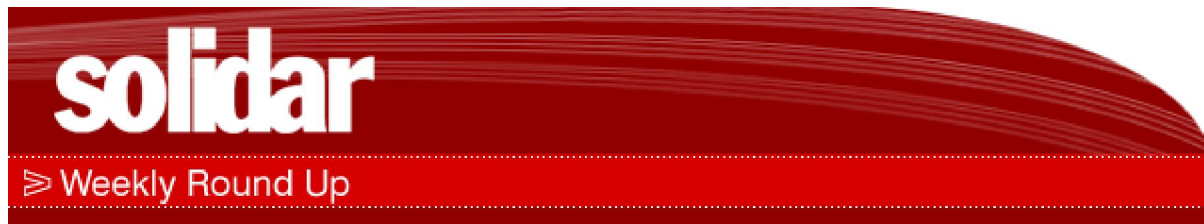


SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 23-03-2012

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Aan: Veerle Solia



Spring feelings - mixed feelings

One year ago we were inspired by the Arab Spring; the democratic revolution against dictators and their suppressive regimes.

Progressives on this side of the Mediterranean had been very supportive and did not make the mistake to interfere in the struggles of those who guided the movements, but allowed for the people to take their destiny in their own hands. The turmoil that followed the collapse of old regimes brought instability and the weakened democratic civil society could not withstand the emergence of traditionalists and religious forces. Consequently, the elections in Egypt and Tunisia showed that the Arab Spring's vision for democratic transition did not become a reality.

The challenge that lies ahead of progressives is to counteract these traditionalists and religious forces on one hand and to demolish the old power structures on the other. We may draw lessons out of the transition processes witnessed in the 70ies in Spain, Portugal and Greece as well as after the fall of the Berlin wall. Strengthening democratic and independent civil society is crucial to ensure the respect of human rights and equal opportunities for all, including gender equality in all spheres of public and private life.

Furthermore, the arrest and sentencing to 6 months of jail of SOLIDAR Silver Rose laureate Kamal Abbas (CTUWS, Egypt), because he "dared" to criticise a representative from the Egyptian yellow (government led) trade union during the ILO conference last June in Geneva, once again underlines the need to work together to mobilise social justice in the Middle East and North Africa.

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

SOCIAL AFFAIRS**ISSUED: COMMISSION PROPOSAL ON POSTING OF WORKERS**

This Thursday, the European Commission (EC) issued its proposal on the enforcement of the [Posting of Workers Directive](#) to resolve the problems with the existing rules concerning workers' protection, fair competition, monitoring and compliance.

According to the EC, the Enforcement Directive should improve the implementation of the 1996 Directive on Posting of Workers that regulates the movement of workers posted from one EU country to another by setting more ambitious standards regarding information of workers and companies about rights and obligations; establishing rules for cooperation between national authorities in charge of posting; defining control competences of national inspections and improving enforcement of rights and complaints handling. [More...](#)

MEPs, SOCIAL PARTNERS AND NGOs CALL FOR QUALITY EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

On 20 March a Round Table on "Young People and the Search for Decent Work" took place in the European Parliament within the context of the "Making Industrial Relations work for Decent Work" project. To secure quality employment for young people and counteract the precarious conditions which young often face such as forced acceptance of flexible working agreements, limited access to training and low wages; the MEPs, social partners and NGOs put forward several suggestions.

First, an EU employment strategy should be designed as well as an EU 2020 sub-target on youth unemployment should be set. Second, the introduction of quality youth guarantee should be explored in all Member States together with a quality charter on internships. Stakeholders also called for an increase in investment in labour inspections and stricter controls on breaches of rights by companies. Last but not least, trade unions recognised the need to find new ways to better involve young adults in their work and decision making.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

RIISING WORRIES ABOUT CONFLICT OF INTERESTS IN THE EU INSTITUTIONS

In a letter to Commissioner Sefčovič - Commissioner for inter-institutional relations and administration - a group of CSOs including SOLIDAR expressed their concerns that the EU institutions rules -which are meant to prevent conflicts of interest from arising when staff leave or join the European institutions-are not sufficiently effective and are not being correctly implemented. Moreover, the staff is not always aware of its obligations as set out in the Staff Regulations; some members of the staff are excluded from consideration under these rules and the European institutions are reluctant to implement cooling-off periods. These concerns were confirmed in a [recent report](#) from the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU) which highlighted several examples.

