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**Datum:** 05/07/2010 02:47 PM

**Onderwerp:** SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 07-05-2010

Currently Europe is going through a period of crisis. This started one year ago with a financial crisis, the social consequences of which have affected European and developing countries with mounting unemployment and a reduction in quality and decent jobs. And now the same bankers who were bailed out by European governments with billions of dollars are now speculating and ultimately ruining any chances of Greece, and now Spain, get out of the grips of national debt crises.

The response from European countries is generous - 110 billion dollars for Greece - but not done in solidarity as conditions mean that Greece must cut public sector wages, jobs and expenditure by 16%. No wonder the polls are showing a rise in nationalism when members of the European Union are no longer standing side-by-side.

In addition, with the aim of getting European citizens feeling more involved in European policy making, SOLIDAR is organising an interactive conference in Austria in July 2010, the topics for which can be put forward by you (in discussion forums or video clips) on the EU4U website: [www.eu4u.info](http://www.eu4u.info)

Together, stronger!

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

## SOCIAL AFFAIRS

### **HOW CAN THE EU'S EMPLOYMENT POLICIES BEST COMBAT POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION?**

Following the release by the European Commission of its proposal for the "EU2020 Integrated Guidelines" on 27 April ([read our assessment](#)), SOLIDAR sees that there are two ways that EU policies can help combat poverty and social exclusion. Firstly, by including key policy objectives in Guideline 10 on the promotion of social inclusion and the fight against poverty: access to affordable and high quality (social) services, effective anti-discrimination measures, a strengthening of the role of the social economy and explicitly including the aim of a substantial reduction of in-work poverty.

Secondly, that Member States agree on the well-established relative poverty indicator of 60% of median weighted household income that could be complemented by other poverty thresholds (40% and 50% of median income) and indicators on material deprivation. This indicator would be to measure the EU headline target on poverty reduction - 25% reduction of those living below national poverty lines - as suggested by the European Commission in its [Communication](#) on the 3 March.

### **LAUNCH OF SOLIDAR BRIEFINGS ON DECENT WORK & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

Last month, SOLIDAR together with partners, organised various round tables in the framework of the 'Decent Work & Industrial Relations' project all over Europe. As a result of these round tables, briefings have been written on the challenges of decent work for vulnerable groups in several EU countries. Take a look at those [briefings on our website!](#)

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION APRIL PACKAGE ON DEVELOPMENT FORGETS DECENT WORK!**

With a letter sent yesterday to Eva Joly, Chair of the Development Committee of the European Parliament, the [Decent Work Decent Life Campaign](#), drew the European Parliament's attention to what it sees as serious 'amnesia' in the [European Commission's Spring Package on Development](#).

Although the package does refer to the most vulnerable and calls for wide-coverage social

protection systems and social justice, it fails to mention and integrate decent work policies (freely chosen employment and full respect for rights at work - encompassing Core Labour Standards - social dialogue, and social protection - including health and safety at work) as a key response to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the 5 years that remain.

As a consequence, no mention is made to how the EU envisages supporting progress to provide productive and decent employment for all including women and young people - where accelerated progress is needed according to the official UN MDGs Progress Report 2009 - and to assist countries to monitor and report effectively on employment indicators under MDGs Target 1B.

[Read more...](#)

## HAITI: WHAT NEXT?

On 5 May, SOLIDAR together with member Solidaridad Internacional organised a round table to reflect on the roles, challenges and possible synergies that could support the reconstruction process in Haiti. Among participants were representatives of the European Commission (Aidco), the European parliament (MEPs, Development Committee), the Spanish Presidency and European Development NGOs (CONCORD, VOICE, Coordination Europe-Haiti, Oxfam International, VOICE, and SOLIDAR members ISCOS and ACPP).

The NGO CROSE, one of the most active Haitian civil society organisations network in the Southeast region, shared their experiences and gave their perspective on the reconstruction process in Haiti. At the end, the round table resulted into an interesting discussion highlighting the views and positions of the different European stakeholders on the issue.

## MEMBERS NEWS

**CTUWS** published an [article](#), also posted on the website of the New York Times, concerning 'Labour protests test Egypt's Government'.

## PARTNERS NEWS

**MEP Franziska Keller** and others are organising a [conference](#) on 'How coherent are you in your politics? Enhancing policy coherence for development' on 11 May at the European Parliament.

The **European Institute for Construction Labour Research** has launched its [Quarterly Newsletter](#). The editor Jan Cremers writes "In today's financial crisis, those countries that survive best have stronger regulatory frames, of labour law and collective agreements, in which workers are protected and treated as stakeholders that keep companies in good shape. These regulatory frames are perhaps costly, but they serve as guarantee and as an anti-cyclical instrument in times of crisis".

## AGENDA

5	Solidaridad Internacional/SOLIDAR Round Table on Haiti Reconstruction Progress, Brussels
7-9	European Civic Days 'Towards a European Social Citizenship, Malaga
11	SOLIDAR Migration and development project kick-off meeting, Brussels
11	SOLIDAR Middle East Working Group (14-17), Brussels
11	SOLIDAR Communications Group Meeting, Brussels
12	SOLIDAR Annual General Assembly, Brussels
18	DWIR Transnational Conference on Decent Work and Migration in Europe, Naples
27	DWIR Project Final Conference, Bucharest
9	DWIR Round Table on Decent Work and Quality Jobs in Europe, Brussels
17-18	Social Affairs Committee and Seminar on Volunteering, London

*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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