



## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION & PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY SHOULD STAY AT THE CORE OF THE REVISED EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

Freedom of association and peaceful assembly must be recognised as an enabling right that fosters inclusive development. The social movements that have flooded the streets of the Arab Spring have the potential to democratise the state and secure the democratic transition. The right to assemble and organise is a precondition for the defense of collective rights and remains at the core of any functioning democratic system.

SOLIDAR members and partners across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are organising a wide range of activities at the national level to raise awareness about the gaps and violations of freedom of association and peaceful assembly that continue to pose serious threats to civil, political and social dialogue, and therefore undermine the potential for real and genuine democratic transition.

### OUR MEMBERS AND PARTNERS UP CLOSE

**In Jordan**, SOLIDAR member **ARCS** together with the Jordanian Partner **East-West Center** organised a national workshop to discuss about “Freedom of Association as an enabling right to access economic, social and cultural rights (ESCRs) for Jordanian Youth: What role for the EU?”. [Here](#) you can find more on their workshop.

Next week **in Palestine**, SOLIDAR member **Movimiento Por la Paz** (MPDL) is organising two workshops together with the Palestinian organisations **Democracy and Workers Rights Center** (DWRC) and the **Palestinian NGO Network** (PNGO), one workshop will take place in Gaza and one in Ramallah on Freedom of Association with a focus on workers’ rights. These activities bring together representatives from independent trade unions, the ministry of Labour, representatives from political parties, and independent Civil Society Organisations’ (CSOs) representatives to discuss the gaps of a legal environment for trade union action in Palestine.

**In Tunisia**, the “champion country” of the ENP south, SOLIDAR member **Solidarité Laïque** together with Tunisian partner **Tunisian Forum for Youth Empowerment**, are starting next week a cycle of workshops across the country, starting at Sidi Bouzid, to develop recommendations on how to advance freedom of association as an enabling right to access ESCRs. In the framework of the **SOLIDAR Tunisia Initiative**, a meeting will be held next week to discuss

the ongoing socio-economic challenges in the light of the ENP revision.

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## IN THE MEANTIME IN ALGERIA

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The situation **in Algeria** is also worrying. The country is still negotiating a European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plan, all the while violations of freedom of association have been recorded, and the European Parliament has taken a strong stance calling for the release of workers' and human rights activists, during a [resolution](#) voted last April. The [case of Algeria](#) was also presented in front of the Committee on the Application of Standards during the International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva last week, in which several concerns regarding the violation of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) have been raised.

**These experiences highlight that the lack of or continued violation of freedom of association, peaceful assembly and collective bargaining rights remain a constant challenge across the Southern Neighbourhood, and that CSOs, political forces and independent trade unions are willing to work together and join forces to promote policy change.**

The revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy should primarily focus on upholding these rights. By promoting freedom of association and an enabling environment for civil society and social partners to work with national, regional and local authorities to design together effective strategies that guarantee decent working conditions, social security, accessible and quality healthcare, social services, as well as accessible and quality education and lifelong learning.

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Rue du Commerce 22 | B-1000 Brussels

T +32 (0)2 500 10 20 | F +32 (0)2 500 10 30