Working Time Directive](#) | [Link to ETUC information leaflet and background information on revised Working Time Directive](#)

EDUCATION

EUCIS-LLL -PUBLIC HEARING & OPEN STEERING COMMITTEE, 18 DECEMBER 2008

A public hearing entitled «Access, equity and diversity in lifelong learning: how to successfully integrate populations of migration background in Europe?» will be organised by EUCIS-LLL on 18 December in Brussels from 9.30-12.30.

You are also invited to participate in the open steering committee meeting organised in the afternoon (14.30-17.30) to discuss important issues for the future development of the platform. [Read the programme](#) and [register](#)

MEMBERS NEWS

SOLIDAR Italian member, **ISCOS-Cisl**, is holding the final [conference](#) of its project on the role of women from Eastern Europe in the range of trade unions organisations on the 24 October in Istanbul.

The project named "Improving Gender mainstreaming within Trade Union Organisations in Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey" aimed to support trade unions to create a debate about equal opportunities for women inside their organisations, so as to facilitate concrete actions within this sector. The focus was on two

different levels: on the one hand, the exchange of good practices about bargaining on both national and territorial level, on the other, the political view towards the presence of women in trade unions. Activities took place in three seminars where representatives from partner organisations worked out action plans to implement within the frame and to support gender policy. ISCOS then created [guidelines](#) to support partner organisations in the process of gender policy.< /P>

Partners involved in the project were CITUB from Bulgaria, Cartel Alfa, CSDR, BNS, Fratia from Romania and DISK, KESK, HAK-Is, TURK- IS, CNI from Turkey.

Swiss Labour Assistance is currently looking for a [Coordinator Humanitarian Aid](#).

Funding update: [link to a list of the latest call for proposals](#)

PARTNERS NEWS

CONCORD's EU monitoring newsletter

European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) [Seminar](#) on The economic and financial crisis: Elements to construct a new paradigm on 8 December 2008, 14.00-17.00 at International Trade Union House

The **European Civil Forum** has circulated a [press release](#) on Youth Mobility in Europe

8	SOLIDAR ECHO Partners Meeting, Brussels
9-10	ECHO Annual Conference
9-10	Social Platform Annual Conference "Civil Dialogue - How can we shape the Europe we want?", Brussels
15-17	Balkan Network Seminar: Enhancing the European Perspective, Montenegro
5	SOLIDAR Social Affairs Committee, Brussels