

Conference Report: Together for a Social Europe 25 June 2008, Paris

Introduction

'Together for a social Europe' is not only the title of a conference¹ held in Paris on 25 June 2008, it is also the motto which best describes SOLIDAR's policy and advocacy work on European social issues over the past few years, as well as being the title of a SOLIDAR campaign which has been carried out since 2006².

The original campaign started by SOLIDAR and three member organisations in 2006 – Volkshilfe (Austria), Arbeiterwohlfahrt (Germany) and La Ligue de l'Enseignement (France) – organised an annual conference to look more closely at the theme and make recommendations to EU decision makers on how to best make Europe more social.

This conference was the third in the series. It focused on three topics high on the European agenda and core to SOLIDAR's work: social services of general interest, inclusive and cohesive societies, and Decent Work. One aim of the conference was to follow up on the conclusions from the two previous events organised in 2006 in Vienna and in 2007 in Berlin³ and update them against the backdrop of the social and citizenship provisions in the Lisbon Treaty. The other aim was to put together the major demands of the SOLIDAR network in view of the European elections in June 2009.

This conference report highlights key statements made by guest speakers and representatives of SOLIDAR members and links them back to SOLIDAR recommendations; brought together in the Resolution⁴ from the conference.

This 2008 resolution has since been updated by the 'Together for Social Europe Declaration' from the 2009 Together for Social Europe conference⁵. For further reading, please also view our five briefings on SOLIDAR's key topics on social affairs⁶.

Context

Societies and welfare states across Europe are facing similar challenges that call for policy coordination within Member States and at European level. In SOLIDAR's view the most prominent and pressing challenges and problems are:

- Social and demographic change, and the new needs related to these issues;
- Labour market inclusion, in particular of disadvantaged persons and groups;
- Guaranteeing access to life-long learning;
- Increase in working poor due to growing shares of precarious and/or low paid work;
- Non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all;
- Increased migration flows to and inside of Europe calling for comprehensive integration policies, but also for diversity management in the provision of personal social services;
- Social consequences of climate change;
- Defending and promoting decent working and living conditions for all.

¹ This conference was organised by SOLIDAR together with its French members and the Maison de l'Europe de Paris

² 'Together for Social Europe' is a SOLIDAR project started in 2009 and carried out in close cooperation with more than 10 members across Europe and supported by the Foundation of European Progressive Studies (FEPS).

³ http://www.solidar.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=20872&la=1&langue=EN

⁴ <http://cms.horus.be/files/99931/MediaArchive/SOLIDAR-conference-Paris-resolution-conclusions-final-30.06.08-EN.pdf>

⁵ http://www.solidar.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=14407&la=1&langue=EN

⁶ Briefings 5-9: http://www.solidar.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=21774&la=1&langue=EN

1. Highlighting social realities and social risks – Europe’s citizens need a real Social Agenda

Europe is witnessing increasing inequalities in income, wealth and access to vital social infrastructures and is confronted with a number of (new) social risks and problems in the society⁷. Social conflicts can no longer or only partially be reduced to relationships around domination and exploitation and be reduced to the sphere of labour relations as Michel Wieviorka (Director of the *Centre d'Analyses et d'Interventions Sociologiques* at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*; President of the International Sociological Association) pointed out in his presentation. Social realities are today more complex and multifaceted. They are related to different challenges stemming mainly from exclusion from economic and political resources, unequal opportunities or discrimination, precariousness, or unemployment.

As one illustration Conny Reuter, Secretary General of SOLIDAR and President of the Social Platform, underlined that social questions related to decent working conditions are not only a problem of the Southern hemisphere and in a global perspective, but increasingly are also a European challenge. Slave work (e.g. in the field of domestic work), indecent or precarious working conditions, an increasing number of working poor are also present in Europe. Recalling the increasing incidence of precarious working conditions of personnel in supermarkets, cleaning staff in hotels, workers in factories, not to mention undocumented migrants (i.e. in Austria, Germany and Italy in the field of care and household-based support), Conny Reuter argued that the European *acquis social* is far from being a reality for all. Highlighting social realities “across the pond”, Susan Schurman, School of Management and Labor Relations at the State University of New Jersey (Rutgers University) and President of the International Federation of Workers’ Education Associations (IFWEA), recalled the increasing income inequality present in the US, with real wages not growing since the 1970s, a reality Europeans are not either unfamiliar with. Harlem Désir (MEP, Vice-President of the PES Group) emphasised the fact that in the context of flexicurity strategies many workers in Europe are facing an increasing pressure to show more flexibility that is not counter-balanced by measures to also strengthen security, an intervention underlined by Ronald Janssen from the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). The latter also recalled social risks linked to early school leave, with a steady number of currently around 15% of the students failing to finish secondary school in Europe to also highlight the strain this puts on the cohesion of European societies.

