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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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EDITORIAL: FRANCE AND GERMANY – GOLDEN WEDDING FOR PARTNERS WITH A SHARED EUROPEAN VISION

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

Next week the French Assemblée Nationale will travel to Berlin to hold a joint session with the German Bundestag to mark the 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty. What a symbol! The Franco-German relationship is still a very special one, and now the comprehension and understanding between the two countries and their cultures needs to be continuously developed through profound intercultural learning. At the European level many feel that this relationship has lost momentum and importance. The pair inevitably need more support for their compromises in the EU of 27 than that of 12 or 15. And their interests do not always converge: economic governance (French) is not understood in the same way as economic coordination (its translation into German) and vice-versa. It also appears that today's Germany, centred on Berlin as its capital - as Willy Brandt and others called for in the moment of reunification - defines its role in Europe differently from the former Federal Republic with Bonn as its capital.

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PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CONDEMNS THE ASSASSINATION OF THREE KURDISH ACTIVISTS IN PARIS

At the opening of the Strasbourg parliamentary session on Monday 14 January, the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, made a statement on the brutal assassination of three Kurdish activists in Paris last week. The official statement was supported by all political groups. On behalf of all victims' families, the family of Mrs Fidan Dogan, one of the victims, was present during the session. The President warmly welcomed them and expressed his solidarity and sympathy. He had earlier written a personal letter on behalf of the Parliament to the three families concerned by the massacre.

The European Parliament also decided in principle to organise an official debate during the next parliamentary session on the situation in Turkey and the new peace talks.

Social Affairs

PARTNERS FOR INNOVATION IN ACTIVE AND HEALTHY AGEING WANTED

At the beginning of this year, the European Commission launched another [Invitation for Commitment to the Action Plans of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing](#). The invitation, which will be open until 15 February 2013, is available to all European stakeholders who seek to focus on the Action Plans and implement transformative solutions in the delivery of care to Europe's growing number of ageing citizens. Interested organisations can either join existing commitments, or target and fill a thematic or geographical gap.

The Action Plans intend to further strengthen and extend the critical mass working to transform the delivery of care to ageing citizens, building upon the initial progress and momentum generated by the Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing. The six Action Plans include among others the following areas: integrated care, independent living and age-friendly environments.

YOUR EUROPE 2013: BUILDING UP ACTIVE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

On 23 and 24 January, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is holding an [Open Space event](#) in Brussels to build up dialogue and participation within the context of the European Year of the Citizen 2013. The aim of the event is to discuss current and future pathways of active European citizenship and to strengthen participation and involvement of citizens in the debate about the future of Europe.

As part of the [European Year of Citizens 2013 Alliance](#), SOLIDAR works to contribute to the empowerment of European citizens as well as their active participation in the decision-making process. The current crisis is having a direct effect on citizens' lives as well as on their confidence in decision makers and the EU. This European Year will provide an excellent opportunity to discuss the civic and social dimension of Europe and to further develop active European Citizenship.

International Cooperation

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS QUESTION THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY STRATEGY ON SYRIA

At this week's European Parliament Plenary, representatives from the political groups the European People's Party (EPP), the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) urged the EU to act on Syria. They warned that the international community's strategy in Syria is not working and the situation of Syrian citizens, 2.5 million of whom are internally displaced, is worsening every day. They reiterated that no solution that allows Bashar al-Assad to remain in power is acceptable. A video of the debate is available [here](#).

According to a SOLIDAR briefing published in November 2012, there is every reason to expect that the humanitarian situation in Syria will deteriorate. Internal displacement is increasing, the host communities' ability to assist is being exhausted, the destruction of residential areas in cities and towns is massive, infrastructure is being damaged and production and transport harmed. At the same time it is expected that the influx of refugees to neighbouring countries will increase. The capability in all the surrounding host countries to care for the refugees is under severe pressure, and the crisis is also challenging political stability in the region, particularly in Lebanon. Read about the [SOLIDAR-network approach and work in Syria](#).

Education

JOB PATROL: ENSURING DECENT WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Youth unemployment in the European Union in November 2012 was 24.4%, almost 6 million young people. As a consequence young people are often forced to work in precarious conditions and sometimes unsafe environments. Against that background SOLIDAR and its members FIC (Denmark), CGIL (Italy) and partner IDEAS (Ireland) launched a project "Decent work for European youth – active methods and best practices" that aims to promote the awareness of young workers of their right to decent work, including issues such as health and safety, wages and paid leave, through what is known as the Job Patrol.

Until October 2013 the partners will help young workers to promote decent work for young people, define policy recommendations, organise a Youth Convention and launch an advocacy campaign to raise awareness of industrial relations and decent work amongst youth. Find [here](#) a first glimpse of the upcoming social media campaign.

Network News

Belgian member **Pour la Solidarité (PLS)** invites you to their [Forum on Civil Dialogue and Participation](#)

Luxemburg member **OGBL** released their [newsletter](#)

UK member **GFT** organises an [event](#)

UK member **USI** has a [video message](#)

Partners News

Rights and Poverty and the Council of Europe are organising the event in Strasbourg: [Poverty and Inequalities, Paradoxes in Societies of Human Rights and Democracy? - Proposals for an inclusive society](#)

ETUI invites you to their events [The crisis and inequality](#) and [European labour markets in \(the\) crisis](#)

Fédération Leo Langrange has [news](#)

SOLIDAR is a European network of 59 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 www.solidar.org

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