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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 21-03-2014

Editorial by Conny Reuter

World Day against Racism – everyday!

Yesterday 20 March, the calendar reminded us the World Day against Racism. Racism in all forms is a standing threat to our societies and not an exclusive European issue. A sad example of how straight forward racism continues to seep through in politics took place this week, when Dutch populist Geert Wilders asked his supporters during his local elections celebration speech in The Hague: “What do we want, more or fewer Moroccans?”. It is the ideology of neglecting respect for diversity. In times of crisis discrimination has reached all classes of all societies because in a world of uncertainties racism gives the false impression of one’s strength and superiority. Growing racism is an attack on fundamental rights, human and civic rights, but it is a reality that needs more than a legal framework to contain it. SOLIDAR member organisations have always been engaged in the fight against exclusion and discrimination. Based on the legal frameworks at EU and national level, our members stand against racism, promote equality and support integration in society through social services, education and culture.

The best way to dry the seed is putting the social dimension of EU at the core of all policies, create decent work, defend public and social services as public good and take democratically legitimized decisions. If people loose trust in the institutions and in their future, we break the social contract and lose the social glue of our societies. [Read more](#)

Social Affairs

4 April: ETUC mobilisation for investments, quality jobs and equality in the EU

SOLIDAR invites to join the [ETUC demonstration on 4 April](#) calling for investments, quality jobs and equality. Blind austerity policies and the narrow focus on financial and fiscal consolidation have a disastrous social effect as the last Employment and Social Developments Review in the frame of the European Semester has shown. Some signs of recovery cannot neither hide these realities nor change these imbalances. A social dimension of Economic and monetary union is not enough. We call for mainstreaming social policies, for a real social agenda.

As SOLIDAR is having traditionally a strong link with the trade union movement, we will participate as civil society network because it is necessary to speak out loud the need for a change: together for Social Europe! Investment in quality employment, social services, education and culture! Equal rights! Equal pay for equal work at equal place!

Last chance to register for SOLIDAR Social Round Tables taking place on 1 April at the European Parliament

On Tuesday 1 April, SOLIDAR is organising two Round Tables at the European Parliament:

10:00 – 13:00h: FEPS, IRIS Network and SOLIDAR Round Table “**Promoting the social dimension of EU Enlargement**” (European Parliament, Room ASP1E1).

Please consult the SOLIDAR website for [more information](#) and the [agenda](#).

Register for this event by filling this [form](#) before 24 March.

15:00 – 18:00h: SOLIDAR Round Table "**Ensuring social progress: National recommendations for achieving Europe 2020**" (European Parliament, Room ASP1E1).
Please consult the SOLIDAR website for [more information](#) and the [agenda](#).
Register for this event by filling this [form](#) before 24 March 2014.

Education

Investing in skills - 2014 European Semester

Looking at the educational headline targets of the Europe2020 strategy, in the last years a moderate progress has been made, however it is being impacted by the crisis and congested by structural problems. The OECD 2013 [PIAAC Survey of Adults Skills](#) shows that one out five people has a low level of basic skills (literacy and numeracy) that has an impact on their labour market participation. The [Council of EU on Education, Youth, Culture and Sports](#) at its last meeting stressed that to address the challenges of inadequate skills levels it is important to foster social cohesion and active citizenship through improved and quality education and training, and Member States should intensify their efforts and place education and training in the strategic role in the European Semester process.

SOLIDAR Members have a long-standing tradition in the empowerment of people through lifelong learning, and actively promote social cohesion, active inclusion and participation in society, therefore would like to highlight that participation in lifelong learning is detrimental to empower people to participate in society and explore new employment opportunities. Therefore we call the policy makers to make lifelong learning a reality and to foster participation of people in education and training, especially those who are far from education, have weak income position and young adults who are neither in employment, education or training (NEETs). [Read more...](#)

International

FOS and SOLIDAR continue the struggle for Decent Work for Domestic Workers

On Wednesday 19 March, Belgian SOLIDAR member [FOS](#) launched the second year of the advocacy and awareness campaign for Decent Work for Domestic Workers. In June 2011 the ILO [Domestic Workers Convention 189](#) was adopted and so far 12 countries have officially ratified C189, Italy being the only EU Member State.

