

This week EU Finance Ministers met in Brussels, where discussions focused on the situation in Greece and the 2009-2010 fiscal stimulus packages. Ministers concluded that Greece is on track to achieve the goal of reducing its deficit by 4% in 2010 due to the efforts of Papandreu's PASOK government.

For us, the social crisis facing Greece should serve as a warning bell that the Growth and Stability Pact must be reviewed in order to ensure that slashing wages, pensions and social services is NOT the only policy tool available to governments in times of crisis. The pursuit of such policies can only lead to more social unrest and greater suffering for the population.

Further, we believe that moving away from the fiscal stimulus packages in 2010 is a mistake which could lead to even greater unemployment, increasing inequality and hampering the recovery; exactly the opposite to the EU2020 strategy's aim. Such a withdrawal should only be considered once employment rates have reached their pre-crisis level and quality.

Finance Ministers have to look at the figures and serve the people first!

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

### EU-ISRAEL ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT UPGRADE CONTINUES

With the tension between the US and Israel on the construction plans in East Jerusalem escalating and despite a political decision by the EU in June 2009 to put negotiations on hold, the EU is still working with Israel to upgrade the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

Since the last Association Council meeting in June 2009, Israeli violations of international human rights and humanitarian law have continued. Further, Israel rejected the Goldstone report, a UN fact-finding mission on the Gaza Conflict, and Israel has not yet lifted the blockade on the Gaza strip. The EU should take a stand and publicly declare that an upgrade of EU-Israel relations will really be on hold if Israel does not start to respect human rights and international humanitarian law.

### EU-COLOMBIA FTA: CAN WE IGNORE ONGOING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS?

A few weeks ago technical negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the EU and the Colombian government were finalised, despite ongoing human rights violations in the country. The ratification process has now started. This week the EU's Commissioner for Trade De Gucht had a debate with the European Parliament's Trade Committee on the topic. [Read more...](#)

## SOCIAL AFFAIRS

### TARGET TO LIFT 20 MILLION PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY ESSENTIAL IN EU2020 STRATEGY

With the upcoming Spring Summit next week (25-26 March), EU leaders will agree on the headline targets in the EU2020 Strategy. SOLIDAR would like to emphasise that it is essential to include the proposed target to lift 20 million people out of poverty in the EU as measured by the relative poverty indicator. SOLIDAR and other social NGOs view this as a potentially historic, albeit interim, step forward for EU cooperation in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

In addition, SOLIDAR is in favour of defending an autonomous Social Open Method of Coordination (OMC), but with a specific social guideline in the Integrated Guidelines that requires delivery on the poverty target and progress on the common objectives of the Social OMC.

### ROUND TABLES ON DECENT WORK & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Within the last few weeks, in the framework of the [Decent Work & Industrial Relations project](#), 5 round tables have been held covering 4 European Member States (Estonia, Italy, Lithuania and Romania). They were organised by our members Ado Sah Rom, Ires and Iscos, LLES and JMK. [Read more...](#)

## MEMBERS

CSV/Volonteuropa and Humanitas are organising a [seminar](#) 'The Library Dialogue: an inquiry into effective consultation of citizens in the EU' on 24 March in Amsterdam.

Lega Coop Bond invites journalists to a [press conference](#) on 'mutual societies in the field of social and health service in Bolzano' on 18 March

Lega Coop Bond published a [press release](#) stating that they became a member of the agency 'Cooperare con Libera Terra' on 16 March

Read the [ARCI Newsletter](#)

## PARTNERS

The **ERRC**, Silver Rose Awards Winners in 2010, published an [article](#) stating that the segregation of Romani children into separate classes based on language is unlawful discrimination, violating the European Convention on Human Rights.

**FOCO** is organising a [conference](#) on climate change on 20 March in Buenos Aires.

A group of 13 Spanish organisations and social platforms are organising the European Civic Days 2010 'For a European Social Citizenship' in Malaga. Read more about it ([EN|ES](#)) and participate!

## **JOBS**

**SOLIDAR** is looking for a [Project Officer - Migration and Development](#).

**SOLIDAR** is also looking for an [intern for our International Cooperation Department](#).

## **AGENDA**

24	Volunteurope and Humanitas Library Dialogue 'Effective consultation of citizens in the EU', Amsterdam
25	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	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 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](#)

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