2. European Social Model and policy visions for promoting Social Europe

The European Social Model (ESM) is both an important concept and a key policy vision for promoting a Social Europe. There is, however, no unanimous definition. This makes working with this concept difficult as Monika Queisser, Researcher at the Social Policy Division of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), argued. In theory, she continued, the clear majority of competences for social policy lies either exclusively or predominantly on EU Member States. In praxis, however, it has actually become impossible for Member States to organise, regulate and finance their social protection systems on their own due to a deepening of European integration in view of completing the internal market. There is also increased competition in the areas of taxation (different tax models, different rates of taxation) and public investment in infrastructures and research which can fundamentally constrain the capacity of Member States to generate public wealth and redistribute income. Social systems are effectively affected by the *acquis communautaire*, common market and competition policies, and are to a limited, but increasing extent already coordinated through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). This instrument of European governance –with an in-built logic towards convergence based on jointly agreed common objectives and indicators, reporting systems and evaluation– has been for example being used in the field of social inclusion and social protection for many years. According to SOLIDAR members’ experiences and assessment the OMC has been instrumental in not only raising awareness on poverty and social exclusion, but also to better coordinate policies and efforts. As underlined by Josef Weidenholzer, President of *Volkshilfe Österreich* and President of SOLIDAR, the European integration has been so far a process mostly driven by the

⁷ See e.g. Spring Alliance Manifesto, Section 2. Challenges http://www.springalliance.eu/images/sa_manen.pdf

development of the common market and the ultimate overall prevalence of the four fundamental freedoms (i.e. free movement of goods, capital, services and people) increasingly has non-negligible backwash effects on the capacity of Member States to organise and finance their social systems. Further to this he stressed that progressive forces are not ready to accept the fact that the European integration process, based on the development of the common market, has a too weak social dimension. This, however, does not imply that there is not such thing as a European Social Model. Out of a long tradition, strong basic values are commonly shared amongst EU members and in different fields a social Europe has already been evolving or achieved, as Catherine Lalumière, President of *Maison de l'Europe de Paris* and *Maison de l'Europe en France*, and others stressed.

Social Europe and, particularly, the necessity of strengthening the social and citizenship dimensions of the European project vis-à-vis the internal market logic and fundamental freedoms was central to many interventions. Josef Weidenholzer stressed how the logic of the integration process around the internal market in some cases has limited the capacity of developing or maintaining national social systems and thereby endangers the further development of Social Europe. Representing the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) James Howard held that rules at a European level should bring social legislations amongst European states to a similar level towards the up, and not towards the bottom, as this currently increasingly happens. He underlined the need for re-regulation at a European level to prevent from tendencies of social dumping and a race to the bottom.

As argued by Michel Wieviorka, a real social Europe should embody active labour market policies, protection for workers based on individual and collective labour rights, and fiscal justice. This Europe, however, is still a reality to be built. He stressed that the European Union and its policies lack the adequate social dimension. The European economic regulation and legislation such as the Service Directive can hinder the capacity to develop a Social Europe and creates worries amongst European progressive forces. Adding to this, Monika Queisser developed on how the common market, with common regulations and the open competition with other countries with different social models, and the social *acquis communautaire* limit the margin of manoeuvre of member states and are inclined to negatively affect on efforts to strengthen Social Europe. In this context Conny Reuter called for more policy coherence, not least in view of the forthcoming revision of the Lisbon Strategy and in implementing the Renewed Social Agenda.

