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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up - World Social Forum 2013 in Tunis

Editorial: SOLIDAR and GPF invite you to our events at the World Social Forum 2013 in

Tunis

Dear Friend,

It is with great pleasure that the Global Progressive Forum (GPF) and SOLIDAR present our joint programme of activities to be held during the World Social Forum in Tunis on 26-30 March 2013 organised with the support of the Party of European Socialists, the S&D Group in the European Parliament, Global Network and SOLIDAR members and their partners.

Since it first met in 2001 the World Social Forum has been driven by the conviction that "Another World is Possible". The worldwide austerity measures imposed in response to the deep-seated global crisis, however, have meant that the new world order is not founded on the principles of equality, social justice and universal human rights. If we are to get back onto the path to fair globalisation, we need to join forces and build alliances with civil society, progressive politicians and the labour movement.

Mindful of the political challenges we face two years after the Arab Revolutions, we will be organising workshops and debates to discuss amongst progressive forces, representatives of trade unions and civil society organisations the following key issues:

- Social Justice
- Democratic Transition and Human Rights
- Women's Rights
- Tax Justice
- Youth Unemployment
- International Trade

In addition to the workshops, we will be holding a reception on **28 March for Social Justice in the Middle East and North Africa**. The Arab Spring(s), and other social movements such as the indignados in Spain or Occupy Wall Street, brought millions of people out onto the streets to address the issue of growing inequalities worldwide and to demand immediate political action for social justice. Yet despite this clear, strong message, the global trend is still towards further inequality. The Middle East and North Africa, for instance, face the highest youth unemployment rate in the world. Without social and economic development, accompanied by an equal distribution of knowledge, income and power, this is set to pose a serious threat to the region's fragile democratic transition.

We hope to be able to welcome you at one of our workshops or during the reception!

In solidarity,

Conny Reuter, Secretary General SOLIDAR



27 March, Workshop – A Progressive Approach to Women’s Rights

Throughout the world women and girls are the victims of the most widespread violations of human rights. In some countries, up to 7 out of 10 women experience physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. Women and girls in communities and countries across the world continue to live in a state of systematic insecurity that transcends geography, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status and religion. This violence and insecurity is exacerbated by the cumulative and intersecting discrimination and exclusion experienced by various groups of women and girls.

During the workshop, moderated by Belgian senator **Marie Arena**, the discussion with **Zita Gurmai**, MEP and President of PES Women, **Oriella Savoldi** from the International Cooperation Network from SOLIDAR member CGIL, **Layal Dorra**, from the Palestinian organisation DWRC, Coordinator of the **Global Network Arab Countries**, **Hafidha Chekir**, Professor and member of the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women, **Lobna Jeribi**, member of the Tunisian Constitutional Assembly and Member of the Political Bureau, **Farroudja Moussaoui** from the Algerian cultural association Amusnaw, partner of SOLIDAR member Solidaridad Internacional and **Fatihia Saddas**, member of the political bureau, will focus on the root causes of gender discrimination, the differences between the western world and other regions, why current strategies are failing to achieve equality and on good practices and policies to improve the lives of girls and women worldwide and end discrimination.

Click [here](#) for background information and the workshop briefing.

27 March, Workshop – Democratic Transition: Human rights, Citizenship and Inclusive Governance

After the Arab Spring, countries in the Middle East and North Africa embarked on a promising path towards becoming societies in which human rights, active citizenship and inclusive governance are respected. Two years later, however, those civil society organisations, social movements, independent trade unions and progressive political forces that were at the heart of the Arab Spring have come under growing pressure. Civil society organisations have been subjected to an intense regimen of bureaucratic scrutiny and harassment, cases of interference in the internal affairs of independent trade unions and workers' movements have been recorded, while so-called 'obedience laws' are enforced discriminating against women's freedom and autonomy. The freedom of peaceful assembly and association are at risk.

The workshop, moderated by Czech MEP **Libor Roucek**, will bring together **Abdellah Ahjam**, Board member of the Réseau Marocain de Jeunesse et de Concertation from Morocco, Partner of SOLIDAR member Solidarité Laïque, **Mona Ezzat** from the Egyptian New Women Foundation, **Kamal Lahbib**, President of the Forum des Alternatives du Maroc, partner of SOLIDAR member ARCI, Italian MEP **Pier Antonio Panzeri**, **Bahia Amra** from the National Palestinian Initiative and **Khelil Ezzaouia**, Tunisian Minister for Social Affairs. Before the public debate, the plenary discussion will tackle issues like the encroachment on the freedom of peaceful assembly and association in several countries, the main challenges to ensuring respect for human rights, recommendations to promote inclusive governance and the role of social movements,

civil society, trade unions and progressive political forces in promoting active citizenship.

Click [here](#) for background information and the workshop briefing.

International Cooperation

28 March, Workshop – Progressive Forces Mobilising for Social Justice

Social Justice is based on equality of rights for all peoples and the possibility for all human beings without discrimination to benefit from economic and social progress everywhere. At the heart of promoting social justice is the reduction of inequality through the struggle for a more just distribution of income, wealth and power. Against this backdrop, only 20% of the world's population has access to adequate social security and 630 million working poor live on less than \$1.25 a day.

