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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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**SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 14-11-2014**

## Editorial by Conny Reuter, SOLIDAR Secretary General

### Just wording?

14 November 2014

This week the European Court of Justice has published a ruling at the request of a Romanian citizen living in Germany expressing her discontent at the refusal by local authorities to allow her access to social benefits. In nearly all media this was accompanied by comments qualifying the request as "welfare tourism". In Germany this issue was raised by the very conservative Christian Social Union in Bavaria, the party of the current EPP President Weber, who made it a central element of their campaign for the European elections.

"Welfare tourism" is the ugly expression used to describe one of the consequences of mobility, which is considered one of the four fundamental freedoms offered by the EU. On top of that it denies the reality of the majority of Romanian and Bulgarian citizens who leave their country to live and work in another EU Member State, thanks to which they actually contribute to the welfare and social protection systems, as distinct from the few who might "abuse" the systems. Again it is much more complicated in politics and in the public sphere to refer to realities, facts and figures than to manipulate public opinion by targeting the emotions.

The same goes for the debate on migration and asylum seekers. How can we call for a Union built on values when at the same time we deny rights which are enshrined in our Treaties and Constitutions? Opening a Pandora's box has never worked, although some conservative and populist parties need it for their good electoral results like bees need honey. They poison the environment for policy making and pave the way for even more extremist ideas to seep into the famous political centre. We need courage and concrete answers to tackle the social consequences of mobility, migration and asylum seeking. And the rule of law should be applied, but with a focus on those who really take advantage: human traffickers on both sides of the EU-borders, criminals, mafias, those employers who exploit irregular migrants to be abused as working slaves and third-class employees. They undermine our labour standards and our welfare systems! But this message – although or because it is not populistic – is never heard or seen either in the media or in political statements!

### SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards – Call for Nominations

The SOLIDAR [Silver Rose Awards](#) were launched in 2000 to raise awareness of organisations and individuals who have significantly contributed to improving social justice and equality around the world. This event brings together more than 400 people to celebrate individuals and organisations whose extraordinary struggles contribute greatly to social justice and solidarity throughout the world. The Awards are presented each year at a prestigious awards ceremony held at the European Parliament in Brussels. This year's edition will take place in February 2015 *exact date to be confirmed*.

#### *Who can make a nomination?*

Everyone is welcome to make a nomination, especially member organisations or other organisations and individuals who actively support SOLIDAR's work. The deadline for the submission of your nominations is **28 November 2014**. The nomination should be made using the [nomination form](#). A more detailed explanation of the procedure can be found [here](#)

## Out now

### Publication: The Social Dimension of EU Enlargement

In 2012 the European Union Resolution on Enlargement expressed concerns about the lack of attention to the social dimension of the EU enlargement process. Indeed in recent years, unemployment and social inequalities have significantly increased in the Western Balkans affecting in particular the situation of young people and demonstrating that the socio-economic dimension cannot be separated from the political one. This FEPS and SOLIDAR publication is a collection of expert articles presenting an overview of the current challenges in consolidating the social dimension of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans.

Read the full version [here](#).

### Briefing 68: Supporting Social Investment in the Western Balkans: European Enlargement Monitoring Report 2014

This briefing contains policy recommendations on how to foster social inclusion and support social investment in the Western Balkans region. These recommendations have been designed in response to the European Commission's Progress reports on the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2014 – 2015, on October 8.

Read the full version [here](#).

## Together for Social Europe

### For a dignified life free of poverty - Securing adequate levels of income throughout the life-cycle

13 November 2014

On 20 November, in the framework of the [European Platform Against Poverty Convention 2014](#), SOLIDAR is organising an event titled '[For a dignified life free of poverty – securing adequate levels of income throughout the life-cycle](#)' together with [EAPN](#), [EWL](#), [AGE Platform Europe](#) and the [European Network of Migrant Women](#). The event aims at identifying aspects and drivers of poverty related to how to ensure men and women in different stages of the life cycle can achieve an adequate income through decent jobs, income support and access to social protection.

[Read more](#)

## Building Learning Societies

### The Education and Training Monitor 2014

13 November 2014

On Thursday 13 November, the European Commission launched the third edition of the Education and Training Monitor. The publication provides an overview of the developments in the education and training sector on the country and European level. Regarding the targets for 2020 in education and training, the monitor provides the updated data on how the EU is meeting its objectives:

- Early leavers from education and training – 12% (target: below 10%)
- Tertiary education attainment – 36.9% (target: at least 40%)
- Early childhood education and care – 93.9% (target: 95%)
- Low achievements in reading, maths and science – 19.6%; 22.2%; 17.7% respectively (target: 15%)
- Employment rate of recent graduates – 75.5% (target: 82%)
- Adult participation in lifelong learning – 10.5% (target: 15%)

[Read more](#)

## Organising International Solidarity

### Universal and Comprehensive Social Protection systems and floors: essential to fight poverty and inequality

14 November 2014

Last week the UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTION ADVOCACY TOUR took place. The tour was organised by the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, SOLIDAR, Brot für die Welt and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung with the participation, among others, of the Arab NGO Network for Development (Lebanon), the Phoenix Center (Jordan), the African Platform for Social Protection (Kenya), the Trade Union Confederation (Ghana), the CIPPEC (Argentina), SEWA (India), HelpAge Thailand and the Asia Europe People Forum (The Philippines).

The Tour included dialogue with CSOs advocating for Universal Social Protection and Tax Justice as well as exchanges with EU representatives (Members of the European Parliament, Permanent Representation officials, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) representatives, and European Commission officials) to advocate for the **inclusion of universal and comprehensive social protection systems and floors in the post-2015 development framework**. The dialogue has been covered on twitter through [#SocialProtection4All](#).

