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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 13-12-2013

Editorial by Conny Reuter

Dream it, dare it, do it!

Next week the European Council will meet again in Brussels. The agenda of the meeting not only includes security and defense issues, but also the completion of the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union. At the end of this year, the fifth year of crisis, social standards in Europe are getting worse, as the Annual Growth Survey 2014 showed. The tendencies have not been inversed, with unemployment - in particular long term and youth unemployment - poverty and social exclusion consistently increasing.

At the same time, we cannot forget that people are dying in an attempt to reach this side of the rich continent called Europe. In countries like Tunisia and Egypt, they fear for the progress of the ideals of the "Arabellion", whereas in Ukraine, people are suffering from police violence with the EU flag in their hands. Human rights and freedom of association are still under threat all over the world. [Read more...](#)

Thanks Olivier! Welcome Seamus!

On Tuesday, CONCORD and its members celebrated Olivier Consolo who left his position of CONCORD's Director after 11 successful years. SOLIDAR wants to thank its friend and supporter Olivier for the work done together and for the inspiration he gave to us on development and cooperation policies and practices. [Read more...](#)

100 Years of Willy Brandt

Next week (18 December) Willy Brandt would have been 100 years old ([See the video](#) by S&D group). Willy Brandt was a [supporter of SOLIDAR's predecessor International Workers Aid](#), and a supporter of the idea of a united Europe. It is worth reading his [speeches](#) again and to defend his ideas, in particular when it comes to the future of Europe and the Union. [Read more...](#)

Social Affairs

Posting of Workers Directive: More Needed to Ensure Fair and Equal Working Conditions for Workers

On Monday, the EU's Council of Employment and Social Policy Ministers issued a proposal for a Directive on the enforcement of the posting of workers. For SOLIDAR, although some progress has been made in terms of clarity, this text still does not provide enough legal certainty and safety for workers posted to another country.

Two major advances were made in the proposed Directive on the documents required from companies in case of an inspection and that the Directive also protects posted workers rights, as well as national workers who will not suffer from unfair competition. SOLIDAR however remains critical as not only does this proposal put at stake article 9 of the EU Treaty on equality of EU citizens but also leaves interpretation open for companies to abuse wages and social dumping in Europe. We demand an effective general contractor liability in all EU countries, clear rules to protect posted workers against sham assignments and a right to advice and support. In addition, the possibilities for Member States to put in place whatever control mechanisms they think necessary to protect workers' rights must be expanded. [Read more...](#)

Launch of Network of Social Service Providers in Western Balkans

On 9-10 December, the regional network meeting “[Promoting active inclusion and social cohesion in Western Balkan](#)” organised by ASB South East Europe, Social Inclusion and Poverty Unit Serbia, the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and SOLIDAR took place in Belgrade, bringing together 50 social service providers. During the meeting, the [baseline study](#) “Comparative Analysis of the Role of Civil Society in Providing Social Welfare Services in the Western Balkans” was presented and a new [network of social service providers](#) in the region was launched.

The study was created as part of the [project](#) “Improving the Provision of Social Service Delivery in South East Europe through the Empowerment of National and Regional CSO Networks” funded by the European Commission’s Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). It presents the legal and institutional framework for the provision of social welfare services by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the role of the NGOs in providing social welfare services in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia. [Read more...](#)

International Cooperation

Civil Society Groups Condemn Attacks on Fundamental Freedoms in Egypt

The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), CIVICUS - the global civil society alliance and SOLIDAR strongly condemn attacks on fundamental freedoms in Egypt. Rising restrictions on public debate have imperiled the aspirations for justice and freedom which underpinned the Egyptian revolution. We are deeply concerned about the enactment of the “Law on the Right to Public Meetings, Processions and Peaceful Demonstrations (Law 107 of 2013)” which was approved by Interim President Adly Mansour on November 24.

This highly restrictive law violates well established international human rights law standards and places arbitrary limitations on the right to peaceful assembly. Its provisions give security officials excessive and discretionary powers to clamp down on public demonstrations and on the right to protest peacefully under the garb of protecting “security and peace”. [Read our recommendations...](#)

Congratulations: 50 Years of FOS and Solidarité Socialiste - Partnerships for Social Protection in North and South

On 10 December, the international day of human rights and the day the memorial for human rights icon Nelson Mandela took place, Belgian SOLIDAR members FOS and Solidarité Socialiste (SolSoc) celebrated their 50th anniversary. Both run partnerships with organisations from the South to establish, promote and develop social protection schemes. SOLIDAR congratulates these members for their engagement in promoting international solidarity and contributing to a more equitable world. [Read more...](#)

Lifelong Learning

EU: More Social Dimension

This week SOLIDAR participated in the networking meeting and conference with EU and Greek social NGOs on the eve of the Greek EU Presidency, in the presence of the Greek Minister of Labour, Social Security and Welfare. Discussions

focused on the social dimension of the presidency priorities. In times of economic hardship, as witnessed in Greece, it is important to adopt long-term strategies to invest in education and training, and strengthen evidence-based policy making both on Member State and EU levels, with the engagement of civil society organisations in the framework of strengthened Open Method of Coordination.

SOLIDAR contributed to the workshop on combating poverty and social exclusion where the [Social Progress Watch initiative](#) and [specific recommendations](#) were presented to the participants on offering access and participation in lifelong learning as a tool to empower people to participate in society and labour market.

Members News

Europe

Read **AEDH's** [press release](#) on "Rule of law under attack in Hungary"

Germany

See **DGB's** [short film](#) on the social consequences of the crisis "MS Europe - We all sit in the same boat".

Partners News

Read CTUWS' [statement](#) "As a background to Iron and steel workers' strike. CTUWS confront a campaign" and a [press release](#) on the opening of the Permanent Conference of Working Women as a result of the important role of the working Egyptian woman in the revolution and in establishment of independent trade unions.

See **Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in the Arab World's** [infographic](#) on "Accountability and Anti-Corruption: Is there a Relationship?" to celebrate the International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December.

See the **Social Platform's** press release on [Member states must restore the balance between social and economic governance](#).

Read **Nord-Süd's** [news](#).

Read the **Fair Trade Advocacy Office's** [news](#).

The **Socialists and Democrats** will organise a [conference](#) on Committing the New Commission to Social Europe on 19 February.

The **Council of Europe** offers '[Journal](#)', a short TV programme of news, interviews and reports on issues of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Secretariat News

Farewell SOLIDAR

After nearly 6 years working as Communications Officer at SOLIDAR, I will be leaving today to take up a new adventure in Zurich with my family. To share these years with you in numbers: 212 Weekly Round Ups, 1992 articles and 63 in-house briefings :) I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here and would like to thank the SOLIDAR team and our partners for all the good cooperation over the years.

Wishing you all the best,
Abigail

Agenda

12-13 December: European Year for Citizens 2013 closing conference, Vilnius (Lithuania)
16-17 December: SOLIDAR 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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