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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 29-11-2013

Editorial by Conny Reuter

Action? Action!

Besides important events like the European Development Days and the European Integration Forum in which SOLIDAR was present, the Commission organised this week the [3rd Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion](#). The Convention was opened by Commission President Barroso, Council President van Rompuy, Commissioner Andor and the Social Platform President Heather Roy. As this Platform is one of the flagship programmes of the Europe 2020 Strategy, it was of particular relevance.

The result of the recent [Annual Growth Survey](#) underlined the damaging trends: increases in poverty, exclusion and unemployment, in particular long-term unemployment, and furthermore an increase of imbalances between Member States. This presents in a way the social balance of the outgoing Commission! 7 million more poor and an increasing number of unemployed and working poor, more people under the threat of the wrong policies. [Read more...](#)

Social Affairs

SOLIDAR Social Progress Watch Initiative: For a More Social Europe

Yesterday (28 NOVEMBER), at an event in the European Parliament with MEPs Evelyne Gebhardt (S&D, Germany), Alejandro Cercas (S&D, Spain), and Josef Weidenholzer (S&D, Austria - SOLIDAR President), and SOLIDAR member Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO), SOLIDAR launched the Social Progress Watch Initiative (read more on our [website](#) and [download the country feedback reports](#)), a monitoring tool to evaluate progress made towards a more social and cohesive Europe within the framework of the European Semester.

The tool - developed with SOLIDAR members and partners - will provide an analysis of Member States' performances in promoting quality employment, active inclusion, social cohesion, non-formal and informal learning, equality and solidarity and will offer concrete recommendations to the European Institutions and Member States involved in the European Semester on how to spur social consolidation in the European Union. Read more about SOLIDAR's recommendations [to strengthen the social dimension of the European Semester 2014](#) and [to promote access and participation in lifelong learning](#). Read [full article...](#)

Lifelong Learning

Building Learning Societies: Promote Access and Participation in Lifelong Learning for NEETs

SOLIDAR welcomes Monday's Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council Conclusions [on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training \(NEETs\)](#) calling on Member States to take immediate action to promote youth employment, education, training, non-formal and informal learning, voluntary engagement, participation and social inclusion of youth. SOLIDAR furthermore calls upon the Council and EU Member States to promote better access and participation in lifelong learning for NEETs.

In order for Member States to take immediate action on this topic, further investment in lifelong learning - in particular non-formal and informal learning - are needed to ensure that these 120 million Europeans who are at risk of falling into poverty can be empowered to participate in society and find new employment opportunities. Read SOLIDAR's [recommendations to](#)

strengthen access and participation in lifelong learning around Europe. [Read full statement...](#)

International Cooperation

New Egyptian Law on Assembly Undermines Fundamental Freedom of CSOs

The Egyptian government issued on 24 November a law that bans all street protests and foresees jail sentences or heavy fines to those who join any public demonstration. This new legislation is a serious crackdown on the fundamental right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, which are not only fundamental freedoms but also the cornerstones of any democratic system (read more about [SOLIDAR's campaign on freedom of association](#) and [briefing paper](#)). The law follows the three-month state of emergency declared in August after the government used deadly force to cripple street protests and suspended civil protection against police abuse.

SOLIDAR supports the [joint statement](#) issued before the promulgation of the law by 19 Egyptian social and human rights organisations, among them two partners of the SOLIDAR cooperation network "Social Justice in the Middle East and North Africa" (the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and the Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights - ECESR) and the Egyptian member of the Global Network, Land Center for Human Rights. [Read more...](#)

Members News

Germany

Read [AWO's article](#) "Wir brauchen ein soziales Deutschland!"

UK

Sign [War on Want's petition](#) demanding the UK government stand up to the tax havens in London this week.

Italy

See all the [initiatives](#) by [Auser](#) on 25 November, the International Day for violence against women.

Partners News

The **United Nations Relief and Works Agency** (UNRWA) has unveiled the first part of its newly digitized archive, which consists of over half a million negatives, prints, slides, films and videocassettes covering all aspects of the life and history of Palestine refugees from 1948 to the present day. In tandem with the digitized archive, UNRWA is also launching a [website](#), where the 1,948 images will be available to media, academics, writers and others who wish to study, explore or just have a window into the world of Palestine refugees from 1948 to the present day.

See the new [video](#) from **PSI** about the assassinations of their union members in Guatemala.

Read [EASPD's response](#) to the new Public Procurement Directive: Member States are free to organise social services in the way they consider more appropriate.

Read the **PES in the Committee of the Regions' press release** "Election of a neo-Nazi at the head of Slovakia's Banská Bystrica region huge threat to European values, says President of Socialists in the Committee of the Regions"

Join the **PES in the Committee of the Regions' lunchtime debate** on "Fortress Europe: No way in? The EU in urgent need of a migration policy" on 11 December 2013, Committee of the Regions.

Join the **Progressive Economy conference** with Commissioner Olli Rehn- 4&5 December, European Parliament Brussels.

Join the **Spring Alliance event** "Go green, Be social - How to tackle climate change greening our taxes while preserving social protection systems?" on Thursday 5 December 2013.

See **WAC MAAN's** annual art exhibition Bread & Roses that will open in Tel Aviv on 28 December. Hundreds of paintings and photographs by many famous and young artists in Israel – Arabs and Jews – will be presented in the exhibition with the aim of raising support for efforts to support Arab women's right for an equal opportunity. See [last year's exhibition](#).

Read **UNRWA's press release** "UNWRA Mourns the Death of Staff Member in Syria".

Full Social Jacket gives Belgian and European social actors material for the debate on the challenges in the larger field of social protection, around themes such as the social Europe, re-employment, pensions, health care and long-term care, child day care, social economy, voluntary society, citizens – the opportunity to express their opinions on these important themes!

The **Finnish Institute of International Affairs** is currently [seeking](#) a Senior Research Fellow to focus on the EU's relations with the Middle East and North Africa.

Agenda

26-27 November: Third Annual Convention of the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, Brussels

27 November: European Year for Citizens Alliance 2013 high-level event, European Parliament

28 November: Social Progress Watch Initiative launch event, European Parliament

28 November – Long-term care in Europe. The way forward by coordination and integration, conference organised by MEP Heinz K. Becker

5 December - Go Green, Be Social– Spring Alliance event

12-13 December: European Year for Citizens 2013 closing conference, Vilnius (Lithuania)

16-17 December: Social Economy Conference Vienna

SOLIDAR is a European network of 60 NGOs 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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