SOLIDAR advocates for a Europe that builds on fundamental rights. In SOLIDAR's view the European Social Model has to be further developed building on common values such as the respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, solidarity, equality and human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values can and need to be made a reality in societies if we are to defend and promote pluralism, non-discrimination, fair chances in life, equality between women and men, decent working conditions as well as full societal inclusion and participation for all.

3. Reshaping social protection systems by investing in social infrastructures and building inclusive labour markets

The functioning and effectiveness of social protection systems across Europe need to be improved to better face current and future social, demographic and financial challenges. Monika Queisser argued that profound reforms are needed to make the different welfare state models work better, as social protection systems are not succeeding in protecting people as they used to or in supporting them according to changing needs. At the same time we are witnessing unequal income distribution growing stronger in most of the OECD countries. Presenting the position of OECD, she argued that too often social systems are providing the wrong sort of protection, with passive measures of support being central (such as unemployment benefits), instead of preventive policies or policies aiming at activation of those outside the labour market. Monika Queisser continued by underlining a structural problem with social and employment policies often targeting the wrong people, e.g. only women and men inside a social protection scheme or those already on the first labour market, i.e. workers and employees with good protection, whereas those more vulnerable (e.g. migrants, people working under precarious or indecent conditions) too often being left without good protection and measures to overcome social

exclusion. Adding to this Susan Schurman argued that to correct some of the current problems some social benefits need to be detached from employment, and rather be based on citizenship or residence.

Ronald Janssen warned against certain types of reforms, which can fundamentally undermine the capacity of social systems to protect people. He used the example of reforms of unemployment benefits in different European countries applying a “make work pay” logic to illustrate the dangers of certain strategies and measures to modernise social protection. In most countries where such reforms were implemented, instead of, for example, minimum wages having been increased or lowest wage ceilings set, entitlement conditions to unemployment benefits were tightened and amounts reduced in order to force people back to work. Based on analyses made by the ETUC and other international organisations he explained that on average these reforms did not increase the overall employment rate, but reduced wages and made working conditions, at least for those at the fringe of the labour market or on the second labour market, more precarious. Further to this and referring to employment and labour market policies Ronald Janssen called upon not to place all or the largest share of responsibility to adapt to changing demands on employees, and not to exclusively talk about flexibility, but to also improve measures around the “security pillar” of flexicurity strategies. In this context he highlighted successful examples from Denmark and other European countries supportive of labour market inclusion, vocational training, and reconciliation of work, family and private life.

Other topics discussed were the issue of intergenerational justice and a stronger focus of social security systems on children and families, both raised by Monika Queisser. She reminded the participants that globalisation used to be seen as the death of social protection systems, given global competition, but evidence shows that this is not the case. Some of the economies and societies most open to international competition and globalisation have full-fledged welfare states, e.g. Nordic countries, and offer high social standards and a high level of quality of life. Strong and effective welfare states therefore can go well together with competition and globalisation, what makes the difference are the parameters to organise and finance social protection schemes and the instruments how to achieve social policy goals. André Jourdes, Vice-President of *La Ligue de l'Enseignement*, asked not to misunderstand solidarity as generosity, but as an obligation towards society. Linked to these debates and further explored later, Corinne Bord, Vice-President of the *Conférence permanente des coordinations associatives* (CPCA), and Joël Hasse Ferreira, MEP and the EP rapporteur on SSGI, highlighted that (social and health) services of general interest of high quality, accessible and available for everyone are indispensable preconditions for the European Social Model to be effective and oriented towards the right priorities.

In this context SOLIDAR recalls that social policy has also to be seen as an investment, not only as a cost. Sustainable economic and social development can only be safeguarded if sufficient investments are made in the social infrastructure needed to promote social inclusion and to strengthen social and territorial cohesion. Infrastructure here is to be broadly understood as comprising the institutions and services (e.g. social insurance, training, and housing), qualified personnel and volunteers, as well as sufficient funding from collectively financed sources. Only with such an infrastructure, a rights-based approach for individuals and groups, investments in people to improve their qualifications and empower them, as well as measures supportive of a redistribution of income and wealth can, in SOLIDAR’s view, prevent from increasing income inequalities, growing poverty and social exclusion, and persisting discriminatory treatments.

