

SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 20-01-2012

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LATE! NOT TOO LATE!

Already during the Hungarian Presidency, progressives called on the EU institutions to intervene and remind the Hungarian government that Europe is based on values and the respect of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Unfortunately as the interventions remained soft spoken, the government continued to deny fundamental civic and human rights and opened a door for nationalistic, and even fascist movements, anti-Semitism and discrimination against minorities.

The list of violations is long. It was only when the Hungarian government violated the independence of the Hungarian Central Bank that the reaction from the EU became firmer. On Wednesday, progressive EU parliamentarians reminded Victor Orban that he is guiding Hungary outside of Europe and that it is strange to see him, a man who fought against communism, leading Hungary along the anti-democratic pathway of an authoritarian regime.

The last weeks have showed that progressives in Hungary are standing up again and that a democratic coalition is emerging. It will be vital to continue helping Hungarian progressive civil society to emerge, to organise and build partnerships. As Zita Gurmai, Hungarian MEP and friend of SOLIDAR said: "We, as socialists, as feminists, as Euro-enthusiasts, will not accept this authoritarian regime in the heart of Europe. We are ready to fight back for the Republic of Hungary". This is not only a Hungarian affair, it is the call for solidarity and action!

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

SOLIDAR congratulates Martin Schulz on his election as President of the European Parliament. In his acceptance speech in Strasbourg, Schulz said that as a result of the economic downturn, poverty in Europe was on the rise and unemployment had reached "disastrous" levels. Before continuing: "The public have elected us and they have high expectations and rightly so. That is why we need to fight for these issues."

SOLIDAR also congratulates Hannes Swoboda on his election as new Leader of the S&D Group in the European Parliament.

SILVER ROSE AWARDS

You can now [register](#) for the SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards. The event, taking place on 6 March in the European Parliament, will celebrate individuals and organisations whose extraordinary acts have contributed to social justice and solidarity in Europe and throughout the worldwide. Winners will be announced in the week of 6 February.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

EC PROPOSAL ON PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AND CONCESSIONS OUT

This week, the Informal Network for Sustainable Development in Public Procurement met to discuss the Commission's proposals for an [EU directive on public procurement](#) and on [concessions](#) issued shortly before Christmas. Both texts are crucial with regard to services provision as they lay down the EU rules for public authorities buying products and services and awarding concession contracts.

The current proposal excludes social, health and education services from EU public procurement and concession rules, unless the contract is above a threshold of ?500,000. Contracts for social services above this threshold will be under a specific regime, which imposes only the respect of basic principles of transparency and equal treatment. Apart from this, the proposal successfully integrates some of the Network's key messages in [response to the Green paper](#) on the modernisation of public procurement rules.

[Read more about the proposal...](#)

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

TUNISIA - CELEBRATING ITS FIRST YEAR OF FREEDOM, BUT SOCIAL CRISIS REMAINS

On 14 January, Tunisians celebrated the first anniversary of Ben Ali's fall and the end of dictatorship. Crowds gathered on Avenue Bourguiba with banners, slogans and revolutionary songs, but this was not all about celebration, as demonstrators reclaimed their right to work and live in dignity. For the majority of Tunisians, the present situation remains difficult and the future looks uncertain.

Unemployment rates keep rising, basic facilities for education or healthcare fail to respond to the needs of the population and the social tension, especially among the youth, is on the edge. A large part of the population stand excluded from the socio-economic changes taking place in largest cities of Tunis or Gafsa, and struggle to take part in the new democratic process. Democracy is a castle to build in which the role of civil society is crucial.

This is why SOLIDAR members are working together with the Tunisians to help them defend their rights and develop a fair and just society at the scale of people's expectations.

[Read more about SOLIDAR's members work.](#)

MEMBERS NEWS

Read the February edition of **La Liga de la educacion's** [newsletter](#)

Read **Arci's** [newsletter](#)

PARTNERS NEWS

Attend **Les Francas'** [event](#) "Rencontres Nationales de Montpellier" on 26-27 February.

Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (IMWU NL) have issued their [Annual Report](#).

Read the **European Network Against Racism's** 12-Point [Call for Action](#) to the Danish Presidency of the European Union: Building an Equal Europe for All.

AGENDA

Feb 3 Achieving decent work through industrial relations - low wage sector, Amsterdam

9-10 Achieving decent work through industrial relations - migrants and young people, Bucharest

21- SOLIDAR Education Experts Meeting, Paris

March

22 Decent Work in the Western Balkans, EP, Brussels
22 SOLIDAR Italian Members Meeting, Roma

6 SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards, EP, Brussels

SOLIDAR is a European network of 56 NGOs active in over 90 countries working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the concerns of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the policy sectors social affairs, international cooperation and lifelong learning. For more info <http://www.solidar.org/>

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