

On Wednesday the EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso presented the new EU 2020 Agenda. The most significant change is the inclusion of a 25% poverty reduction target. We acknowledge this step forward and welcome the inclusion of some social aspects into the Agenda. However the document still lacks a clear commitment to social inclusion, investment in social infrastructure (SSGI) and anti-discrimination policies.

Nevertheless we consider that progress has been made. We will concentrate our efforts now on putting content into the "flagships" in the Agenda (see article below), the integrated guidelines (to be decided in the June summit), the next social agenda and the European Employment strategy.

Which brings us back to the fundamental questions that European citizens want answers to: will the EU 2020 Agenda provide a framework for real change? And will it help pave an exit to this crisis and prevent future crises? The answers to these questions stay open...

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

## SOCIAL AFFAIRS

### A SOLIDAR PERSPECTIVE: EU2020 STRATEGY - WHAT'S IN, WHAT'S MISSING?

On Wednesday, the European Commission published their [Communication on Europe 2020](#). SOLIDAR welcomes that poverty reduction has been included as one of the main priorities and considers the suggested tool, the OMC, appropriate as long as there is clear political commitment at all levels to achieve the targets set and to involve all relevant stakeholders, including social NGOs.

However, in SOLIDAR's view some significant factors are missing: (1) an emphasis on quality jobs and decent work, (2) active inclusion as one important pathway to improve access to the labour market and full participation in society and (3) the role social services have both as core element of social protection and as a source of employment growth. Furthermore, there is a lack to strengthen the security elements when implementing 'flexicurity' strategies. In the coming three months SOLIDAR will mobilise and join forces with our members and other social NGOS to improve the priority objectives under the "flagship initiatives". [Read our break-down of the Agenda..](#)

### COMPANY STRATEGIES IN EUROPE: FLEXIBILITY AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in Europe (Eurofound) has launched a [survey](#) that sheds light on working time and flexibility strategies in European companies. The main conclusions are that the more skilled/higher earners are also those who have more access to training and more flexible working times. Whilst access to life-long learning is reduced to those lower skilled and lower earners such as temporary agency workers, interns, workers on fixed term contracts and apprentices.

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

### GROWING SUPPORT FOR FINANCIAL TRANSACTION TAX

Two EP committees: Economic and Monetary Affairs and Development have adopted reports supporting the establishment of a financial transaction tax. Separately, Japanese foreign minister Katsura Okada said that politicians internationally should consider a tax on international finance. Both agree that the financial transaction tax could help developing countries to cope with the effects of the global financial and economic crisis, or that it can be used as a fund to guard against climate change.

SOLIDAR has been supporting civil society efforts to push for the G20 meeting in June in Canada to adopt this tax. We are holding a series of meetings, including as part of the Europeans for Financial Reform campaign, aimed at persuading EU leaders to formally adopt and support such a tax. We clearly support the efforts of the MEPs and the Japanese foreign minister as we are convinced that taxing banking transactions would be a significant contribution of the financial sector to worldwide social justice. Following the British and the German campaigns, AK Europe and ÖGB Europabüro now launched the ['International Conference on the Financial Transaction Tax'](#) in Austria.

## EDUCATION

### EUCIS-LLL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL) will bring together 19 major European networks in education and training, including SOLIDAR, during a Conference on the Social Dimension of Education and Training in Europe on the 14 April 2010 in Barcelona. Read more about it on their [website](#) | Consult the programme ( [EN](#) | [FR](#) | [ES](#) ).

## MEMBERS

**Pour la Solidarité** organises a European conference on 11 March 2010 on "Le secteur financier: acteur de l'intégration social". Consult the [programme](#)

**Swiss Labour Assistance (SLA)** published a [booklet](#) on the role of Swiss NGOs. The study gives an overview on the developments of Swiss NGOs embedded in their international context

Read the [ARCI newsletter](#)

## PARTNERS

**Plades** is organising a [seminar](#) on International Women's Day in alliance with trade union movements and women movements. The seminar will take place on 6 March in Ica, Peru.

**CTUWS** published an [article](#) saying that one worker from Al Nubariya Company was injured during a sit-in and carried to the hospital. The sit-in started on Monday 1 March. The workers called for their salaries which they have not received for two years.

To mark International Women's Day, **WAC-MAAN and Ahoti** organised '[A March of Working Women](#)' followed by an Assembly in Tel Aviv on 8th March 2010. A coalition of 15 organisations will be present, calling for reducing unemployment and establishing fair job conditions.

**CECOP-CICOPA Europe** seeks an [office assistant](#) for its Brussels-based secretariat.

## AGENDA

9	SOLIDAR Social Affairs Committee, Brussels
15	<a href="#">Europeans for Financial Reform Conference, Brussels</a>
24	Volunteurope and Humanitas Library dialogue 'Effective consultation of citizens in the EU', Amsterdam
26	Meeting of SOLIDAR Advisory Group on Quality Jobs and Decent Work, Brussels
14-15	EUCIS-LL Annual Conference and General Assembly, Barcelona
15	FIC Conference 'Faces of Poverty in Europe', Copenhagen
22	Social Platform General Assembly, Brussels
7-9	European Civic Days "Towards a European Social Citizenship", Malaga
12	Annual General Assembly SOLIDAR, Brussels
27-28	DWIR Project Final Conference, Bucharest

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

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