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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 21-11-2014

Editorial by Conny Reuter, SOLIDAR Secretary General

A New Thrill: Investment

21 November 2014

When Commission President Juncker addressed the European Parliament prior to his election he put forward the idea of an investment programme of 300 billion euro. Too ambitious or too modest? At least it is a clear sign of possible policy change! Until now the orthodoxy of "sound public finances" and the "black zero" have been the overall objective. This mantra was not questioned and always presented as though there was no alternative. In response, progressives have consistently called for a balanced policy that includes investment and does not kill the investment capacity of Member States even those under the Troika rules. The unilateral focus on financial and fiscal consolidation has produced unprecedented social imbalances in and between the Member States, as the Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) review has shown in the last three years.

Now there seems to be a new momentum: the investment programme for which progressives have always called for, even before Mr. Juncker became the leading candidate of his political family. There are two questions: where shall the money come from and where shall it go to? Progressive economists have provided enough proof that public investment is more sustainable than short term private investments. Therefore, there should be a central role for the European Investment Bank for binding private investment into public investment and increasing its fiscal capacity. Another source of revenue should come from tax justice by closing tax havens and ending tax competition between Member States and by doing so stop tax evasion and tax fraud. Unfeasible? No, just a matter of political will!

And where shall the investment go to? As social NGOs that have argued since the beginning of the financial and economic crisis for social consolidation, we call for investment in education and social infrastructure. The social economy is based on a public-private-partnership model, and has a significant financial and social return on investment. We are convinced that our progressive allies in the EP will take this position into consideration, which will make a difference and give the investment programme the social dimension it needs.

Instead of looking to the unspent areas of the European Social Funds, meaningful thought should be given to new sustainable financial tools and instruments such as social project bonds.

After the promises, it is time to deliver and to make a difference on the social front!

SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards – Call for Nominations

Only one week left to submit your nominations

Would you like to nominate either an individual or an organisation with a significant track record of promoting social justice and equality around the world?

Only a week left for you to submit your nominations and contribute to the long list of [**SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards**](#) Winners.

- [Nomination form](#)
- [List of SOLIDAR Silver Rose Winners](#)

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, published on October 8.

Read the full version [here](#)

Together for Social Europe

For a dignified life free of poverty – SOLIDAR at EPAP Convention

21 November 2014

On 20 November, in the framework of the [European Platform Against Poverty Convention 2014](#), SOLIDAR organised 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 aimed 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](#)

Enforceable labour and social standards in TTIP

17 November 2014

Last Wednesday 12 November, **SOLIDAR** took part in the EESC conference on Sustainable Development in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). During the session 'Participative Mechanisms in TTIP' **SOLIDAR** called upon the negotiators to take a second look at the Trade and Sustainable Development chapter of TTIP to make labour and social standards enforceable; for instance by including a dispute settlement and sanctioning mechanism on the basis of all ILO Conventions and in particular the ILO Recommendation 202 on social protection. To promote democracy and transparency, **SOLIDAR** called in particular for the European Parliament to hold an open and transparent mid-term

assessment of the TTIP negotiations providing a better, stronger, political mandate for the Commission negotiators. The speaking notes can be read [here](#).
[Read more](#)

Building Learning Societies

Expert Roundtable: Social inclusion through VET – New opportunities for NEETs

20 November 2014

SOLIDAR Foundation invited practitioners and policymakers to an expert roundtable in the European Parliament on 19 November 2014 to discuss the pressing topic of NEETs in Europe and the role of vocational education and training (VET) in reintegrating NEETs into the labour market and society as a whole. The roundtable was hosted by MEP **Brando Benifei** (S&D group).

[Read more](#)

Organising International Solidarity

Taking stock for a new Neighbourhood Policy

21 November 2014

Last week **SOLIDAR** spoke at an Arab Europe dialogue organised by the Coptic Evangelical Organisations for Social Services (CEOSS) and the Protestant Academy Loccum (EAL) with the support of Brot für die Welt and Danmission ([Speaking notes](#)). Taking part in the panel together with representatives of the European Commission, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office and Faculty of Economics and Political Science of Cairo University, **SOLIDAR** underlined the need to reorient the Neighbourhood Policy to support social justice in the Middle East and North Africa.

