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To: **Martin Schulz**
President of the European Parliament

Catherine Ashton
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Štefan Füle
Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy

Subject: **Open invitation to promote Social Justice in the Middle East and North Africa**

From: **Conny Reuter**
Secretary General SOLIDAR

Brussels, 26 March 2013

Dear Mr. Štefan Füle,

SOLIDAR would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you with your achievements in fostering the democratic transition processes in the **Middle East and North Africa** following the Arab Spring, and your relentless commitment to providing support to 'actors for change' in this region. In particular we welcome the considerable support to improve governance and socio-economic development by the European Union in the framework of the Progress reports on implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy published on 20 March 2013.

SOLIDAR, a progressive European network of 59 NGOs active in over 90 countries striving to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide, works on a daily basis in equal partnership with civil society organisations, think tanks, social movements and independent trade unions in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Western Sahara. This work is based on SOLIDAR's historical commitment – for more than 60 years – to empower local activists; in the seventies, our network supported movements in Spain, Portugal and Greece to break the yoke of dictatorship, while in the nineties we supported 'actors for change' to promote democratic transitions in Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans.

In 2012, SOLIDAR together with members and partners organised two extensive consultations amongst more than 80 civil society organisations, think tanks, social movements, progressive political forces and independent trade unions during two international conferences: [26-27 June in Brussels \(Belgium\)](#) and [13-14 November in Amman \(Jordan\)](#). These consultations aimed at setting up a new agenda that promotes the development of modern pluralistic societies in the Middle East and North Africa and

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to bring forward the social dimension into the development equation, in which civil society organisations, think tanks, social movements and independent trade unions are recognised as a crucial actors to ensure the respect of civic, economic, social and cultural rights and for ensuring equal opportunities – both women and men – for all.

As was indicated at the beginning of this letter we hope that you will continue with your relentless commitment to providing support to 'actors for change' in this region during these challenging times of democratic transition, and we would like to invite you to join the efforts of SOLIDAR, members and progressive partners to promote **Social Justice in the Middle East and North Africa**.

Today, SOLIDAR will join today the World Social Forum, where we will formally launch our new platform in the Middle East and North Africa on 28 March at a reception organised together with the Global Progressive Forum, bringing together over 100 civil society organisations, think tanks, social movements, progressive political forces and independent trade unions from the region.

We remain at your disposal for any further comments or remarks, and look forward to your response to this open invitation.

With kind regards,



Conny Reuter

Secretary General SOLIDAR



SOLIDAR is a European network of 59 NGOs active in over 90 countries working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the concerns of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the policy sectors social affairs, international cooperation and lifelong learning. For more info www.solidar.org