EDUCATION

RECOGNITION OF SKILLS AND COMPETENCES IN THE LIGHT OF THE AGENDA FOR NEW SKILLS AND JOBS

On Tuesday at the European Round Table hosted by La Ligue de l'Enseignement, representatives of SOLIDAR Education Experts Network that includes 22 Workers' Education Associations, Trade Union Education Institutes and popular education movements from 18 EU Member States developed a common understanding of the recognition and validation of skills, competences and knowledge acquired in the non-formal environment.

During the Round Table good practices from France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom and a pilot project - "Promoting the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs: Strengthening individual learning pathways by developing skills assessment tools for workers" developed by DGB-Bildungswerk, SOLIDAR, AIAS, ABF, FIC, and ETUI were presented.

DIALOGUE-TO-CHANGE: PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

During the CEMEA hosted Round Table on 21 March which featured Gautier Delannoy from the Municipality of Seclin (France) and Ana Feder from Eurocities as speakers, SOLIDAR members and partners from 18 EU member states explored best integration practices and agreed that successful integration and intercultural learning strategies have to go beyond diversity and cultural identities.

Integration is a political and societal project that defines how we all live together, how we construct and do things together and how we participate together. The rights of migrants and their vulnerability and social exclusion exacerbated by the financial crisis should be the central priorities. To that end the members agreed to work together for dialogue-to-change.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Banana Link's [Make Fruit Fair campaign](#): Take action to protect melon workers' rights in Honduras.

War on Want is calling for an end to [sweatshop exploitation](#). They are working in countries like Bangladesh, supporting women in their fight for better pay and decent conditions.

PARTNERS' NEWS

Enforcement of Labour Standards in Egypt is Overdue! Read the [report](#) on the progress made one year after issuing the Trade Union Freedoms Declaration.

[30 NGOs declare solidarity](#) with **Kamal Abbas** and call for quick investigation of corruption cases in the general Federation of Egyptian Workers

[Register](#) by 30 March for the **European conference 'Addressing Pension Challenges: EU and Stakeholders' Approaches'** on 17 April organised by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), the Trade Union related Research Institutes (TURI) network, the European Social Observatory (OSE), and the INCA CGIL Observatory on European social policies, in collaboration with the Workers' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

Watch **EUROCITIES** [video](#) featuring migrant youth views from Barcelona, Ghent and Stockholm on issues such as discrimination, diversity and language learning produced within the MIXITIES project co-financed by the European Integration Fund.

Attend the [Open Day](#) organised by the **European Economic Social Committee** on May 12 targeting representatives of the European civil society organisations and networks.

Exchange views on mobility and intermodality at the [Danube Forum](#) | March 28 | European Parliament

Support the newly launched [campaign](#) for European Citizen Initiative **"Water is a Human Right not a commodity"** sponsored by the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

CONCORD AidWatch is looking for a [consultant/report writer](#) for the first AidWatch report in 2012. The deadline for application is Sunday, 25 March 2012, 12 PM Brussels time.

EU in Crisis - analysis, resistance and alternatives to corporate Europe | Saturday 5 - Sunday 6 May 2012 | Maison des Associations Internationales, Brussels. Join Corporate Europe Observatory, Transnational Institute and representatives from social movements and trade unions across Europe for this two-day event to examine the EU's response to the crisis, discuss democratic alternatives, strengthen networking, and develop concrete plans for action. [Register now](#)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has launched a [video contest](#) for young people (from 18 to 29 years) to show how the global jobs crisis is affecting their lives.

AGENDA

April March

28 SOLIDAR International Cooperation Committee, Brussels - [register](#)

11 SOLIDAR Round Table: Why Social Protection Should be an Essential Part of EU Development Cooperation Strategy, EP, Brussels - [register](#)

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