

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY: ITS CHANGING FACE How to harness the best from the new equality and social justice movements?

Concept note

1. BACKGROUND

The current global pandemic crisis has been a strong reminder of how we are all part of the same humanity and, at the same time, how inequalities are still deeply embedded in our global system. COVID-19 made clear that we are not all equally equipped to ensure our own safety and protection and for those who are already suffering from other crises - famine and droughts, the harsh consequences of climate change, discrimination, conflict and wars - the stake is even higher.

To confront inequalities and divides, many are voices today that continue to champion international solidarity as the answer to current and future crises, and as a matter of global morality and long-term vision. Just recently, the responses of the [UN75](#) survey¹ place second the “strengthening of solidarity among peoples and countries” in the priorities to recover better from the current pandemic. Whether we are confronting a pandemic, global warming, income inequality, erosion of social rights, racism or gender-based violence, solidarity depends on how we come together and how we understand and assume our responsibilities towards each other.

But what is our understanding of international solidarity? What forms does it take today? What are its prospects or real impact in the current context of globalisation? Is there a future for international solidarity when we see a trend of countries moving towards a more protectionist and autocratic approach? Is international solidarity motivated by a shared moral duty or a rational shared interest?

In order to raise awareness on the importance of international solidarity and to contribute to a reflection that provides answers to the questions above, the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity of the Council of Europe – the North-South Centre – launched the public campaign “[One World, Our World: #SolidAction](#)”.

#SolidAction is a global call for collective mobilisation for solidarity to fight against inequalities. The campaign aims to showcase solidarity initiatives around the world and to mobilise people to join a global debate, create a common platform on solidarity and to collectively build a roadmap to place solidarity at the core of global governance.

The debate starts with a series of video-interviews and a webinar that kicks off the reflection looking into international solidarity today, its scope, main agents and effectiveness.

¹ To mark its 75th anniversary in 2020, the United Nations launched UN75 online survey to encourage people worldwide to share their thoughts around current and emerging global trends and to define how enhanced international cooperation can help realize a better world by 2045. Accessed on 28 June 2020 the survey collects close to 250 000 responses: <https://un75.online/>

2. FORMS OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

During the last 30 years, globalisation has transformed and challenged social relations and models of production worldwide. Traditional forms of solidarity, and the legal frameworks that sustain it, have evolved and developed into new forms. The current trends of solidarity include long-term or short-term movements that seek transformation towards a more just and sustainable world, of greater equality and social justice, for present and future generations. The organisations behind these movements operate supranationally, but also through a myriad of local networks that, implicitly or explicitly, connect with the wider global concerns. Just recently, in the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic, we have seen a renewed wave of international solidarity initiatives from a people in different parts of the world to address various and different needs.

Guiding questions:

- How could international solidarity be described today? What forms does it take nowadays?
- What are the strengths of the current forms of international solidarity? Are they truly impactful?
- What are the effective frameworks and tools out there today to sustain solidarity efforts and what are the key principles for success?
- Who are the main and most influential international solidarity agents and how could their efforts for a more equal, just, and sustainable world be better supported?

3. OBJECTIVES

The aim of the webinar is to provide a space for dialogue and reflection about international solidarity today, its scope, main agents and effectiveness.

- To raise awareness about the importance of international solidarity as a matter of long-term vision to provide solutions for current and future crisis.
- To mobilise people worldwide from all sectors to join a global debate and create a common platform on solidarity that considers the diversity of realities, needs and perspectives.
- To exchange good practice, inspiring examples and very practical gestures of solidarity.
- To collect ideas and proposals to feed the annual [Lisbon Forum](#) - tipping point of the SolidAction campaign - to collectively build a roadmap to place solidarity at the core of global governance

3. DRAFT PROGRAMME

Moderated panel discussion followed by Q&A session

Moderator:

Ms Catherine Burton, Council of Europe Directorate of Communication

Invited experts:

Mr Giuseppe Palmisano, President of the European Committee of Social Rights, Council of Europe

Mr Raúl Acosta-García, Professor of Social and Political Anthropology, University of Konstanz

Ms Avril Benoit, Executive Director, Doctors Without Borders

5. TARGETED PARTICIPANTS

The webinar aims at engaging a wide diversity of stakeholders around the world:

- **Decision Makers:** including but not limited to government representatives, as well as representatives of international organisations
- **Civil Society Organisations & Informal Groups/Movements** to help discover and unveil actions of solidarity as well as connecting the discussion with the grassroots
- **General Public:** seeking the active engagement of a wider audience and the active support of committed citizens.