Today the struggle is far from over since the daily life of most domestic workers is still characterised by precarious and vulnerable conditions, lacking access to trade unions or social protection. Belgian SOLIDAR member FOS launched this week the second year of the campaign that aims to improve the situation of domestic workers in Belgium and has a global outreach through partnerships with Domestic Workers Associations worldwide. Myrtle Witbooi, a founding member and general secretary of the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union ([SADSAWU](#)) and Chair of the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) testified at the kickoff event about her life as a domestic worker and her fight to unionise this very vulnerable, highly discriminated, mainly female and often invisible workforce in South Africa. Although the country ratified C189 in 2012, the way to full implementation and true respect for workers' rights for domestic workers is still long. [Read more](#)

The challenges ahead after the Egyptian constitutional referendum

On Monday 17 March a Round Table and interactive dialogue: "International Observation of Egypt's Referendum - Challenges Ahead", organised by the Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD) at the European Parliament, took place to present and discuss the findings and recommendations of the international observers on the Egyptian new constitutional referendum and the challenges that lay ahead for the Egyptian parliamentary and presidential elections. The draft constitution passed a public referendum on 14 and 15 January 2014, but it's what comes next that will shape Egypt's political, economic and social framework for future generations. The voting on the constitutional referendum was an attempt to bring legitimacy to the political developments since the July 2013 ousting of President Mohamed Morsi.

SOLIDAR advocates for an Egyptian state based on the rule of law, a democratic government that keeps its electoral promises and invests in social and economic justice, in a free and pluralistic society and in more space for civil society organisations to participate in decision making processes at all levels. It is very important that the EU, both at political and civil society level, continues to support the Egyptian people and that we keep stressing the important role of civil society in democratic transition processes. Maged Mosleh, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Brussels, highlighted that "rooting democracy is not an easy and not a short process". SOLIDAR will continue to actively support the Egyptian partners in the [Cooperation Network for Social Justice in the Middle East and North Africa](#) and work together for Social Justice. [Read more](#)

Members' News

FEPS announces the publication of Economic Policy Viewpoint #1 March 2014: [The problem of long-term unemployment](#) by Erik Bjørsted, Senior Economist of the Economic Council of the Labour Movement (ECLM)

Today, 21 March, is the XIX Day of memory, victims and commitment against organised crime. Read the [statement](#) of **AUSER** and watch the Libera promotion [video](#) on YouTube.

Pour la Solidarité presents its [annual report](#) 2013

Partners' News

Read the **AGE Platform** press release "[European elections 2014: Civil society and candidate MEPs commit to a Citizens' Europe](#)" issued on the occasion of Civil Society Day on 18 March

ALDA invites you to the Workshop '[Local governance and cooperation between Local Authorities and Civil Society Organisations for development](#)', organised in cooperation with the **CONCORD EPAN Working Group** on 9 April

PES Group in the Committee of the Regions announced the winner of the Remix Europe music competition. [Listen here](#). Check out as well the newly launched photo competition "[Jobs for Europe, Europe for Jobs](#)"

The **European Youth Forum** and Youth Intergroup invite you to the conference "[Youth Employment: What Next?](#)" on 7 April at the European Parliament

Tell European leaders to reject secret courts in the TTIP by signing the [petition](#) on **Sum Of Us**.

The **Steering Committee of EU-Russia Civil Society Forum** published a statement on the international crisis around the situation in Ukraine in [English](#) and [Russian](#)

LIBERA Brussels will celebrate on 21 March the Day of Memory and Commitment in Remembrance of Victims of Organised Crime and create all together the "Tree of Legality". Painter Laura Cascone and DJ Bruno Brown Selecta will give their contribution to this moment of remembrance and use their art to grow awareness toward legality values in our society. At La Tentation - Centro Galego de Bruxelas - 28, Rue de Laekensestraat - 1000 Bruxelles / Brussel at 19:00h. Read more in this [article](#) or on [Facebook](#)

"The reaction of the European Commission lacks any real ambition to respond appropriately to the expectations of 1.9 million people", states the [press release](#) from **European Federation of Public Service Unions** on the EC Communication that gives official response to the first successful European Citizens' Initiative **Right 2 Water**

ETUC press release "[Falling wages casts doubt on recovery warn trade unions](#)"

Agenda

24-25 March: SOLIDAR-FEPS-GPF Conference "A common vision for a progressive Arab world", Amman, Jordan. For more information, contact [Maurice Claassens](#)

27-28 March: SOLIDAR, ETUI Education and ITC-ILO Actrav Workshop "[Promoting methodological and technological cooperation for a better trade union and workers' education](#)", Turin, Italy

1 April 10:00-13:00h: SOLIDAR, IRIS Network and FEPS Round Table "[Promoting the social dimension of EU Enlargement](#)", European Parliament, Brussels. [Register](#) before 24 March

1 April 15:00-18:00h: SOLIDAR Round Table "[Ensuring social progress: National recommendations for achieving Europe 2020](#)", European Parliament, Brussels. [Register](#) before 24 March

3-5 April: FEPS Forum: [A Progressive Renaissance for Europe](#), Brussels

4 April: ETUC demonstration: [For a New path for Europe](#), Brussels

25 June: SOLIDAR Annual General Assembly, Brussels

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