

SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 30-03-2012

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KEEP UP THE PRESSURE FOR DECENT WORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

Last June, the International Labour Conference voted in favour of ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. Together with the International and European Trade Union Confederations, SOLIDAR and the international NGO network [The Global Network](#) have been actively engaged in campaigning all around the world for the ratification of this Convention, and now its subsequent ratification by governments worldwide so that domestic workers will have the same basic labour rights as those available to other workers. With many Latin American countries celebrating Domestic Workers Day today, why is this issue so important?

Domestic work - that is to say providing care and cleaning to families and households - is an important occupation and source of revenue for millions of people around the world. As domestic workers work primarily in private households, they are mostly invisible, making them a vulnerable workforce both inside and outside of Europe. Their rights are often denied and they suffer particularly from exploitation. With the demographic change and changing employment patterns in Europe, the need for individual-centered home care services are rising and, as a consequence, the request for workers in this sector is constantly growing.

We have to support the unions and social service providers engaging for decent working conditions in this sector - like the ITUC-led [12 by 12 campaign](#) - in which a vast majority of women, and in particular migrant women, are affected by atypical working contracts and conditions. We need to bring domestic workers out of the shadow, calling for decent working and living conditions for domestic workers, and the ratification of ILO Convention 189 by as many governments as possible to make sure that all workers have the same basic rights!

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

CONCERN FOR KAMAL ABBAS, DEFENDER OF EGYPTIAN FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

SOLIDAR echoes the [concern](#) of our Belgian members [Solidarité Socialiste](#) and [FOS](#) on the fate of Kamal Abbas, Director of the Egyptian Centre for Trade Union and Workers Services (CTUWS) and friend and partner of SOLIDAR. Kamal Abbas was sentenced to six months in prison in February 2012 "for interrupting and criticizing Ismail Fahmy, Acting President of the official Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), during his speech at the International Labour Conference in Geneva in June 2011". One year after the Egyptian revolution, this sentence is a serious infringement of the freedom of expression and a threat to trade union freedom and democracy. [Read more...](#)

CONCORD: MAKE EU BUDGET SUPPORT TRANSPARENT AND OPEN TO CITIZEN SCRUTINY

In the recently released position on budget support, [CONCORD highlights](#) that the European Union (EU) is the biggest provider of budget support and has a long expertise in this area, notably through Millennium Development Goals (MDG) contracts. Over the period 2003-2009,

this aid modality represented around 6% of total bilateral aid in 2010.

Nevertheless, questions about how to improve the quality and impact of budget support are raised by several actors. Amongst others, the fact that budget support arrangements remain characterised by a lack of citizen and parliamentarian oversight of agreements, implementation and monitoring, with few civil society processes established to influence decision-making and frameworks, monitor implementation or assess the impact of budget support funds.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

EU PUBLIC PROCUREMENT RULES FROM A SOCIAL SERVICES PERSPECTIVE

This week, the Social Services Europe network - of which SOLIDAR is a co-founder - issued a briefing paper analysing the Commission's proposal for EU public procurement rules and its impact on and relevance for social services. The document stresses the need for clear definitions for social services as well as to make quality a compulsory criteria when tendering social services.

Some of the issues in the briefing were also discussed during a public hearing on "[Modernising EU public procurement rules](#)", which took place on 20 March in the European Parliament's Committee on Internal Market and Consumer protection (IMCO). Members of the Network for Sustainable Public Procurement, in which SOLIDAR is also involved, suggested that there is a need for the better integration of social and environmental considerations into the public tendering process.

EDUCATION

ERASMUS FOR ALL: PROMOTING PARTICIPATION AND JUSTICE

On 27 March, the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) organised a Public Hearing on "Defining a future EU education and youth programme". Experts, representing different educational sectors, shared their views on the Commission's proposal. Participants stressed that there is a need to better focus on the lifelong learning dimension of the programme and responding to the key challenges Europe is facing nowadays, not only in terms of fighting unemployment, but dealing with social changes, fostering solidarity and peoples' participation in society.

Doris Pack MEP, Chair of the CULT Committee, stated that in her view as rapporteur for "Erasmus for all", all current programmes within the current Lifelong Learning Programme must be treated on an equal basis with the new programme for education - Erasmus for all. The Council and the European Parliament will start discussions on the proposal, and the negotiations are foreseen for 2012-13.

ENLARGEMENT

CONSULTATION: IS IPA II SOCIAL ENOUGH?

This week SOLIDAR launched a [public consultation](#) amongst trade unions, think tanks and civil society organisations in the Western Balkans to gather impressions from the regions around the European Commission's Proposal for a revised Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II), which funds all programmes related to EU enlargement policies. A [proposal](#) has been sent to the European Parliament for feedback.

SOLIDAR welcomes this communication as it opens all components to countries in the Western Balkans (regardless of status), has a stronger focus on policy areas and reduces administrative burden. Improvements can still be made with regards to increasing the capacities of social partners and civil society to develop social and civic dialogue, strengthening the capacities of community-based initiatives, and more specifically, addressing the needs of the most vulnerable people and those who are most at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

UK member **CSV** has issued [press release](#) responding to the newly issued Riots, Communities and Victims Panel Report, an independent report investigating the riots in the UK last summer.

Belgian member **FOS** have launched a [petition](#) "Give the minister a jab!" - people who suffer from easily preventable or curable diseases, suffer from injustice. We know the remedies, like a Global Health Fund or social audits and citizen participation. Remedies that the Belgian Minister for Development can bring about.

Everyone remembers the great video from **SOLIDAR Suisse** copying a Nespresso ad. This campaign was very successful getting international coverage in the press on fair trade coffee; starting intense discussions with Nestlé and its partners; and since last October, the [campaign](#) encouraging companies to provide fair trade coffee for their employees is in full swing. [Read more](#).

On the first anniversary of the Egyptian "25th of January Revolution", a joint mission of researchers of the NOVA's Institute for Active Nonviolence, Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR) and Spanish member **Solidaridad Internacional** travelled to Egypt for a Fact Finding Mission in order to assess the level of achievements of the demands of the Egyptian Civil Society from a rights-based approach. The result of this mission is the report: [Egypt under repression](#).

Read **ACPP**'s [news](#)

Read **ARCI**'s latest [news](#)

PARTNERS NEWS

Read the [letter](#) from **Hannes Swoboda, President of the S&D group in the EP** to Minister for Economic Affairs and the Interior of Denmark on the Financial Transaction Tax and fight against tax fraud and tax evasion.

EUCIS-LLL is holding its [Annual Conference](#) on «Social Innovation for Active Inclusion: Lifelong Learning Contribution for better Tomorrow» on 14 May 2012 from 9:30 to 18:00 in the Auditorium "Zeger Van Hee" in College De Valk (KU Leuven University) Leuven.

La Ligue internationale de l'enseignement de l'éducation et de la culture populaire is coordinating a "[Welcome to Palestine Campaign April 15th-21st 2012](#)"

Check the [outcomes](#) of **ILO-Brussels** consultation on "Decent Work for youth - the EU dimension", which will feed into the ILO Global Youth Employment Forum in May 2012 and the on-going EU debates.

Read **RESPECT Network**'s [press release](#) during the Anti-racism day event in Amsterdam last 24 March 2012.

European Disability Forum is looking for a [Human Rights Officer](#)

AGENDA

28 SOLIDAR International Cooperation Committee, Brussels

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

25 Round Table: The Search for Decent Work: Low Wage Sectors and Migrant Workers, EP, Brussels - [register](#)

11 SOLIDAR Board, Brussels

May
22- 24 Global Network Global Conference, Rio

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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