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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 27-09-2013

Editorial by Conny Reuter, SOLIDAR Secretary General

Middle East and North Africa: On the Way to Social Justice?

When the uprisings in the Middle East and North African (MENA) countries started three years ago, expectations and hopes were raised which were quickly confronted with the realities and difficulties inherent in transitions. Besides the political instabilities in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, there is a strong need to find answers and develop solutions to tackle the growing inequalities, ensure human rights and fight poverty. That is why SOLIDAR has been working to build an alliance of progressive civil society, trade unions and progressive political forces from the very beginning, an alliance which met this week in a series of meetings in Brussels. [Read more...](#)

Thematic newsletter: Social Justice in Middle East and North Africa

From Tuesday to Thursday (24-26 Sept), SOLIDAR members and partners from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) met in Brussels to discuss an alternative socio-economic development paradigm for the region. Organised in cooperation with the [Global Progressive Forum](#) and the [Global Network](#), this [three day seminar](#) brought together civil society organisations, think tanks, independent trade unions and progressive political forces from the region to debate strategies aimed at reducing poverty and tackling growing (social) inequalities in the region.

A New Roadmap to Promote Freedom of Association, Decent Work and Social Protection

Last June, SOLIDAR published the first European Neighbourhood Policy Progress Report on [Freedom of Association in the Middle East in North Africa](#). This report highlights the worrying developments in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia of encroachments to the freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and information, and democratic transition and civil dialogue.

On Tuesday, members of the [Social Justice in the Middle East and North Africa \(MENA\) Network](#), coordinated by SOLIDAR in cooperation with its members, developed a roadmap that will strengthen our common efforts to jointly [advocate for freedom of peaceful assembly and association, promote social justice and advocate for more investment in social protection and decent work](#) in the region. [Read more...](#)

New report: Investing in Decent Work and Social Protection in MENA

On Wednesday, at a seminar organised by SOLIDAR in cooperation with the [Global Progressive Forum](#) and the [Global Network](#), bringing together civil society organisations, think tanks, independent trade unions and progressive political forces from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) with Members of the European Parliament Josef Weidenholzer (SOLIDAR President), Véronique De Keyser, Marc Tarabella, Bernd Lange and the European Union Special Representative for the Southern Mediterranean Bernardino Leon, SOLIDAR launched a [new report on decent work and social protection in the MENA region](#).

The report highlights the problems that the MENA region is facing today: mass unemployment throughout the whole region, especially among young people and women; structural problems of unskilled young people, as well as underemployment; rising poverty; rising informal employment; increasing child labour; lack of fundamental freedoms; and the heritage of (neoliberal) perspectives from former authoritarian regimes.

[Read more...](#)

Promoting Fundamental Freedoms with European Endowment for Democracy

Freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and information, and civil dialogue are cornerstones to promoting democratic transition in the Middle East and North Africa. The [European Endowment for Democracy](#) (EED) is a new foundation that has been created by Member States and European Union institutions to promote the European values of freedom and democracy. [Read more...](#)

Women's Rights in Middle East and North Africa

Today, the [Foundation for European Progressive Studies](#) and SOLIDAR have launched, at a round table attended by women representatives from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), a new research programme on gender equality in the region. This initiative, under the patronage of Member of European Parliament and FEPS Vice-President, Zita Gurmai, seeks to promote the empowerment of women in the region and to shape socio-economic development based on the principles of equality and social justice. [Read more...](#)

Members News

Germany

Read [Samaritan International's news](#).

Spain

Read [Alianza's news](#).

Partners News

Read [EUCIS-LLL's news](#).

Save the date: on 2 October, **Zita Gurmai** will be hosting under the umbrella of the S&D, a documentary '[Threshold of the Desert](#)' followed by a debate on women's economic empowerment in the Arab world together with representatives from the UN, OECD, World Bank and Ann Lindh Foundation.

Sign the [Avaaz petition](#) on Syria: The violent conflict in Syria is forcing 5,000 people daily to leave their country. Over 2 million Syrians have fled their homes since the beginning of the conflict. Half of these Syrian refugees are children.

Agenda

24-26 September: Social Justice in Middle East and North Africa, Brussels

24-26 September: Global Network Steering Group, Brussels

15 October: SOLIDAR Round Table: Decent Work and Quality Employment for NEETs, European Parliament ([register now](#))

16 October: SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards 2013, European Parliament ([register now](#))

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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