

NEW NAMES, NEW CHALLENGES... AND SOME OLD ONES

Although we thought that we would have a long overnight wait before knowing the names of the new President of the European Council and the High Representative of Foreign Affairs, they came out surprisingly quickly. Herman van Rompuy has a long experience in politics and as some say, if he was able to create consensus in a complicated country like Belgium, he should be successful in finding consensus amongst the diverging interests of the EU Member States. In Baroness Ashton, we welcome a friend of SOLIDAR and someone who in her current role of Trade Commissioner has made a difference in comparison with her predecessor.

Baroness Ashton (right) at the Silver Rose Awards 2008

As a first action, SOLIDAR calls on both the new President and High Representative to take action in favour of human rights activist and 2007 Silver Rose Award Winner, Aminatou Haidar, who is not being allowed to return to her home in the Western Sahara ([read media statement](#)). For SOLIDAR, human rights are indivisible. Some Members of the European Parliament are also sending round a [petition](#) for her return ([FR](#) | [ES](#)).

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

CONFERENCE: IMPACT OF THE EU TRADE POLICY ON DECENT WORK

On Wednesday and Thursday this week, a conference, hosted by Kader Arif MEP, on the impacts of the EU's *Global Europe* trade strategy on decent work took place. This event brought together MEPs and representatives from trade unions, the Commission's DG Trade, business and international organisations. The exchange of views by people with very different backgrounds and interests resulted in highly interesting and fruitful discussions on how to guarantee sustainable development, of which decent work is a part, in the trade agreements that the EU is negotiating.

Particular attention was given to the impact of the financial and economic crisis, that is now turning into a jobs crisis, and the fact that as a result of this crisis we can see that the current trade model based on export-led growth simply does not work. SOLIDAR, together with its Global Network partners, stress that the mere objective of trade liberalisation will not necessarily guarantee the preservation of jobs and decent work in the countries that are trading partners of the EU. What is rather needed is a modification of the current EU trade strategy *Global Europe* to include the concept of decent work as a main aim. [Read our media release...](#)

DECENT WORK AND MULTINATIONAL SUPPLY CHAINS

How can multinationals be made accountable for the denial of decent work to their workers? This was one of the central questions raised during the seminar on the business of labour rights held on Tuesday in the European Parliament organised by War on Want, ECCJ and SOLIDAR, and hosted by Pervanche Berès MEP, Kader Arif MEP and Richard Howitt MEP. Some 45 people including MEPs, representatives from NGOs, trade unions and the European Commission exchanged views on how to implement corporate accountability in order to effectively improve working conditions in developing countries. Testimonies by Anton Marcus (Free Trade Zone Trade Union Sri Lanka), Astrid Valencia (Grupo de Monitoreo Independiente de El Salvador) and Dharmendra Kumar (FDI Watch India) illustrated the working conditions that workers face because of irresponsible corporate behaviour.

After last week's positive announcement by the Swedish Presidency that it is looking to operationalise the Protect, Respect and Remedy framework on corporate accountability developed by John Ruggie, SOLIDAR is hoping that the Spanish Presidency will actually walk the talk and implement the suggestions of this framework. SOLIDAR also calls on MEPs to organise a hearing about access to justice within the EU for non-EU victims of irresponsible corporate activities and a parliamentary resolution on the establishment of a legal framework for EU companies to respect workers' rights abroad. [Read our media release...](#)

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

WEBSITE LAUNCHED ON THE POSTING OF WORKERS

The construction industry is characterised by the high mobility of its workforce. In this framework, the Posting of Workers Directive constitutes a central piece of European legislation, aimed at regulating the movement of workers posted from one EU country to another. European social partners in the construction industry, with the support of the

European Commission, recently launched a [website](#) that focuses on legal provisions and regulations affecting construction activities, with the aim of helping firms and workers identify those national legal and conventional provisions which have to be respected when workers are posted from one EU country to another.

In SOLIDAR's view this website is a useful tool to highlight the benefits of joint efforts by employers and trade unions to broaden the knowledge base on labour law (for example, minimum wages, working time and minimum rest) and social protection (like health and safety at the workplace) issues related to the posting of workers. It should support efforts to promote decent working conditions for posted workers across the EU27. Interpretations of the European Court of Justice in its 2008 rulings Viking, Laval, Rüffert and Luxembourg/Commission have raised [serious concerns](#) by trade unions and social NGOs, including SOLIDAR about an unbalanced relationship between fundamental social rights and economic freedoms and the negative effects this has on individual and collective labour law.

MEMBERS

[Read](#) about an event on gender violence organised by **Solidaridad Internacional**.

Read the **ARCI** [newsletter](#).

La Ligue de l'Enseignement is looking for a [Poste de Chargé\(e\) de Projets Europeén](#), based in Paris.

PARTNERS

Tribute to Neil Kearney

SOLIDAR is shocked by the sudden death of Neil Kearney, General Secretary of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF). We would like to pay tribute to Neil, who dedicated his life to improving the wages and working conditions of some of the most exploited workers in the world, as well as campaigning tirelessly against child labour. He will be sorely missed.

On 22 September **EUCIS-LLL** organised a public hearing in Brussels on "Lifelong Learning, a key to achieve European active citizenship?". [Read 10 key ideas that emerged from the discussion...](#)

Read a [report](#) by **CTUWS** on their meetings with a AFL-CIO Delegation and Egyptian Labour Activists.

EVENTS

17	SOLIDAR conference: Whose responsibility? Decent work and multinational supply chains, Brussels
18-19	SOLIDAR conference: The jobs trade off: the impact of Global Europe on decent work, European Parliament, Brussels
22-24	Baltic Sea Conference, Bornholm (Denmark)
2	SOLIDAR Round Table: social/active inclusion and decent work in Europe, Brussels
3	SOLIDAR Social Affairs Committee, Brussels
9-10	Global Network Europe Seminar, Belgrade
12	SOLIDAR Silver Rose Award 10th Anniversary, European Parliament

SOLIDAR is a European network of 53 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