

## Veerle Solia

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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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### **SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 08-02-2013**

**Editorial: Instead of roses**

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

Today is International Women's Day: It is not just a day to offer roses and to repeat our commitment to gender equality which is often forgotten the next day. We are still far from the goal of gender equality and women are still the ones hardest hit in these times of man-made crisis.

On the political agenda we need a clear commitment to steps to reduce the gender pay gap. This issue will not be solved by the self-regulation of the markets and or by voluntary commitments by corporations and enterprises. The example of the Nordic countries shows that clear rules can improve the situation and pave the way for more equality and power sharing.

We must also take a critical look at ourselves: even in civil society organisations and NGOs where the majority of staff, and all those involved, are women, we are far from achieving equality in our representation and leadership. We need to make a firm commitment and take concrete steps, such as the gender charter we have in SOLIDAR.

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### **On the occasion of International Women's Day, SOLIDAR members and partners actively engage for the promotion of women's rights**

See here the list of articles, activities and ongoing campaigns from SOLIDAR members and partners:

Swedish member **ABF** hosts a [public women celebration](#) the afternoon of 8 March.

Spanish members **Solidaridad Internacional** and **ACPP** join the national initiative "[Porque tu voz cuenta](#)".

German member **AWO** sets standards for gender equality in a [press release](#)

Italian member **ARCI** [urges Italian society](#) to improve the social position of women and put an end to the assassination of women.

Italian member **Auser** puts [elderly women in the spotlights](#) on International Women's Day.

Italian member **CGIL** [campaigns for women rights](#) with the slogan 'Founded on respect. Violence against women is a defeat for all and organizes local events throughout the country '

Belgian member **FOS** supports women worldwide with a [public demonstration](#) and testimonials about the [impact of the crisis on women worldwide](#)

International member **IFWEA** and **Global Network Asia** urge the Cambodian government to guarantee rights for Domestic Workers: [Domestic workers rights are women rights!](#)

Italian member **ISCOS** pays tribute to women in Mali with an [interview with Oumou Sall Seck](#), the first women trade union

activist in Mali.

Spanish member **MPDL** pays **tribute** to the thousands of activists worldwide who fight for equality between men and women and organises **multiple events**

Norwegian member **NPA** is training the **first all women demining team** in Cambodia

Norwegian member **Olof Palme Center** presents their **awareness video** on the women's struggle for gender equality in South Africa.

Spanish member **Solidaridad Internacional** highlights the **women's fight in the Andes region for sexual and reproductive rights**

**Alliances for Africa** and **Global Network Africa** published a **press release** on women's rights in Africa

UK member **USI** celebrates women and the activists who fight for equal rights worldwide with an **interview** with Indian women's rights activist Ranjana Kumari

**ILO** calls to **stop violence at work** and organises a **conference** on the topic

**ITUC** pays **tribute to all women's rights' defenders**, organises a photo and video collection "**The women who inspired me**" and published a **global union statement** on zero tolerance for violence against women and girls

**ITUC Labour Rights for Women Campaign** calls for **end of gender based violence**

**ETUC** draws the attention on the **consequences from the crisis** for women and girls

**CONCORD** **highlights** that gender equality and women's empowerment are critical to success of future development framework

**EPSU** **underlines** gender inequality in Europe confirming that women are hit hardest by austerity

**International Labor Rights Forum** campaigns for **Decent Work for women in the banana industry**

**The European Women's Lobby** participates in the **UN Commission on the Status of Women** and organizes the **50/50 Campaign**

## **Social Affairs**

**Civil Society engagement as the key to strengthen active European Citizenship**

What are the components of genuine, active and participatory European citizenship? How can the effective exercise of economic, social, civic and political rights reinforce the democratic legitimacy of the EU? These key questions were discussed during Civil Society Day on 6 March, co-organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the [European Year of Citizens Alliance \(EYCA\) 2013](#), which includes SOLIDAR among more than 60 civil society organisations and networks.

The current crisis is having a direct effect on citizens' lives as well as on their confidence in the EU, while the gap between citizens and decision-makers is increasing in many EU countries. 'We need NGOs to change this reality', stated Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission in her closing speech. NGOs and civil society organisations have a key role in filling in the gap between citizens and institutions and engaging citizens to actively participate in the European project.

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## Enlargement

### SOLIDAR calls for highlighting social inclusion in EU Enlargement

On 6 March 2013, SOLIDAR, the Foundation for European Progressive Studies, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the S&D Group hosted a conference on the largely neglected social dimension of EU Enlargement. In the light of social exclusion, high-unemployment and informal labour in the Western Balkans, SOLIDAR calls on the EU to strengthen the social dimension of enlargement, based on the EU Social Acquis and the recommendations of the [Koppa Report](#) of October 2012, to which SOLIDAR and the partners of the [Decent Work Balkan Network](#) contributed. The conference featured discussions with MEPs – including the MEPs Maria Eleni Koppa and Richard Howitt as well as the President of the S&D Group, Hannes Swoboda - and experts from the Western Balkans on the public perception of enlargement, the impact of the crisis and lessons learned. The [conference](#) was also attended by the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Stefan Füle.

## International Cooperation

### STOP violence against women at work

With this year's theme for International Women's Day, celebrated worldwide on 8 March, "A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women", the UN seeks to strengthen the international community's commitment to put an end to violence against women. In his statement, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon regretted that "we must look back on a year of shocking crimes of violence against women and girls and ask ourselves how to usher in a better future". To commemorate International Women's Day the International Labour Organisation (ILO) published a [briefing note](#) aimed at drawing particular attention to violence against women workers. Violence in the workplace is, evidently, at odds with the SOLIDAR supported ILO mandate to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

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## Education

### European experiences in promoting education and training at the workplace

On Tuesday SOLIDAR in cooperation with the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training organised a Round Table on “Promoting work-based learning: Dual VET system – European experiences” hosted by MEP Mary Honeyball (S&D, UK).

The debate between practitioners, representatives of the sectors and EU Institutions aimed at answering a series of questions on how to promote active labour market policies, what kind of educational opportunities can be offered to young people, and how investment in education and training should be geared at a time of austerity.

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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](http://www.solidar.org)

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