The Tour highlighted the role that different EU institutions can play in the pledge for the implementation of Universal Social Protection systems.

Read the full summary and related policy recommendations [here](#).

### SOLIDAR ENP Monitoring report on Tunisia

13 November 2014

Following the publication of the 2014 European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Progress Report for Tunisia, **SOLIDAR** in collaboration with the **Arab NGO Network for Development** (ANND) carried out an extensive consultation process with Tunisian civil society organisations to comment on the progress report prepared by the EU and assess the implementation of the ENP in Tunisia.

As a result of the consultations document Tunisia took up several of the recommendations contained in the 2012 progress report. For instance, on 26 October 2014, Tunisia held free and fair parliamentary elections that resulted in the victory of the Nidaa Tounes Party. However, despite Tunisia enjoying international praise for having achieved a “peaceful revolution leading to promising stability”, major concerns remain about the worsening economic situation and growing security threat. On a positive note, in 2014 Tunisia ratified three international labour conventions, and lifted reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, the ENP monitoring report highlights that implementation remained the major problem throughout 2014.

[Read more](#)

## Members News

**SOLIDAR** has been present at our partner **Volonteurope**'s 23rd annual conference: 'Enlargement, Migration and Social Cohesion in the EU' that took place in Malta. Conny Reuter, SOLIDAR Secretary General, delivered a keynote speech in which he called for more political will and investment for CSOs to improve the current situation. During this conference they held their **Active Citizens of Europe (ACE) Awards Ceremony** recognising individuals for their invaluable contribution to the social cohesion of communities and tolerance in Europe.

In the category of 'Volunteers', the 2014 ACE Awards winners are:

- Gauri Desai (UK)
- Marside Bandilli (Albania)

In the category of 'NGOs', the 2014 ACE Awards winners are:

- Aditus Foundation (Malta)
- Macmillan at Glasgow Libraries Volunteers (UK)
- Gemeinsam Leben & Lernen in Europa (Germany)

More information can be found [here](#).

Our partner **CSV** has announced that they are part of a consortium led by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts which is part of the 'Our Environment, Our Future' portfolio. More details on the projects and how to get involved can be found [here](#).

**SOLIDAR** partner **CONCORD** has just published their 'Guide to EuropeAid funding instruments 2014-2020'. This report aims to provide the reader with a comprehensive, up-to-date overview of the instruments and programmes (both thematic and geographic) used by the European Union (EU) in its development cooperation. More information can be found [here](#).

## More News

On 19 November the S&D Group and Caritas Europe are organising a conference titled 'Which Welfare for Europe? Can we still meet the EU2020 Social Objectives?' in the European Parliament in Brussels. SOLIDAR Secretary General, Conny

Reuter, will be speaking during the panel discussion on 'Are the applied solutions supportive for enhancing the European Social Model? How do we make Europe more social and more inclusive?'. Click [here](#) for the programme and registration.

**UNRWA** Gaza situation report (issue No. 69), read the full report [here](#).

## Upcoming Events

### Conference - The Ingredients for an Inclusive Jobs, Growth and Investment Agenda

Tuesday 2 December | 10:00 – 19:00

**SOLIDAR** works for a more social Europe. Against the background of our European social fabric which has been seriously damaged by the economic crisis and by the effects of one-sided austerity policies, **SOLIDAR** advocates for a policy change that puts social consolidation back at the heart of EU policies. The mid-term review of the EU2020 strategy provides a new momentum for this.

This one day event titled '**The Ingredients for an Inclusive Jobs, Growth and Investment Agenda**' offers three roundtable debates covering the key ingredients expressing our vision for a more inclusive jobs, growth and investment agenda. Investment we consider as being highly crucial for social progress and lifelong learning in order for Europe to move beyond its current 'damaged' state.

The first debate will present policy proposals to realise a more inclusive, equal and cohesive Europe. The second debate, organised in cooperation with Policy Network, covers the impact of the 2008 financial crash on European social and national welfare policies. The day will close with a debate on the role of education and lifelong learning to accomplish a participatory and equal society.

[Draft Programme](#)  
[Registration](#)

### Round Table - EU trade and Investment Policy: Between Development Goals and Access to Developing Markets

Wednesday 10 December 2014 | 9:00 – 12.00

Even with the changing contexts on both shores of the Mediterranean, the EU remains the biggest economic partner of the Arab Region. One of the EU's policy strategies towards the Southern Mediterranean is the creation of a deepened Euro-Med Free Trade Area that aims at removing trade barriers between both shores of the Mediterranean. To that end, under the Deauville Partnership, the European Council agreed to negotiate Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs) with four Arab countries in transition – Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia- as a tool for economic growth and investment attraction in the Southern Mediterranean region

With this background, the **Round Table "EU trade and Investment Policy: Between Development Goals and Access to Developing Markets"** will focus on:

- Trade and Investment and the role of the private sector: rethinking investment protection.
- Tax policies: a tool of redistribution.
- Inequalities arising from trade and investment agreements.

CSOs from the Middle East and North Africa region and members of the European Parliament will share the challenges and the opportunities they see to develop and implement an inclusive and equitable Trade and Investment policy in the Southern Mediterranean.

**Draft Programme**  
[Registration](#)

19 November 2014	Brussels, Belgium	Roundtable Debate titled 'Social inclusion through VET - new opportunities for NEETs' organised by the <b>SOLIDAR Foundation</b>
27-30 November 2014	Paris, France	The 16th edition of the <i>Salon Européen de l'éducation</i> organised by <i>La Ligue de l'enseignement</i>
2 December 2014	Brussels, Belgium	Conference - The Ingredients for an Inclusive Jobs, Growth and Investment Agenda organised by <b>SOLIDAR a.o.</b>

To register and other upcoming events, please click [here](#)

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