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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 18-10-2013

Editorial by Conny Reuter, Secretary General



On Wednesday evening, we celebrated the 13th edition of the SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards, a key civil society event in the European Parliament. More than 250 people assisted in the ceremony and warmly applauded our extraordinary winners. One of the participants resumed it perfectly: “The awards ceremony was fantastic, such inspiring people and stories. (...) There are some truly incredible people and initiatives and I think it is great that SOLIDAR showcases and awards such work.” [Read more...](#)

SILVER ROSE AWARDS 2013

This week’s newsletter focuses on this year’s five inspiring Silver Rose Award winners, bringing together the work and main asks that they highlighted at the ceremony on Wednesday. If you missed it, you can view it at [#SilverRose Awards](#) or [see the photos](#).

Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) and Mohammed Younis, Migrant Leader

Awarded for their work to ensure justice and rights for migrants and their families in Ireland, and in particular Mohammed Younis for his tireless campaigning on forced labour.

“I came to Ireland and faced modern-day slavery for 7 years, and now I want to fight for all migrant workers in Ireland and encourage them to stand up and speak out about their issues” said Mohammed Younis, MRCI migrant leader, translated by fellow activist Waseem Yousef. Thanks to Mohammed Younis’ work and support, modern-day slavery has now become a crime in Ireland.

Grainne O’Toole, Community Worker at MRCI, continued by explaining that undocumented workers often find themselves in situations where they fall out of the system: *“Younis is a great example as he was made undocumented by his employer and is unable to recoup his compensation. Undocumented workers should be entitled to seek legal redress for labour exploitation without fear of being returned home and the European Parliament must include undocumented workers in their upcoming directives on victims of crime.”*

Islamic Community of Tapada das Mercês and Mem Martins (ACITM), Portugal

Awarded for their work integrating people coming mainly from Western Africa into the Lisbon suburb of Tapada das Mercês.

Tapada das Mercês is an area with a very high population density, a lot of young people and many different nationalities. This community works with a holistic approach to try to identify the problems that the people living in the area of Tapada das Mercês are facing and then help them resolve these problems to improve the quality of life for families in the neighbourhood and give value to the area and its population.

"With more than 40,000 people benefitting from our services each year, we want to construct a new community centre to make Tapada das Mercês a meeting point for culture and diversity. Last year we were granted land for the construction of this dream and now we ask EU decision makers to support us with the necessary financial aid and human resources." said Mamadu Sissé, ACITM President.

U Maung Maung, Secretary General of Federation of Trade Unions-Myanmar

Awarded for his essential role in the survival –and now growth – of the trade union movement in Myanmar.

"This prize belongs to the whole FTUB and workers' movement that has been alive for the last 24 years, and also all the international trade unions who supported us along the way", said U Maung Maung FTUM General Secretary upon receiving his prize.

Before continuing: *"While we are now starting to see many investors coming into the country, the European Union and its Member States should require those EU companies doing business in Myanmar to uphold human rights and workers' rights standards, as well as a fair distribution of wealth. In this way we believe that Myanmar can be a role model for the whole Asia region".*

Guatemalan indigenous Ixil communities represented by Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH)

Awarded for their fight for the truth to come out and for justice to be done regarding the crimes committed against the Guatemalan indigenous Ixil communities during the civil war.

"I will fight for human rights until the day I die" said Juana Sanchez Toma, member of the Ixil community, in a heartfelt speech which met with a standing ovation. CALDH has been a driving force in working for justice to be done and the truth to come out regarding the terrible abuses that the Guatemalan people faced during the internal armed conflict, supporting the Ixil community notably in their complaint for genocide and crimes against humanity against former General Efraín Ríos Montt.

"We hope the European Union will continue to support and accompany the struggle against impunity in our country; one that we consider a necessary step to achieve the peace our country has sought for so long" said Juan Francisco Soto, CALDH Director.

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, UK

Awarded for their work to reduce income inequality and improve the quality of life for all.

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett want to make sure that issues of inequality remain on the political agenda and make the connections between a fair society for everybody and sustainable economies that the world so desperately needs. They are working for greater equality to become a measurable goal in the post-2015 development goals and a central part of sustainable development goals for the world as well.

Kate Pickett explained: *"We believe that greater equality is the best way to ensure a high quality of life for everybody and that a fair distribution of resources across populations across the planet is the only way that we can all cooperate together to create the sustainable development that the world needs."*

Members News

EU

The **European Association for the Defense of Human Rights** (AEDH) issued a [media release](#) condemning statements made by certain members of the European Parliament during the plenary discussion on the situation of Roma people, held on Wednesday 9 October at the European Parliament.

UK

War on Want, together with Unite the Union and Change 2 Win, has released a [report](#) exposing the UK high street chemist and pharmaceutical giant Boots' tax avoidance, and how it has been able to do this by loading its UK business with enormous debts.

Partners News

Read the **European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning** (EUCIS-LLL)'s [media release](#) on the Education, Training and Youth Forum 2013: time to act together!

Also read **EUCIS-LLL**'s October [newsletter](#).

Sign the **Avaaz** [petition](#) to help set free Ana Paula and 29 of her Greenpeace crewmates who are trapped in a Russian jail for trying to save the Arctic from oil drilling.

Read the [Declaration](#) of **Party of European Socialist** (PES) Economic, Finance, Employment and Social Ministers on Five Guidelines for a Fair, Social and Sustainable Europe.

SOLIDAR is a European network of 60 NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. For more info www.solidar.org.

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