

SOLIDAR contributed to Civil Society Day which took place in the European Economic and Social Committee on the 14 April. Conny Reuter, Secretary General, took part in the Round Table on Civil dialogue and the Lisbon Treaty with MEPs Richard Corbett and Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann. Kaufmann contributed with feedback on a report on the citizens' initiative whilst Corbett spoke about the 'developing civil dialogue at EU level' report that he assisted Genowefa Grabowska to draft. "This was a very successful day with many platforms present and participating in putting forward an agenda for civil dialogue" commented Jean Marc Roriant, Chair of the SOLIDAR Board.

## SOCIAL AFFAIRS

### COME ALONG TO THE TOGETHER FOR SOCIAL EUROPE CONFERENCE

In the frame of the Together for Social Europe campaign, SOLIDAR is organising a conference on the 29 April 2009, hosted by Jan Cremers MEP. The event will bring social workers from SOLIDAR member organisations to the European Parliament to present their experiences of working with socially and economically disadvantaged people and vulnerable groups to Members of the European Parliament.

Read [more about the event and register](#).

### FRUITFUL TALKS ON WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE BUT STILL NO FINAL AGREEMENT

Negotiations on the Working Time directive continued between the Parliament and Council representatives yesterday for what has been described as "fruitful talks", although a final agreement has not yet been reached. The negotiating teams will therefore reconvene on 23 April to try and find enough common ground for a final formal conciliation meeting on 27 and 28 April. The sole point of discussion was the "opt-out", which has so far been the most contentious issue. Read [SOLIDAR's position on these discussions](#)

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

### BUSINESS AS USUAL NO LONGER POSSIBLE, UN RAPPORTEUR ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND BUSINESS WARNS

This week SOLIDAR attended a Public Hearing on Business and Human Rights with Professor John Ruggie, the special UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on human rights and transnational corporations. [Prof. Ruggie's report](#), unanimously adopted by the UN Human Rights Council in 2008, outlines a three-point plan for ensuring business activities respect human rights. This includes strengthening the state's duty to protect its citizens from human rights' abuses by third parties, including corporations; the corporate responsibility to protect ie not infringe on the rights of others as they go about their business and lastly, on ensuring there is access to remedies, both judicial and non-judicial. [Read more...](#)

### EC TRANSPARENCY CALLED INTO QUESTION

A 15 page "vademecum" issued by the Commission's trade department and leaked on the EU Observer website warns officials to be careful about what they write in emails and advises them on how to narrowly interpret requests for information, following new EU rules on access to documents ([read article](#)). The vademecum reminds staff in DG Trade that "all documents, including emails, are "in principle subject to disclosure" and asks them to think of the regulation when they are producing documents" reports the article.

SOLIDAR is extremely concerned as this vademecum brings up a fundamental question about the transparency of the EU institutions. "We, as a civil society organisation, have registered on the Commission's voluntary lobbying list as requested. But this is a two-way issue. In order to have institutionalised civil dialogue, we also need access to clear and transparent information from the Commission so that we can dialogue and progress together in an open way" says Conny Reuter, Secretary General of SOLIDAR. SOLIDAR will be following this up in a coordinated response with other stakeholders.

## MEMBERS NEWS

Register now for the **SOLIDAR Annual General Assembly** on the Members Area. Forgotten your password? Contact [Abigail](#)

Read **ARCI's article** on the Italian government's proposal to give the 5 per 1000 of income taxes which is normally given to the non-profit sector to the area hit by the earthquake.

**FIC** invites readers to participate in an [online citizens consultation](#) for the EU elections:

## PARTNERS NEWS

### SIKHULA SONKE CALLS FOR DECENT HOUSING FOR FARM WORKERS IN WESTERN CAPE

On April 18 Sikhula Sonke will hold a demonstration in Cape Town to demand that decent housing - which includes proper sanitation, access to clean drinking water and an end to evictions from the farms - is ensured to farm workers.

Sikhula Sonke is a woman-led trade union who work with farm workers mainly in the Western Cape. It operates as a social movement dealing with all livelihood challenges of farmwomen (domestic violence, food insecurity, alcoholism etc.) and has today a membership of 4000. It is a partner organisation of SOLIDAR Belgian member FOS and UK member War on Want. Click here to know how you can [support](#) Sikhula Sonke action and the [program](#) of the day.

To know more about Sikhula Sonke, read [SOLIDAR's interview](#) with its Secretary General Wendy Pekeur.

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The European Anti Poverty Network is looking for a [Policy Officer](#)

14	Civil Society Day, Brussels
14-15	SOLIDAR Development and International Funding Workshop & West Africa Working Group, Brussels
16-18	Conference: Social Economy, Prague
22-23	Conference: Social Services - a tool to Mobilise Workforce and Reinforce Social Cohesion, Prague
29	SOLIDAR conference: 'Together for Social Europe', Brussels
26	SOLIDAR Annual General Assembly, Brussels
27	SOLIDAR International Cooperation Committee meeting, Brussels
9	SOLIDAR Social Affairs Committee meeting, Brussels

**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](#)