4. Social services between general interest and competition

Corinne Bord recalled that the importance of Social and Health Services of General Interest (SHSGI) as an indispensable element for the development of the European Social Model and policies oriented at the general interest of our societies is being increasingly recognised at a European level. She considered that the Communication on Social Services of General Interest (SSGI) of April 2006 and European Parliament reports on Services of General Interest (SGI) have reinforced and showed the importance given by EU institutions to SSIG. Regulations of the Services Directive have a direct and

indirect impact on SHSGI, Conny Reuter highlighted that the transposition of the Services Directive into national legislation is not a mere administrative exercise, but a highly political one.

In this line, Josef Weidenholzer expressed his concern about the fact that there is yet no clear understanding about SGI and SSGI at a European level, a statement shared by Michel Wievorka and Philippe Miet (APF), both deploring the lack of a common definition at European level and highlighted that SGI, public service and social service have different notions from one country to another. Michel Wievorka also pointed to an overall worrying tendency to restrict the margin of manoeuvre and development for public services and to increase the space for market forces and competition. Similarly, Corinne Bord and representatives of French NGOs warned against the implications of a SSGI concept promoted by the European Commission, which leads to a marketisation of the sector, a sector which needs instead a comprehensive regulation to underpin the general interest orientation. Conny Reuter highlighted the importance of orienting policies and regulation in a way that they contribute to prevent the risk that a more generalised application of public procurement rules and a widespread use of calls for tender put systematically pressure on the quality of the service. Without the right framework, the need to cut costs would bring a reduction of staff costs which would imply negative consequences with regard to working conditions of those employed in the sector of social and health services. Corinne Bord asked which criteria can and should be used in order to define a service as of general interest. Jean-Michel Charles, *Union Nationale des Associations Laïques Gestionnaires d'établissements spécialisés* (UNALG) and Vice-President of *Pupilles de l'enseignement public* (PEP), stated that respect and dignity of the person are key values and basic principles of SGI. The priorities for SGI are to provide quality, accessible and affordable services to people. Having expressed the same request, Claire Roumet, Secretary General of the European Liaison Committee for Social Housing (CECODHAS) and Vice-President of the Social Platform, underlined how, with quality and general interest orientation as a guiding principle, SGI are not seeking market profit. They are indispensable tools to strengthen social cohesion and integration into both labour market and society and, involving millions of volunteers around Europe, also help developing active citizenship.

The need to clarify the applicability and application of Community rules was stressed by Corinne Bord who referred to the example of holiday camps and the requirement of mandating service providers. She wondered if it could be possible, not least in view of transposing the Services Directive, to foresee a mandating procedure for several providers (*mandatement collectif*) and in view of a specific sub-sector (*mandatement pour le secteur*). Claire Roumet argued that criticising for example of cooperatives or associations for disloyal competition, since they benefit from certain fiscal advantages, is a way of denying that alternative forms and contexts for economic activities are possible. What is needed is that activities by organisations of the social economy are being recognised and that providers from this sector can operate on a level playing field. Joël Hasse Ferreira underlined the need to reduce the influence of the rulings of the European Court of Justice by taking clear political decisions at national and European level around a range of questions that requires a legal clarification a legislation that should be the outcome of policy debates.

On the issue of access and quality of services, Monika Queisser argued that reforms are needed in order to provide better access to social protection and good quality services for everyone, including for those not entitled to social insurance benefits. On the working conditions of service providers, Ronald Janssen used the example of childcare to illustrate the enormous waste of human resources if looking to the gender dimension of the sector with a high number of qualified women working only part time in the less productive jobs and precarious working conditions, a situation also suffered by other qualified staff and migrant workers, in particular undocumented.

Regarding the effect of global trends on SGI, James Howard recalled how it is increasingly difficult for progressive governments to maintain sufficiently high taxes to finance good social services, given strong pressures to reduce taxes in order to avoid companies leaving Europe. Concretely on trade of services, he mentioned how some services, including SHSGI, are object under General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations, with governments considering proposals to privatise some of them. Trade can thus have strong backwash effects on education and health services, for example. James Howard argued that a general increase of trade without a social and labour rights dimension is

unlikely to have a positive impact on workers in developing countries, as no social clauses are part of the trade negotiations. He requested that some specific public services, namely SHSGI, should be excluded from WTO negotiations.

