

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

### A EUROPE WITH NO TAX HAVENS WOULD BE A HAVEN!

On Sunday 20 February, the leaders of the EU's biggest economies met in preparation of the G20 summit to be held in London on 2 April. In their meeting in Berlin, they agreed that there must be stricter regulation of hedge funds and to take action against tax havens. The first step in this direction will be to draw up of a list of 'uncooperative areas' by 2 April.

Even before the crisis exploded, several civil society organisations (CSOs) strongly criticised the blind attitudes of several governments, including European ones, with respect to tax havens. The theme of the regulation of tax havens/secrecy jurisdiction was one of the topics tackled at the financing for development conference in Doha in late 2008. In that framework, CSOs -amongst which SOLIDAR - asked, without success, for governments to adopt the goal of closing down tax havens and to strengthen the institutional architecture within the UN system to deal with international cooperation on tax matters. This demand is also supported by the European Parliament which urged the European Union 'to keep the elimination of tax havens at a worldwide level on the agenda'. Read more about CSOs mobilisation at the G20...

### SOLIDAR IN SRI LANKA UPDATE

The United Nations Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Relief Coordinator, John Holmes, arrived in Sri Lanka last week on a 3 day visit amidst reports of rising civilian casualties caused by fierce fighting between security forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in some 100 square kilometers of an area south of Mullaitivu town in Northern Sri Lanka. The objective of his visit was to assess the current humanitarian crisis and see how the Government of Sri Lankan could be assisted by the UN and its partners in addressing urgent issues of IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons).

During a press briefing John Holmes expressed concern for the plight of civilians stating that the government and the LTTE should ensure civilians were not harmed or killed in the fighting. "*We call upon the government and the LTTE to avoid civilian casualties and injuries*" Mr Holmes said. [Read more.](#)

## SOCIAL AFFAIRS

### HOW TO STRENGTHEN THE SOCIAL OMC?

On 18 February SOLIDAR took part in a workshop co-organised by the Social Platform, together with EAPN, FEANTSA, AGE and Eurochild, on how to strengthen the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). This was a follow-up to a workshop on the OMC that took place during the Social Platform Annual conference (9-10 Dec 2008).

SOLIDAR is in favour of the Social OMC, as a governance tool involving all stakeholders, including NGOs, in the process of preparing, implementing and evaluating national action plans in the field of social inclusion and social protection, but the OMC still has important shortcomings and a great unexploited potential. SOLIDAR would like to see a process enabling a better involvement of actors on the ground, with clear annual priority topics, and a greater and more active involvement of the European Parliament and national Parliaments in the OMC process. Read [SOLIDAR's position on the OMC](#)

### OWN INITIATIVE REPORT ON SOCIAL ECONOMY ADOPTED BY EP

An own-initiative report on the Social Economy\* was adopted by the European Parliament on 19 February with 580 votes in favour, 27 against and 44 abstentions. Conny Reuter, Secretary General of SOLIDAR, commented that "*this is an important step towards a better recognition and the provision of a legal framework for social economy organisations, which is key to highlighting the need for the European institutions to formally recognise all civil society actors, including associations, foundations and mutual societies.*"

Read the minutes of a hearing organised by the ALDE group, attended by SOLIDAR on 20 January, on the same topic.

## EDUCATION

### EARLY MATTERS SYMPOSIUM

In October 2008, EUCIS-LLL participated in a Symposium, organised by the European Commission on improving early childhood education and care. Read the [summary of the key conclusions](#).

## MEMBERS NEWS

Read the latest funding update, meeting report from a European Policy Centre event on 'Social Europe: advancing or retreating in the economic crisis'... in the **Members Area**. Don't have a password? Contact

## Abigail

Spanish member, **ACPP**, is organising [Cooperation in the field courses](#) for people interested in learning more about the world of cooperation and highlighting the impact that ACPP development cooperation projects have had in 11 countries.

Italian member, **Legacoopbund**, has launched a [new website](#)

French member, **La Jeunesse au plein air**, is organising on the 18 March 2009 [a day of reflection](#), together with partner organisations, on the adjustment of children's rhythms of life.

## **PARTNERS NEWS**

On the occasion of International Women's Day on 8 March, the Belgian collective **«Tous ensemble pour la cause des femmes en République Démocratique du Congo»** is organising a [march](#) in Brussels to support the cause of women in the Congo.

The **Palestinian Peace Coalition** organised a [workshop](#) in Gaza on 'The Role of Media in Promoting the Culture of Peace & reconciliation'.

12-13	Conference "Quality and Safety Policy for Patients", Prague
16-18	Conference: Social Rights, Active Citizenship and Governance in the EU, Brussels
17-18	SOLIDAR Board meeting
19	EUCIS-LLL Annual General Assembly, Brussels
25-26	Conference: Flexicurity - Lifelong Learning and Social Protection Components, Prague
2	G20 meeting, London
2-3	Global Progressive Forum event, Brussels
14	Civil Society Day, Brussels
16-18	Conference: Social Economy, Prague
22-23	Conference: Social Services - a tool to Mobilise Workforce and Reinforce Social Cohesion, Prague
29	SOLIDAR-FEPS conference: 'Together for a Social Europe'

**SOLIDAR** is a European network of 50 NGOs and labour movement organisations. Working in cooperation with progressive civil society and trade unions, SOLIDAR promotes equality, solidarity and social justice in the fields of social affairs, international cooperation and education. SOLIDAR's Weekly Round Up provides you with the latest information and news from the SOLIDAR Network.

If you have any comments or wish to have further information on any of the articles featured in the Weekly Round Up, please do not hesitate to contact [SOLIDAR's Communications Officer](#)