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Editorial by Conny Reuter, SOLIDAR Secretary General

Fundamentals and Future – L'Avenir Est Un Long Passé!

In 1948 when our founders decided to set up International Workers' Aid, predecessor of SOLIDAR, Europe was in a post-war period and only those who really trusted in the future could imagine a peaceful and wealthier Europe after the tragedies of the war. Our creation was the political will of one political family: social democracy and the Socialist International.

Yesterday (23 May), German Social Democracy celebrated its 150th birthday. Leaders like French President François Hollande and German Social Democratic Party (SPD) leader Sigmar Gabriel underlined the importance of historical continuity and the capacity to adapt to the realities of every decade, the capacity to stick to the principle values of freedom, democracy, solidarity and equality. This political family has always stood for the compromises between economic progress and social justice. German President Joachim Gauck highlighted the contribution of social democracy to emancipation and democracy, even during the worst times in the past. Read more...

Social Affairs

Promoting the Social Dimension of EU Enlargement

On 22-23 May, the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and SOLIDAR organised, in cooperation with IDC, a field visit in Serbia on active inclusion, decent work and quality employment to ongoing projects: Building Partnership to Reduce Informal Economy, TDI – They Deserve It project on the integration of internally displaced people (IDPs), EKO – BAG social enterprise and the Decent Work programme of SOLIDAR Suisse. In addition, at a technical meeting, partners discussed the building up a research programme on the social dimension of EU enlargement, involving academics and think tanks from the Western Balkans.

Strengthening Active Inclusion in the Western Balkans

In 2012, the European Parliament stated that *"the social dimension has been largely neglected in the enlargement process".* To overcome this neglect, SOLIDAR submitted an Active Inclusion Monitoring Report to the European Commission last Friday that was the result of a consultation launched amongst civil society organisations, think tanks and academics on the EU Enlargement Country Progress Reports 2013.

This Report identifies clear needs that require emphasis within the enlargement process to promote the social dimension, and in particular highlight the need to create institutional frameworks to guarantee universal access to quality services and foster social services reforms. Read more...

Pushing Research Further: Workshop on Innovation in Social Services

Last Friday (17 May), the INNOSERV team held an international workshop in Brussels to present the first results of the Innovative Social Services Platform (INNOSERV) project and to discuss future challenges, trends and research gaps related to innovation in the social service sector. The workshop was kicked-off by SOLIDAR Secretary General who stated that, especially in times of crisis, innovation in social services should not be considered as a goal in itself but as a means to better meet peoples' needs and to reinforce the social dimension of Europe. Read more…

International Cooperation

A Step Forward to Combat Tax Fraud?

With EU Member States having to deal with the effects of austerity, the necessity to take action to tackle tax evasion at European level has, once again, been at the centre of the summit which took place in Brussels this week (22 May). "Tax fraud and tax evasion limit countries' capacity to raise revenue and carry out their economic policies. In times of tight budgetary constraints, combating tax fraud and tax evasion is more than an issue of tax fairness - it becomes essential for the political and social acceptability of fiscal consolidation", state the Summit conclusions.

For this reason, EU Member States have committed to deepen cooperation and strengthen common tools to share data on non-resident depositors. According to the European Commission, tax evasion and fraud cost member states about €1 trillion a year. For SOLIDAR, social justice within and outside the EU needs tax justice.

Education

Publication: Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Competences of Workers' Representatives

With the aim to support social partners in the development of a taxonomy of personal skills and competences, and innovative assessment tools that could enable workers to bridge the skills mismatch and offer them individual leaning pathways, SOLIDAR together with partners DGB-Bildungswerk, AIAS, ABF and FIC ran a project that addressed the question of skills assessment, the initial part of the validation process. During this project a publication was developed on the "Recognition of non-formal and informal competences of workers' representatives". Read more...

Members News

Germany
See **AWO**'s Social Barometer poll for May 2013 on the future prospects of children and adolescents.

Spain
Alianza por la Solidaridad is holding an event on ethical volunteering on 31 May in Madrid.

Italy
Read **Auser**'s news.

UK
Impact of **WEA** Adult Education report out.

Partners News

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

The **Social Platform**'s Annual Report is now available.

Agenda

27 June: SOLIDAR Annual General Assembly

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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