

ACTIVITY REPORT

CSOs ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE ON THE GROUND

STUDY VISIT TO CALAIS AND SOLIDAR MIGRATION TASK FORCE MEETING

10-11 October 2019 | CALAIS, France

18 representatives of SOLIDAR members from nine different countries met in Calais, France, on 10 and 11 October to join SOLIDAR's second annual study visit, jointly organised with our member [La Ligue de l'Enseignement du Pas de Calais](#).

Calais was identified as the location for our members to better understand and learn from the work by La Ligue de l'Enseignement, together with other CSOs to promote social inclusion for migrants left abandoned by the State. The Study visit showcased the essential role of CSOs as well as the need for social investment to fight against social injustice. Calais embodies the extent to which the criminalisation of solidarity begets social exclusion, isolation and social malaise. And why it is crucial to continue **learning from this experience and advocating for SOLIDARity, in Calais and all over Europe.**

Session 1: Welcome reception at *Maison pour tous*

10 October

The Study Visit began at the [Maison pour Tous](#), an association born in 1901 to promote social and cultural aggregation in Calais. Over lunch, SOLIDAR members broke the ice by getting to know each other and were welcomed by the SOLIDAR team that illustrated why the

timeframe, the location and the topic addressed by this study visit are notably relevant.



Session 2: Visit at *Auberge des Migrants*

Participants and members of our host organisation - La ligue du Pas de Calais - moved onto the first activity by visiting the [Auberge des Migrants](#). The Auberge is a warehouse where 30 to 70 volunteers per day, who are active in the nine NGOs present in the warehouse, come together. They efficiently organise and manage the preparation and distribution of meals, clothes and all the other basic essentials for the migrants living in the area of Pas de Calais. SOLIDAR members had the opportunity to meet and exchange views with the volunteers and some representatives of the warehouse to understand not only how it works from a logistic perspective but notably how the NGOs are providing a wide array of social services that ought to be set up and implemented by public policies. Volunteers have reported on the main logistics-related

difficulties, not least stemming from the lack of funding, the administrative burdens and the unfriendly behaviour of the local police. Since 2014, the array of actions undertaken by the NGOs settled at the *Auberge* has risen in line with the increased number of migrants, and the consequential creation of the Calais camp known as “The Jungle” in April 2015. The camp was recently dismantled by the public authorities, yet they did not provide any better alternative. As a consequence, most of the migrants now live on the streets.

Participants were particularly interested in observing the organisational aspects of the *Auberge*, making it possible for 200 volunteers from nine NGOs to work together and provide support to migrants in an effective manner, in spite of all the above mentioned hardships.



Session 3: Meeting with *Plateforme de Service aux Migrants* and thematic roundtables with local associations and practitioners



The third part of the Study visit started with the **welcome remarks delivered by the vice-president of La Ligue de l'enseignement, Eric Favay, and by the President of La Ligue du Pas de Calais, Daniel Boys**. After a brief introduction on the history of the organisation, both spoke about the role that La Ligue plays in France and Europe to support the access to education of young people and adults, with particular attention to those vulnerable categories prone to early school leaving and social exclusion, as for exemple migrants and unaccompanied minors.

Next was the presentation delivered by the members of [Plateforme de Service aux Migrants](#). This **network of associations** offers support and services to migrants by:

- Organising and facilitating communications between volunteers and migrant people;
- Collecting information thanks to the support of sociologists and ethno-psychiatrists, about migratory routes, migrants' cultural backgrounds, and – when the Jungle was still there - their daily life difficulties in the camp;
- Compiling a list of all the social actors supporting migrants and providing services for them;
- Supporting other associations by getting them in touch with each other and with legal advisors and lawyers;

- Helping migrants to leave unsuitable shelters;
- Raising awareness by organising local events involving elected representatives.



Thanks to Marie Le Ray and the other colleagues of the PSM, other local associations working and acting in the field of humanitarian aid and integration joined this part of Study visit, enriching the discussion thanks to their experiences and professional background. Four thematic roundtables followed, organised for participants to promote and enhance the exchange of positions, experience and practices between local actors and SOLIDAR members. The topics addressed by participants in this last session of the first day were: how to cope with police violence; how to empower migrants; how to deal with unaccompanied minors and, not least, what are the commonalities among members' activities in different countries.



Day 2: SOLIDAR Task Force on Migration meeting

11th October



Maison pour Tous hosted the Task Force on Migration of SOLIDAR members for this second annual meeting. The chair of the Task Force, Zuzanna Schreiberova (MKC), kicked off the meeting addressing communications-related issues for NGOs working on migration. The discussion then shifted to SOLIDAR's advocacy strategy on migration, drawing from the changing political context and evolving priorities. Members shared their thoughts identifying their common strengths and an improved mutual sharing of information to step up the impact of our advocacy action across Europe.

Indeed, the meeting offered a first overview of members' activities: which are the issues on which they focus their actions, the main challenges, and their future objectives on migration and integration. The discussion led to the definition of a timeline for the next trimester.

The Study visit ended with a final discussion on the political situation in Calais, chaired by Daniel Boys. Members left the venue with an enhanced knowledge of their common **strengths and of how to be more effective at tackling together the "criminalisation of solidarity" while**

solidar

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la ligue de
l'enseignement
un avenir par l'éducation populaire



 TOGETHER FOR
SOCIAL EUROPE

advocating for concrete and long-term policies for the integration of migrants.