Despite the fact that the international community has been dedicated in recent years to the reduction of poverty – and notable progress had been made before the crisis – it has become apparent that poverty in absolute terms can be reduced while inequality levels continue to rise. In addition, inequality is much more than just income inequality. It includes questions of access to anything from the national labour market to health and education services and political processes that contribute to determining peoples' wealth and wellbeing.

The debate on social justice, moderated by **Conny Reuter**, Secretary General of SOLIDAR, will bring around the table **Nabeel Shaath**, leader of Fatah Palestine, **Nadeem Mansour**, Executive Director of the Egyptian Association for Economic and Social Rights, Partner of SOLIDAR member Norwegian People's Aid, French MP **Pouriah Amirshahi**, **Elisio Rodrigues**, president of CITI-HABITAT (Cape Verde), Partner of SOLIDAR member Solidarité Socialiste, Spanish MEP **Vicente Garces Ramon** and **Nevine Guirgis**, member of the Women's Secretariat of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party.

Click [here](#) for background information and the workshop briefing.

28 March, Workshop – We Want Tax Justice, Now!

The irresponsibility of speculators, the unlimited ambition and the lack of scruples and solidarity have triggered a world crisis that has resulted in poverty, rising inequalities and a huge debt crisis. It's now time to make them pay for the crisis they caused; it's now time for fair burden sharing and tax justice. This means on the one hand, taxing the financial sector to enhance fairness and on the other hand, fighting against tax fraud and tax avoidance. A financial transaction tax could generate more than 500 billion Euros per year - funds badly needed to fight climate change, pay for global public goods, fight against poverty and create jobs, as well as to rebalance the economy from gambling and speculation to manufacturing and services.

During the workshop, moderated by **Javier Moreno Sanchez**, General Secretary of the GPF, speakers **Anne Demelenne**, Secretary General of FGTB Belgium, **Martha Kuhl**, Secretary-Treasurer of National Nurses United USA, **Benedikte Pryneid Hansen**, President of Attac Norway, **Hernan Cortes**, Policy & Executive Officer of UBUNTU Forum, **Rosa Pavanelli**, Secretary General of Public Services International (PSI) and French MP **Philip Cordery** will discuss the possibility of achieving a global agreement to tax the financial sector, how to address tax evasion and which actors can play

a role in redesigning the financial markets and regulations.

Click [here](#) for background information and the workshop briefing.

28 March, Workshop – Youth Unemployment: A Global Challenge

The current global youth employment crisis is unprecedented. Young people are on average three times more likely than adults to be out of a job, and there are more young people poor or underemployed than ever before. Millions of young people are trapped in temporary and involuntary part-time or casual work that offers few benefits and limited prospects for advancement at work and in life. The Middle East and North Africa suffer from the highest youth unemployment rates in the world with 28.4% in the Middle East and 26.7% in North Africa, while the unemployment of young women is even higher, at 40% across the Arab world. Preventing a further rise in inequality and avoiding social exclusion must be the top priorities for socio-economic development for the region, combined with a progressive new economic policy that generates decent work opportunities.

The key issues in the debate will be discussed by **Jan Royall**, Vice President of the Party of European Socialists (UK), **Youssef Tlili**, General Union of Tunisian Students (Tunisia), Partner of SOLIDAR member CGIL International Cooperation Network (Italy), **Hasan Barghouti**, Director of DWRC Palestine, **Global Network Arab Countries** Coordinator, **Hamadi Jeljeli**, President of Crédation et Créativité pour le Développement et l'Embauche (Tunisia), Partner of SOLIDAR member Solidarité Laïque, **Arezki Derguini**, Member of Parliament FFS and **Rana Khallaf** from Youth People of the MENA region, Partner of SOLIDAR member Norwegian People's Aid. The focus of the workshop will be on the key factors that have led to high youth unemployment rates, the policy measures governments should implement to tackle this issue and how to build an effective social protection system and ensure access to quality education for everyone.

Click [here](#) for background information and the workshop briefing.

29 March, Workshop – Another Trade Is Possible

We live in a world of growing interdependence and internationalisation. International trade is therefore a potential source of economic growth and poverty reduction. However, too often trade liberalisation results in job losses, an increase in gender disparity and an increase in poverty. Trade policy must contribute to sustainable development for all and fulfil people's social, economic and cultural rights. Trade policy must respect the fundamental values of labour standards and social justice, and in order to do so a new balance must be found through trade relations based on equity, full reciprocity and mutual benefit. These are the principles that must guide the EU's bilateral negotiations to establish a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, and with other countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

Participants in the debate will include, notably, **Libor Roucek**, Czech MEP and Vice President of the S&D Group in the EP, **Heba Khalil**, Chief of Research Unit Egyptian Centre for Economic & Social Rights, partner of SOLIDAR member Norwegian People's Aid, **Bernard Soulage**, member of the Committee of the Regions, **Leopoldo Tartaglia**, Department Coordinator of CGIL International Cooperation Network, **Ziad Abdel Samad**, Executive Director of Arab NGO Network for Development and Spanish MEP **Vicente Garcias Ramon**. They will discuss the main challenges in the design of a new approach towards trade, focusing on how international trade can be turned into a win-win situation for both developed and developing countries and support sustainability, on which policies and reforms are needed to ensure that trade liberalisation

also improves developing countries' prospects for inclusive growth and on how social, human and workers' rights can be respected and implemented in international free trade agreements.

Click [here](#) for background information and the workshop briefing.

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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