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## **SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 03-05-2013**

### **Editorial: EU-US Liberalisation or Higher Social Standards?**

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

The EU and the US have started talks on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Many promoters of the new agreement see a window of opportunity for re-launching the economy and growth. As usual such an agreement will not only have an impact on trade as such, but will have many implications on labour and social standards on both sides of the Atlantic.

Since SOLIDAR - together with the ITUC and ETUC - launched the campaign on decent work for a decent life, we have lobbied with the unions for Core Labour Standards in Trade Agreements. What better opportunity than to use the FTA with the US for raising labour and social standards and to commit to a welfare state model?

[Read more...](#)

PS: May Day 2013 - see a [selection of happenings](#) around the world from the SOLIDAR network and our partners in the Global Network.

### **Conny Reuter: New Co-Chair of EESC Liaison Group**

Last Friday, Conny Reuter, SOLIDAR Secretary General, was appointed by EU NGO networks as their Co-Chair to the European Economic and Social Committee's (EESC) [Liaison Group](#). The EESC Liaison Group was set up to interact with European civil society organisations and act as both a liaison body and a structure for political dialogue.

"I am delighted to have been nominated into this vital role. As citizens' trust in the EU hits an all-time low, it is crucial to have structured civil dialogue to maintain citizens' involvement in EU affairs" said Conny. He continued: "I am looking forward to fruitful cooperation with Henri Malosse, newly elected EESC President and Co-Chair of the Liaison Group, to

develop the dialogue between European civil society organisations and, through the EESC, the EU institutions as an essential part of strengthening participatory democracy in the EU."

## **Social Affairs**

### **Input to Consultation on EU Neighbourhood Policy in the Balkans**

As in previous years, SOLIDAR - together with other EU networks - is invited to provide input in the EU Enlargement Country Progress Reports by filling in the yearly country tables provided by the European Commission which include benchmarks and an overview of achievements until 2012. We now have the opportunity to include our perspective on the developments in 2013.

[Read more...](#)

### **AUSER Abitare Solidale: intergenerational solidarity to reduce inequalities and promote active inclusion**

Abitare Solidale is an innovative project carried out in Italy by SOLIDAR member AUSER together with the municipality of Florence and other associations. The project supports inter and intra-generational cohabitation as a sustainable housing solution to respond to the needs of self-sufficient older people as well as persons experiencing economic difficulties and women victims of domestic abuse.

Abitare Solidale has been selected as an example of innovative social service by the INNOSERV project and made into a [short film](#). Share your opinion about it filling in the [questionnaire online](#).

## **International Cooperation**

### **World Social Forum 2013 in Tunis – SOLIDAR Report**

This year's World Social Forum took place in Tunisia, providing a unique occasion to underline SOLIDAR's call for [Social Justice in the Middle East and North Africa](#). In good cooperation with SOLIDAR members and their partner organisations in the MENA region, as well as with the Global Progressive Forum, SOLIDAR organised six workshops and a reception (read summary in the [event report](#)), establishing dialogue between civil society, trade unions, social movements and progressive political forces on key issues.

[Read more...](#)

### **Register now: Social Protection Floor and Role of CSOs**

On 16 May, SOLIDAR and the European Working Group on Decent Work and Social Protection in Development Cooperation, will organise a lunchtime seminar on "Social Protection for All: the Social Protection Floor and the role of CSOs" ([register now](#)). In June 2012, the ILO Recommendation No. 202 on national floors of social protection was unanimously adopted by the global community. Through it, governments have committed to ensure universal access to

essential services and protection against the risks of sickness, unemployment, poverty for example.

Confirmed speakers including Christine Bockstal, International Labour Office, and Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and initiator of the Global Fund for Social Protection Initiative, will be discussing questions such as: How can social protection floors support the fight against inequality and transform societies? What is the contribution they can make to the realization of human rights (e. g. the right to food)? How its implementation could be funded?

### **Justice for victims of Bangladesh building collapse**

Over 500 people have been killed in the collapse of a building in Bangladesh which housed garment factories making clothes for Primark, Matalan, Mango and other major brands. A thousand more have been injured. Global clothing brands make huge profits off the backs of the workers in factories like these and refuse to join a union-supported workplace safety plan, complaining that it would cost too much and be legally binding (see [ITUC statement](#)).

[Read more...](#)

## **Network News**

### **Switzerland**

**Solidar Suisse** is asking for [your help](#) for Syrian refugees.

### **France**

La **Ligue de l'Enseignement** is participating in the [Europemobility platform](#) to encourage cross sector cooperation and synergy on work placements abroad between Higher Education, Vocational Education and Training and Non Formal and Informal Education.

### **Belgium**

Read [Solidarité Socialiste's news](#)

## **Partners News**

The **Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum** (CSF) together with the **Committee of the Regions** will organise a [conference](#) on Fiscal Decentralisation in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) area on 14 May 2013, from 9.00 to 13.00. ALDA has participated actively in the CSF since it started operating in 2009 and is the coordinator of the Subgroup on Public Administration Reform since 2011. Throughout this event, experiences of fiscal decentralization from both EU and partner countries will be presented (Panel 1), as well as the current situation of EaP countries with a focus on good practices and challenges (Panel 2). These discussions will give grounds to the panellists and participants to identify specific indicators and goals for fiscal decentralization in EaP countries. If you would like to join, please contact [aldabrussels@aldaintranet.org](mailto:aldabrussels@aldaintranet.org)

before 7 May for further details.

Read **European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL) news**

The **European Trade Union Confederation** is **asking** that on this 1 May, we keep up the momentum to bring a strong social dimension to the EU

Did you know that 2013 is the European Year of Citizens? The **European Economic and Social Committee** will be welcoming visitors to its premises on **Open Doors Day**, Saturday 4 May.

**Cooperatives Europe & Fair Trade Advocacy Office** **invite** you to: People-centred businesses, making supply chains work for small producers, 5 June.

## **Agenda**

15 May: SOLIDAR Board meeting, Brussels

15-16 May: SOLIDAR International Cooperation Forum, Brussels

16 May: **Round Table - Decent Work and Social Protection in Development Cooperation – the role of CSOs**, Brussels

25 June: SOLIDAR Annual General Assembly, Brussels

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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