5. Legal frameworks and policy instruments at European level

One of the main arguments in France against the Constitutional Treaty was that it was a regressive Treaty with insufficient social provisions or provisions to guarantee and promote a Social Europe. This opinion, used again in public campaigns to oppose the Lisbon Treaty, was not shared by Michel Wieviorka. As he stated, the Lisbon Treaty might not be social enough and economic and social objectives not equally balanced, but that this new European framework for institutions and policies is still very important. In this regard he mentioned that the Lisbon Treaty will allow working towards stronger legal and policy framework for SGI, an opinion shared by most speakers and participants. Corinne Bord highlighted the Protocol No.9 on SGI annexed to the Lisbon Treaty and argued that this Protocol opens a new paths to further develop SGI at European level in a sense of strengthening policies devoted to the promotion of solidarity and the general interest. During the discussion Philippe Grosjean (*Forum permanent de la société civile*) and Joël Hasse Ferreira, shared the view that Art. 14 of the Lisbon Treaty on SGI and the Protocol No. 9 on SGI seen together with the Charter of Fundamental Rights will represent an improvement in view of the policy and legal framework for social and health services at European level, too, as they are expected to reinforce the fundamental rights and social dimensions. The latter argued that more still needs to be done to protect the rights of users of social services and guarantee good working conditions of staff employed in this sector. As André Jourdes, Vice-President of French SOLIDAR member *La Ligue de l'Enseignement* in charge of international relations, put it, the problem is that the Lisbon Treaty is unfortunately not visible enough, which explains, for example, that Irish voters largely ignored the content of the Treaty. This could be seen as another, albeit rather sad, illustration for a perceived and real gap between many European citizens and European institutions in the construction of Europe.

The topic of policy instruments available at a European level to deal with social policy related issues was mentioned by Monika Queisser. In principle falling into the competence of Member States, the EU has attempted to gain access to this field, by developing different governance tools. Monika Queisser described a situation where today a certain number of “hard” policy strategies, such as the Lisbon Strategy, and in particular the Community Law dealing with competition and the common market and affecting national policies, co-exist at a European level with more “soft” approaches, such as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). According to the representative of the OECD, the OMC can also be seen as an attempt to attain the biggest common denominator amongst Member States in view of coordinating and converging social policies while preserving the specific characteristics and policy priorities of national social policies. Each country has to find its own balance, building on own traditions, however, this will and has to be done within an EU framework also comprising the OMC where interesting policy dialogue, mutual learning and exchange of best practices can take place on a trans-national level.

Several speakers underlined the need to bridge the gap between European institutions and citizens. The Irish NO to the Lisbon Treaty in 2008, following the French and Dutch NO votes in referenda on the Constitution for Europe in 2005, revealed the extent to which citizens feel distant from the European integration process. The Irish referendum of June 2008 cannot and should not be understood as a vote against European integration, argued Josef Weidenholzer. In his view the outcome was also motivated to a certain extent by a degree of ignorance about Europe, but mostly reflects a general feeling of dissatisfaction and detachment or even growing apart from the way the European integration has been advanced and currently is being led. He shared his conviction that only by giving answers to daily needs, expectations and concerns of their citizens Europe will be able to regain popular support. Conny Reuter stated that only if there is a better match will the credibility of European policies increase and citizens' adherence to representative and participatory democracy get stronger. In this context he recalled the importance of civil dialogue involving civil society organisations and the citizens they represent to advance the social dimension of the European integration process.

SOLIDAR welcomes the stipulations of the Lisbon Treaty that allow for building upon a more social Europe as well as the explicit mentioning of the instruments put in place to promote civil dialogue, participatory democracy and the right of petition at a European level. They have to be broadly and proactively used to help making a more social and just Europe a reality.

