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## MATERNITY LEAVE DIRECTIVE: INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF SOCIETY AS A WHOLE

On Wednesday, the European Parliament voted by a large majority in favour of a Resolution on maternity leave, adopting all the amendments that the Social Platform (and its members) have been lobbying for: 20 weeks maternity leave and the introduction of two weeks leave for new fathers, both fully paid. In addition, the Parliament also adopted amendments to ban the dismissal of pregnant workers from the beginning of a pregnancy to at least 6 months following the end of the maternity leave. This is real progress, meanwhile however a call for an EU framework law on minimum income did not receive support of a majority of members of the EP's Employment Committee.

Coming at a time when in the UK government cuts are predicted to lead to the dismissal of 490,000 public sector workers and the ongoing unrest in France over pensions, this shows that when civil society and social NGOs work together, they can be successful on important issues benchmarking the path to more social progress, even in times of crisis!

But we should not cry victory too soon, as the negotiations by European governments to follow may mean watering down the progress made. We need to keep struggling, together, for more social progress in times of austerity programmes and budget pressure!

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

## SOCIAL AFFAIRS

### COMMON QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR SSGI

In a process parallel to the European institutions work on a [Voluntary Quality Framework on social services](#) (see [last week's article](#)), NGOs brought together in the [Prometheus Project](#) (which aims to address different aspects related to the quality of social services of general interest) have also put together a [Common Quality Framework for social services of general interest](#).

SOLIDAR welcomes the inclusion in this document of elements on preconditions for quality, which was not addressed in a comprehensive way in the EU document. SOLIDAR will support this Framework document as an important discussion document at EU level. [Read more](#).

### SOLIDAR MEMBERS COMBATING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Last week, the Social Affairs Committee in Copenhagen was an opportunity for SOLIDAR members to highlight their actions in tackling youth unemployment. Members Movimiento por la Paz-MPDL (Spain), Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO) (Germany) and La Ligue de l'Enseignement (France) shared their experiences. [Read more](#).

### NEW VIDEOS: DECENT WORK - A KEY TO INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

SOLIDAR has two videos highlighting different aspects of precarious work in Europe. In the first video [four workers](#), Manuel, Igor, Judith and Mark tell about their stories about precarious work and its impact on their lives. The second video puts forward the [recommendations](#) on how to improve working conditions around Europe in sectors with higher incidences of precarious work, including by project partners, the European Commission, ILO.

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

### SOLIDAR AT THE ECHO ANNUAL PARTNERS MEETING

Members of the SOLIDAR Humanitarian Cooperation Network (HCN) participated in the meetings of the Annual Conference of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Partners held on 21-22 October in Brussels. A stand was specifically allocated for SOLIDAR members to present their humanitarian work and their vision to develop and strengthen the effectiveness of humanitarian actions as a network in the framework of this year's general theme "efficient and effective

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