



Report on the 14th September 2007 meeting in STOCKHOLM

with - ATTAC Sweden, Germany, France –SOLIDAIRES France – Fédération Syndicale Unitaire France - CGIL FP Italy – SWEDISH TRANSPORT WORKER'S UNION – AITEC/IPAM France – Sindacato di Lavoro Intercategorial – SUG Sweden - Social Forum Turkey – KESK Turkey - Swedish Network for Common Welfare

Program :

"Networks in Europe: cooperation on common ground"

The European network for social services has already identified overarching **themes** which could form a basis for thematic cooperation and sharing of information. These themes are:

1. Alternative ways of financing public services (including taxes and PPPs)
2. Democratising public services (workers, users, citizens etc)
3. Struggles and actions
4. Challenges and threats to Public Services
5. Common principles for public services (EU legislative framework for protection of workers and citizens rights)

Those themes will be developed in our Brussels Meeting 5th and 6th and november, call for participation and co-organisation of the round tables is now opened. A sending will be diffused in October with the registration form.

“How can networks cooperate before, during and after the European Social Forum in Malmö 2008?”

List of proposals (non exhaustive)

- We need to create positive visions of the future, not merely fight against current attacks on our welfare systems
- We need to collect and share the experiences we have in our different countries from privatisation and new public management, to be able to use each other's experiences in national/local initiatives/campaigns
- We need to find ways of mobilising people jointly, and work harder on creating the visions for how we want our public services to function
- A space in the FSE website (<http://www.fse-esf.org/>) is now dedicated to our network, it's up to us to make it live with relevant contributions. A dynamic agenda (with links) is also available to insert the coming and past issues.
- The issues are different in different countries, from privatising of schools and healthcare to energy and water. However, much of the general experience of debate climate, a dominating neo-liberal agenda and the need to joint forces among social movements is the same, which means we have a lot to gain from cooperating and sharing of information.
- The ESF 2008 should be seen as an opportunity to involve Eastern European countries much more in the Network. Countries in Eastern Europe are often used as trial ground for privatisation experiments, which are then also practiced in Western Europe. By early sharing of information about this, we could prevent it from spreading to other countries and also form opinion against this kind of experiments in vulnerable countries in general

- The Europe thermometer (the response to the Eurobarometer, which goes deeper in assessing the quality of social services) should be used to collect and disseminate relevant information material and analysis on public services ahead of the ESF 2008.

- Two major initiatives of importance are underway at EU level, which we need to relate to urgently:
 - The EU constitution (decision to be made in October 2007)
 - The Global Europe initiative (links to WTO/GATS among others)

For these issues it will be too late to wait until sep 2007 (e.g. the EU internal law of competition). We need to find a way to press public opinion now, and do it as an overall defence of public services, and not any particular sector. The assembly in Brussels in December should be used for commenting on the possible consequences of the Global Europe strategy

- We should use the ESF / Networks to share ideas on possible joint initiatives/campaigns of the same kind as before the Bolkestein-directive decision. It would be good to organise communities/groups of sharing on the ESF website based on:

- Examples of privatisation and its consequences (for other countries to use in their struggles)
- Good examples/role models (such as the "Model municipalities" in Norway) of where social services have been developed and/or successfully reclaimed
- Examples of how to mobilise and involve people (in the fight for social services) Examples of how to reach out in the public debate with information, facts and experiences. How do we "win" the debate?

- We should share information about all rallies/meetings on the theme of public services up until September 2008 (calendar function on the ESF webpage, where users themselves can upload information on their planned events?)

- We should also share information about how to work successfully with trade unions. Perhaps contacts at European level (or with progressive national trade unions) could encourage (other) national trade unions to collaborate in our initiatives

- We should share ideas and information on how to mobilise the workers/employees and how to transmit our work to "normal citizens"

- The water issue could perhaps be used as an "entry point" for creating awareness among citizens regarding privatisation in general, and to enlarge the network. This issue may be easier for people to understand, than are issues like health or education.

Next meeting of the network

The next meeting of the network will take place the 30th of November 2007 in the frame of the ESF European Preparatory Assembly in Istanbul (<http://www.fse-esf.org/spip.php?article232>)

To contact the network, for any information, contribution, sub or unsubscription:
<mailto:publicservices-network@fse-esf.org>