Most speakers highlighted the importance of the intermediary role civil society organisations play in reaching out to citizens. They recalled the need to strengthen different forms and channels of civil dialogue which would also allow citizens to regain ownership of the European project. The experiences and knowledge SOLIDAR members and other civil society organisations bring into this process represents a crucial resource to foster active citizenship and social cohesion amongst European societies, as Josef Weidenholzer and other speakers and participants stated. Further to this, SOLIDAR's president stressed that for Europe to win the heart of the people it requires the involvement and support of civil society. Corinne Bord argued that the third sector and more particularly social economy organisations need to increase their visibility in the political landscape at both national and European level by redefining and positioning itself as a key actor to promote inclusion and participation of all in society. Catherine Lalumière highlighted a paradox and challenge civil society faces: given the diversity of interests, preferences and choices to be voiced, organised and represented in pluralistic European societies a grass-root approach implies the development of a broad range of opinions, expectations and demands and consequently a dispersion of associations if they are to remain democratic and maintain representativeness. This multitude of civil society organisations' interests represents an important handicap vis-à-vis other stakeholders. Taking up this remark, James Howard suggested further exploring ways to best work together as trade unions with partners and allies in civil society and to join forces. Such a coordinated and joint approach would be instrumental to defend and promote social justice, solidarity and decent working and living conditions.

SOLIDAR recalls the particular strengths social NGOs have and the important role they can play as they are working at the fore-front of society experiencing daily social changes and social risks, and know about needs, expectations and concerns of citizens, based on their community-based, neighbourhood or local social work. SOLIDAR member organisations work with poor, socially excluded and disadvantaged persons and support vulnerable groups aiming at their empowerment and full participation in society. They provide personal social services involving volunteers to a broad range of citizens.

6. Decent working and living conditions – Global social challenges

Conny Reuter clearly stated that the Decent Work Decent Life is not only a campaign for the partners in the alliance that launched it⁸. He stressed the aim of the partners of the alliance to establish decent work as a reference point for a new large social movement. In the same vein, James Howard expressed the importance of decent work as a qualitative concept – embracing good work, which respects ILO core labour standards, comprehensive coverage by social protection schemes and an effective social dialogue. Conny Reuter reminded again that decent work is not only a problem for developing countries, but increasingly also a concern for Europe. Hence, he asked the EU, in the light of the discussion about a new Social Agenda and the revision of the Lisbon Strategy, to develop a more coherent EU policy to safeguard decent work in the fields of development, trade, economic growth, and financial and social policy.

On an international level, James Howard asked for the promotion of decent work amongst international institutions in order to promote a global agenda on decent work. He underlined how the embracement of the concept by the ILO provides a global alley appropriate to examine the policies of international institutions and their effects on employment and decent work. He recalled the importance of counting with an international mandate to promote core labour standards. Conny Reuter shared the point that social clauses in public procurement need to be promoted across Europe and worldwide, as well as ILO

⁸ <http://www.decentwork.org/>

core labour standards, as enshrined in ILO Conventions and Recommendation, need to be ratified and implemented. Harlem Désir went further on this when he asked the EU to use its foreign trade leverage to, for example, impose respect for labour standards as a condition for trade agreements and to define the inclusion and respect of social clauses in international commercial contracts. He stressed that the simple signature of declarations is not enough and asked for sanctions in case of violations of social clauses.

In the discussion section, Susan Schurman expressed her partial disagreement with the decent work concept, as she considered decent work to cover a very limiting idea, as decency only means acceptable minimum working conditions. She asked for a more ambitious agenda, but acknowledged that given the enormous growth of precarious work, decent working conditions for all would be a significant improvement from the current situation. S. Schurman also underlined the need to learn from new experiences of social dialogue outside the scope of formalised collective bargaining.

Other issues related to challenges in the context of globalisation were also mentioned by speakers throughout the conference, because, as James Howard underlined, addressing social issues in Europe requires a perception of relevant framework conditions and related policies. He concretely referred to the question of taxation of income and wealth as an example of a challenge generated with globalisation. Taxation of income is fundamental to maintain good social services, but progressive governments find it difficult to develop progressive taxation systems, e.g. corporate taxation, as there is tax competition within the internal market and at a global level. He referred to the origin of the financial crisis to illustrate a common interest of workers everywhere, namely the need to set up an international body to provide global regulation and prevent European citizens against bad financial practices in lending money and handing out mortgage loans. Ronald Janssen underlined how with globalisation companies have more choice. The threat of delocalisation provides employers with a strong negotiating power over trade unions.

