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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 29-03-2013

Editorial: Another world must be possible!

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

Two years after the Tunisian revolution activists of all corners of the world gathered in Tunis in the World Social Forum 2013, and SOLIDAR is present at this global progressive event. The forum highlights not only the worries and the critics about the effects of the crisis, but also puts forward messages of hope and confidence for the future.

Mustafa Ben Jaffar, the President of the Constitutional Assembly of Tunisia said in a side event during the World Social Forum that Tunisia might give the example to the other countries in the region, but so far nothing is achieved yet in the transition process.


Instead of giving help and support to young people in particular, the borders of Europe remain closed. There is whole generation of young people who share our values and who aspire to a decent life based on the European social model. At the same time the trade agreements the EU negotiates will not promote socio-economic development; all our partners in the region agree on the risk that when these hopes are disappointed this paves the way to populism which will benefit Salafists and other extremists.

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SOLIDAR at the World Social Forum: official launch of the cooperation network for Social Justice in the Middle East and North Africa

SOLIDAR participated this week, together with members and partners of the [Global Network](#), in the [World Social Forum](#) in Tunis 26-30 March 2013. This is an important milestone, as SOLIDAR launched yesterday evening 28 March at a reception in Tunis, organised together with the [Global Progressive Forum](#), a new cooperation network on Social Justice in the Middle East and North Africa, bringing together over 100 civil society organisations, social movements, independent trade unions and progressive political forces from the region.

At the heart of this informal network stands the reduction of inequalities, by supporting the struggles for a more just distribution of income, wealth and power. SOLIDAR will work together with members and partners to:

 Build progressive alliances of civil society organisations, social movements, independent trade unions and progressive political forces that have the potential to promote social justice.

☐ Promote the creation of secure and democratic spaces in society and at the workplace – based on the respect for freedom of peaceful assembly and association – for these progressive alliances to operate in

☐ Strengthen that welfare redistribution and the reduction of inequalities will become as central goals of policy making in the region, though promoting social protection

☐ Realise the creation of decent work opportunities to obtain a just income and work actively to reduce the gender pay-gap, as well as stimulate local and rural development

☐ Facilitate freedom of movement between both borders of the Mediterranean

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.

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Finance Watch and member SOLIDAR state that Cyprus bank deal should serve as a model for future bank crises

As a member of the public interest association Finance Watch, SOLIDAR welcomes and support the positive analysis of the Cyprus bank deal as a model for future bank crises. On Wednesday, [Finance Watch](#) published a press release on the matter:

“We agree with Mr Dijsselbloems comment that “where you take on the risks, you must deal with them”. We hope that the decisions taken in the Cyprus bank deal will be reflected in the EU's coming Bank Recovery and Resolution (BRR) legislation and become the rule for managing bank crises in Europe,” said Finance Watch Secretary General Thierry Philipponnat.

Finance Watch warmly welcomes the decisions to honour deposit guarantees for all deposits up to EUR 100,000 and to bail in both junior and senior bondholders of Laiki Bank, which is a first in the management of a bank crisis in a Eurozone country.

Read the [full press release](#).

Social Affairs

Social innovation as one of the means to deliver on the Europe 2020 Strategy

The European Commission has recently issued the [State of the Innovation Union Report 2012](#), providing an update on progress made at Member State and European levels towards achieving an Innovation Union in 2012. The Innovation Union is one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy focusing on investments in education, research and innovation as the key to achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The report shows that progress has been made although the gap between Member States' performances is widening.

At many occasions, SOLIDAR stressed that social innovation should be considered as one of the means to achieve the social objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy but it should not replace investment in social inclusion. This implies that social innovation should lead to increase the quality of life of service users/beneficiaries as well as empowerment of individuals, participation in society and social cohesion. Concrete recommendation on how to promote social innovation to better deliver on the Europe 2020 Strategy can be found in the [SOLIDAR briefing](#) as well as in the [Social Services Europe briefing](#) on innovation in social services.

SOLIDAR is also part of [INNOSERV](#), an FP7 project aiming at suggesting an agenda for future research activities on innovation in social services. As emerged from the first results of the project, the improvement of services' quality, accessibility and availability as well as the of users' inclusion, empowerment and quality of life have to be considered as

important criteria to take into account when evaluating and promoting innovative policies and practices.

International Cooperation

In 2013 the struggle for domestic workers rights continues!

After a year of intense mobilisation in the framework of the ITUC led “[12 by 12 Campaign](#)” aiming at the ratification of [ILO Convention 189](#) for Domestic Workers Rights, the struggle for better working and living conditions for over 100 million domestic workers worldwide continues. During a Round Table in the European Parliament in October last year hosted by SOLIDAR, partner in the 12 by 12 Campaign, participants from NGOs and trade unions urged [European policy makers](#) to support the national ratification processes in all EU countries and assure their commitment to integrate the ratification of C189 in all bilateral negotiations with non EU countries.

An important issue highlighted at the Round Table was the impossibility for EU countries to autonomously ratify ILO Conventions without prior authorisation by the Council in respect of those parts of the Convention which fall under EU competence. Therefor SOLIDAR welcomes last week's [EC proposal for a Council Decision](#) authorising EU countries to ratify the ILO Convention concerning decent work for domestic workers. "Improving working conditions in personal services is an important objective for the Commission" said László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. "I urge Member States to ratify this Convention as soon as possible, which will also contribute to implementing the EU strategy against trafficking in human beings", he added.

Today the struggle is far from over since the daily life of most domestic workers is still characterised by precarious and vulnerable conditions, lacking access to trade unions or social protection. So far only eight countries have ratified the Convention, Italy being the only EU Member State. As a national follow up to the 12 by 12 Campaign, Belgian SOLIDAR member FOS launched earlier this month a two year campaign “[Don't sweep Domestic Workers' problems under the carpet](#)”. The campaign aims to improve the situation of domestic workers in Belgium and has a global outreach through partnerships with Domestic Workers Associations in the Andes region.

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Network News

Norwegian member **NPA** has [vacancies](#) for a country director (M/F) Iraq/Syria and a country director (M/F) Palestine.

[Interview](#) with Raffaella Bolini from Italian member **ARCI** at the WSF2013.

Italian member **ARCI** published their [weekly report](#).

[Le Croco](#) from Belgian member **Solidarité Socialiste** with a focus on Palestine

Partners News

Read the **EUCIS-LLL news** for March

Read this week's **EU monitoring** by **CONCORD**

EPSU published a **press communication** for World Water Day

FEPS has **Fresh News**.

Eurofound has **news** and a new **publication** on employment polarisation and job quality.

UNRWA **deplores** killing of a staff member in Syria

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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