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**Verzonden:** vrijdag 31 mei 2013 13:19  
**Aan:** Veerle Solia  
**Onderwerp:** SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 31-05-2013



Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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## **SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 31-05-2013**

**Editorial by Conny Reuter, Secretary General**

## EU: A Credible Global Player For and Reliable Supporter of Fundamental Rights?

This Monday (27 May) in Egypt, a controversial bill was submitted to the Islamist-dominated legislature, backed by the ruling Muslim Brotherhood, which would allow the government to intervene in the internal governance and activities of civil society organisations and to control all funding. If enacted, human rights defenders say that all of the 41,000 NGOs in Egypt would basically just be working for the government. Unfortunately, this is not a new state of affairs, but the new law would surpass previous broad and repressive legislation to clamp down on civil society organisations being able to do their work.

Human rights organisations, women's advocates, independent trade unions, organisations that seek legal reforms and groups championing minority rights have all come under growing pressure from regimes, like those in Egypt, that are determined to marginalise or eliminate all perceived sources of opposition and dissent. Civil society has legitimacy in the form of non-governmental organisations, but in more and more countries around the world, their essential freedom of peaceful assembly and association (FoA) is being denied. [Read more...](#)

## International Cooperation

### Policy Campaign: Mobilising for Freedom of Association

Yesterday (30 May), the [UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association](#), Maina Kiai, presented the [second thematic report](#) to the Human Rights Council. In his report, he reminded governments that in recent years, these fundamental freedoms have come under growing pressure from regimes that are determined to marginalise or eliminate all perceived sources of opposition and dissent. The result has been a notable reversal for freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in much of the world.

On this occasion, SOLIDAR launched its new briefing paper "[Guaranteeing the cornerstones of democratic systems](#)" that highlights encroachments against freedom of peaceful assembly and association (FoA) around the world. With this briefing paper, SOLIDAR is preparing a [global policy campaign](#) to expose encroachments against FoA and to advocate for policy change by documenting violations in Guatemala, China, Lebanon, Colombia, Egypt, Algeria, Pakistan, Georgia, Zimbabwe, Jordan and others worldwide.

### Syria Crisis: Humanitarian Assistance Needed

Following the EU's failure to renew the EU arms embargo towards Syria on Tuesday, it can be expected in the months to come that the situation will only deteriorate at the expense of citizens' lives. According to the United Nations, over 1 million refugees have already fled to neighbouring countries and at least another 3 million displaced within Syria. In March, a total of 5 million people – 1 in 4 Syrians – were estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance both outside and inside the country. [Read more...](#)

### MEPs Ask to Protect Development and Humanitarian Aid in EU Budget

This week, in response to the proposed cuts to development and humanitarian aid, 82 MEPs from different political groups have called for strong and effective development and humanitarian aid funding in the Multi Annual Financial Framework. In their [Declaration](#), they stress that the Commission proposal for the 11th European Development Fund and Heading 4

‘Global Europe’ should *be the bare minimum of what is required*. [Read more...](#)

## Social Affairs

### Social Services Europe Responds to Social Investment Package

Social Services Europe, of which SOLIDAR is a co-founder, has issued its [response to the Commission's Social Investment Package](#) (SIP) launched in February 2013. This paper presents Social Services Europe's recommendations on the implementation of the SIP and outlines reasons and opportunities for a partnership approach.

Social Services Europe welcomes the launch of the SIP as it reflects an important paradigm shift in relation to European Social Policy. However, as legal competence for social policy largely rests at the level of Member States, the effective implementation of the SIP will to a great extent depend on the cooperation of national and local governments, the appropriate use of the EU Structural and Innovation Funds, the governance process of the European Semester and a partnership approach with social service providers at EU, national and local level.

## Members News

### Spain & Norway

Network members ACPP, Movimiento por la Paz - MPDL, Solidaridad Internacional and Norwegian People's Aid, as part of the **Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) for Palestine**, have issued a [report](#) this week highlighting how the European Union fails to fulfill its promises in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and how words are not translated into concrete actions to prevent violations such as expanding colonies or the demolitions carried out by Israel.

Find out about the **Movimiento por la Paz - MPDL** [action](#) “Arroz a la Africana” starting on 29 May.

### Belgium

Read **Solidarité Socialiste**'s latest [news](#).

### UK

**War on Want** [urges](#) you to stop UK aid giveaway to multinationals.

### European

SOLIDAR became a member of **European Movement International** (EMI)'s at their [General Assembly](#) in Dublin last week. EMI is one of the largest pan and pro-European civil society organisations, bringing together representatives from European associations, political parties, enterprises and trade unions.

## Partners News

Through our engagement in various platforms, SOLIDAR is involved in the first [Citizens' Summit](#), hosted by the [Civil Society Contact Group](#) in Brussels on 24-25 June 2013. The Summit aims to bring together for the first time professionals, practitioners and activists from across the sectors culture, development, education, environment, health, human rights,

social affairs and women's rights to discuss the future of Europe.

Read the **Global Network's** [newsletter](#).

[Register](#) for the 22nd Annual **Volonteuropa Conference**, taking place in Bucharest, 16-18 October 2013 under the theme of 'Active Citizens of Europe'.

The **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees** (UNRWA) [condemns](#) the attack on the Sbeineh Palestine refugee camp in Syria.

The **National Guestworker Alliance** (NGA) is coordinating a global day of action against exploitation and retaliation at McDonald's on 6 June 2013. To endorse a global letter to be presented to McDonald's worldwide or to sign up to host an action, contact [Jacob Horwitz](#).

Read the **European Network Against Racism** (ENAR) [press statement](#) on the Riots in Sweden: Time for government to finally address ethnic minorities' exclusion.

The **PES Group in the Committee of the Regions** has issued a [publication](#) "Youth Employment: Making it Happen!".

The **EU Ombudsman** has [dealt with](#) more than 30,000 complaints in the past ten years.

## **Agenda**

27 June: SOLIDAR Annual General Assembly - [register](#)

*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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