Harlem Désir identified the topic of trade and the WTO as another battle field for social progressive forces to promote better working conditions worldwide. He asked opening up a debate on the impact of trade on decent working conditions. He also called on the Commission to fix conditionality between the fulfilment of labour standards on the one hand and the opening and further developing of trade relations between the EU and third countries on the other.

James Howard identified climate change as another global challenge with important social consequences worldwide. He asked that measures addressing global warming should also take into account the social consequences of implementing such reductions of production in order to prevent workers worldwide from paying for it. Investment to make a more effective use of energy and create employment through green jobs was identified as a possible social-friendly measure to address climate change.

Migration and integration of migrants did not attract much attention during the conference. Harlem Désir denounced how undocumented migrant workers lack collective rights, which not only exposes them to precarious working conditions and the risk of exploitation, but affects the overall quality of work and might put pressure on “regular” employment contracts. He also explored the question of how to organise transitions towards integration of migrants into society. On this issue, André Jourdes criticised the atomisation of responses to achieve the integration of migrants, with, for example, educational support not linked to social work on the ground. In the same vein Monika Queisser underlined how most social security systems link the provision of services to employment contracts, leaving a very vulnerable group such as undocumented migrants insufficiently protected. Roland Biache, from Solidarité Laïque, condemned the fact that some European countries had not yet ratified the conventions on the rights of migrants and called upon civil society and governments to address this deficit.

Programme

9h15 – 10h30

Opening Session

Jean-Marc Roirant, Secretary General of La Ligue de l'Enseignement and Chair of Board of SOLIDAR
CHAIR

- Catherine Lalumière, President of Maison de l'Europe de Paris and Maison de l'Europe en France
- Jean-Marc Roirant, Secretary General of La Ligue de l'Enseignement and Chair of Board of SOLIDAR
- Josef Weidenholzer, President of Volkshilfe Österreich and President of SOLIDAR
- Prof. Michel Wieviorka, Director of the Centre d'Analyses et d'Interventions Sociologiques (CADIS) at the l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, and President of the International Sociological Association (ISA)
- Dr. Monika Queisser, Researcher at the Social Policy Division of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Questions and discussion with the audience

11h00 – 13h00

Roundtable I “(Social) Services of General Interest”

Corinne Bord, Vice-President of the Conférence permanente des coordinations associatives (CPCA)
ROUNDTABLE MODERATOR

- Dr. Joël Hasse Ferreira, MEP (PSE) and EP Rapporteur on SSGI
- Claire Roumet, Secretary General of the European Liaison Committee for Social Housing (CECODHAS) and Vice-President of the Social Platform
- Jérôme Vignon, Director “Social Protection and Integration”, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (excused)
- Ronald Janssen, Adviser of European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
- Jean-Michel Charles, Union Nationale des Associations Laïques Gestionnaires d'établissements spécialisés (UNALG) and Vice-President (Pupilles de l'enseignement public (PEP))

Questions and discussion with the audience

14h00 – 16h00

Round table II “Decent Work, Decent Life – Fight against poverty and social exclusion”

Conny Reuter, Secretary General, SOLIDAR and President of the Social Platform
ROUNDTABLE MODERATOR

- Harlem Désir, MEP (PES), Vice-President of PES Group
- James Howard, Director of Economic and Social Policy Department, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
- Prof. Susan J. Schurman, Professor in the School of Management and Labor Relations at the State University of New Jersey (Rutgers University) and President of the International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA)
- André Jourdes, Vice-President of La Ligue de l'Enseignement in charge of international relations

Questions and discussion with the audience

16h30 – 16h45

Presentation of SOLIDAR Resolution and Conclusions “Together for a Social Europe”

- Erich Fenninger, President of Volkshilfe Österreich and Member of Board of SOLIDAR

16h45

Conclusions

- Jean-Pierre Jouyet, Secretary of State for European Affairs in the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (excused)

List of participants

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