[Read more](#)

SOLIDAR Report monitoring ENP Progress in Palestine

21 November 2014

After Sweden officially recognised the State of Palestine on 30 October, in an important move that confirms the Palestinians' right to self-determination, last week Spanish MPs overwhelmingly adopted a motion calling on their government to recognise a Palestinian state, echoing similar votes last month in Britain and Ireland.

SOLIDAR's member, El Movimiento por La Paz (MPDL) that has been working in Palestine for 19 years, with extensive in-field knowledge of the political and socio-economic context of the country, has positively welcomed the initiative of the recognition of a Palestinian state.

[Read more](#)

SOLIDAR ENP Monitoring report for Egypt

18 November 2014

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

[Read more](#)

From 9-11 December 2014 **SOLIDAR** and **ANND**, together with partners in a delegation of representatives from the MENA region, will be organising the **International Cooperation Forum** in Brussels to highlight some of the aspects mentioned in the ENP country reports. These events include roundtables in the European Parliament on the future of the ENP and EU Trade Relations with the region.

SOLIDAR International Cooperation Forum (ICF)

- 10 December 2014 | Roundtable Debate – 'EU Trade and investment policy: Between Development goals and access to developing markets'
09:00-12:00 European Parliament
[Programme](#)
[Registration](#)
- 10 December 2014 | Roundtable Debate – 'Designing a New European Neighbourhood Policy'
18:00-20:00 European Parliament
[Programme](#)
[Registration](#)
- 11 December 2014 | Civil Society Dialogue 'Taking Stock for a Revised European Neighbourhood Policy (South)'
09:00-18:00 European Endowment for Democracy
[Programme and registration](#)

Members News

ASB, AWO and Volkshilfe Austria opened their European Office on 18 November 2014 in the premises of **SOLIDAR** in Brussels with the objective of further engaging with discussions on the EU-level and strengthening cooperation with EU-policy makers. This special occasion has been summarised in a press release which you can find [here](#).

SOLIDAR Member **CONCORD** launched its annual Aidwatch report on 20 November 2014 at the OECD in Paris. For more information click [here](#).

Partners News

SOLIDAR partner **EASPD** has sent out a press release on the unacceptable living conditions of persons with disabilities in Greece. This situation highlights yet again the importance of having sufficient and skilled professionals in the sector and the need for a solution to be put forward at the European level in view of the repeated occurrence of such human rights scandals in many European Member States. It is clearly a European problem, and the EU must therefore act and help Member States do better in this area. You can read the full press release [here](#).

More News

On 19 November the **S&D Group** and **Caritas Europe** organised 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, appeared as one of the speakers during this event, calling for the reinforcement of universal and comprehensive social protection systems. Preventive measures are a fundamental component of a social investment perspective. Providing people with adequate support to participate in society and respond to risks is a way to empower them, to make them more resilient and to prevent them falling into social exclusion and inactivity. More effort should be made to promote this logic at Member States' level and the Europe 2020 Strategy represents an excellent framework for it. More information on this event can be found through [#WhichWelfare4Europe](#)

UNRWA Gaza situation report (issue No. 70), read the full report [here](#)

Upcoming Events

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

Tuesday 2 December | 10:00 – 19:30

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. We consider investment to be essential 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.

- **Session 1 - Together for Social Europe: Investing in Social Progress**

- [Session 2 - Economic and Social Futures: Social Investment in Europe](#)
- [Session 3 - Building Learning Societies: Investing in Education and Lifelong Learning Draft Programme](#)

Please click [here](#) to register for this event, please note that registration will close on Monday 24 November 2014.

Other Events

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 SOLIDAR a.o.
2 - 11 December 2014	Brussels, Belgium	Lifelong Learning Week organised by EUCIS-LLL in cooperation with SOLIDAR , more details can be found here
9 - 11 December 2014	Brussels, Belgium	SOLIDAR International Cooperation Forum (ICF) in cooperation with ANND together with partners in a delegation of representatives from the MENA region

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

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