



**solidar**  
FOUNDATION



Annual General Assembly  
ACTIVITY REPORT

# SOLIDAR FOUNDATION ACTIVITY REPORT JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

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## Foreword from Mikael Leyi, Secretary General

The past year has posed new challenges to SOLIDAR Foundation and over the last few months, an unprecedented pandemic has shaken our communities. Our network finds itself today at a crossroad, at the same time as the European Union project and the whole society. This unique situation can bring important opportunities for our network by framing our new strategic orientation and operational plan in the systemic and transformative change that we demand for our society. I am looking forward to seizing this opportunity together with you.

I intend to bring energy, commitment and a progressive heart to our current and future work and struggles and I hope that you are as keen as I am to advance the work of our network and make SOLIDAR Foundation the most important partner for Europe's progressives in the years to come. To make the network work for you in the best way we can! Together we have to build and structure a progressive answer to the nationalistic and populist right threatening not just our democracies and sustainable future but posing a very direct threat to our movement.

Europe and the world are suffering from the effects of the global pandemic of Covid-19. There is good reason to regard this global systemic shock as a prelude to the dramatic effects of the ongoing climate and environmental crisis. If the current experience tells us anything, it is that a strong society based on trust and solidarity is needed to face the challenges it comes with. Our members have made the case for a solidarity-driven response daily during the pandemic and we proudly made the best practices from across Europe as visible as possible to European policymakers. During this crisis, social investments, in health, support systems, education and lifelong learning, has proven to be fundamental to secure welfare for all. The pandemic has also unearthed for all how interdependent and similar our world is. It has revealed how vulnerable our lives and how unequal our societies are, and, in the most dramatic way, it has once again proved that the neoliberal model is flawed and extremely dangerous.

The time is now to set a new political agenda in Europe and globally based on the progressive values of democracy, equality, sustainability, and solidarity. The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the Recovery Fund presented by the European Commission on the 27th of May this year must be commended for the solidarity-driven approach that underpins both the proposals. However, it is necessary that European funds are conditioned to the full respect of the Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and that they reach those sectors and citizens that are worse off. For this reason, we regret the choice to decrease the ambition for ESF+ as well as for Erasmus+, while we welcome the increase in budget compared to the Council proposal. Moreover, it is regrettable that the Global EU response to COVID 19 does not make available new EU funding to respond to the pandemic but builds on the existing EU budget without prioritising the most marginalised and excluded people. We cannot merely go back to where we were, we must seize the opportunity to create a new normal and advance our goals for a sustainable Europe.

We, progressive civil society organisations, have unmistakably shown, evident during the pandemic, our essential role to push for increased equality and justice alongside the most vulnerable and poor in communities across Europe. Our annual publications demonstrate the crucial function of our members for our societies to stay democratic and inclusive, and advance social progress. The funding that grants the operational capacity of civil society

must therefore be preserved and further enlarged in the financial streams that will put the proposed MFF in motion over the next seven years.

It is time to build up our societies and economies again, and as we do, we are also faced with multiple threats that demand both local and global answers from our progressive movement:

- The climate and environmental crisis pose a real and immediate threat to our civilization
- Rapidly growing inequalities and destructive conflicts tear our societies apart
- Democracy, democratic values, freedoms and rights, as well as regionalism and multilateralism are under attack in a way not seen in decades.

Europe has a special role to play in this transformative period. Collective action is needed and SOLIDAR Foundation shall be at the forefront with the European and International labor movement, the broad citizen's movement and all its progressive allies. We witness the establishment of a global movement for progressive development that shares the aim to advance democracy, equality, and sustainability. A change that is necessary to achieve the aims of the progressive left of freedom, social justice, peace, workers', and human rights. SOLIDAR Foundation has an important role in Europe and beyond to foster and support this movement and to build alliances with likeminded organizations and networks.

There is a need for further European and international cooperation to safeguard universal access to healthcare, to reinvent the economic model for the well-being of all, to develop a new social contract, to create new jobs, and a sustainable society. Democratic citizenship and quality education are key to win the societal transformation that we need. We now have an opportunity to rethink and redo as we rebuild our societies and economies:

- The need for a new social contract, a new societal model, and a sustainable development path
- The need for collective action to tackle inequality, discrimination, and access to rights
- The need for a strong welfare state with the capacity to cater for all citizens on equal terms
- The need for decent work, quality and affordable education and health care for all

During this annual assembly we set the organisation in the right direction to be at the forefront of these challenges together, showing the way for cooperation, solidarity, and progressive boldness.

## About SOLIDAR Foundation

### Mission

The SOLIDAR Foundation is the cooperation platform of SOLIDAR; a European network of NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR brings together 60 member organisations based in 25 EU member states and in 6 candidate countries.

We work together in Social Affairs, International Cooperation and Lifelong Learning. The Building Learning Societies pillar includes 23 members, covering 18 EU member states. SOLIDAR Foundation engages through member and partner organisations citizens in EU decision making processes, empowers people through lifelong learning and VET, and voices their concerns to the EU institutions by carrying out active lobbying, project management and coordination, policy monitoring, research and awareness-raising.

SOLIDAR Foundation cooperates with progressive civil society and labour movement organizations, is a founding member of EUCIS-LLL and European Year of Citizens 2013 Alliance and works in strategic partnership with ETUI and EVBB. Since 1948, SOLIDAR has been working towards achieving more social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR Foundation is funded by contributions from member organisations and by project funding from European and international institutions.

### **SOLIDAR and SOLIDAR Foundation members**

#### **In alphabetical order**

1. Alianza por la Solidaridad (APS)
2. Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB)
3. Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO)
4. Arbeiterwohlfahrt International (AWO INTL)
5. ARCI Associazione di Promozione Sociale (ARCI)
6. ARCS Culture Solidali (ARCS)
7. Asociácia odborných pracovníkov sociálnych služieb (AOPSS)
8. Asociația pentru Dialog, Ocupare și Migrație (CONNECT)
9. Assamblea de Cooperacion por la Paz (ACPP)
10. AUSER
11. Berufsförderungsinstitut Oberösterreich (BFI OÖ)
12. Center for Peace Studies (CMS)
13. Centres d'Entraînement aux Méthodes d'Education Active (CEMEA)
14. CGIL International Cooperation Network (CGIL)
15. Community Development Institute (CDI)
16. Czech Council on Foreign Relations - Rada Pro Mezinarodni Vztahy (CCFR)
17. DGB-Bildungswerk (DGB BW)

18. Drusto Evropska mreza za enakost spolov (CEE Network for Gender Issues)
19. Fagligt Internationalt Center (FIC)
20. Fonds voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking - Socialistische Solidariteit (FOS)
21. Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS)
22. Foundation Max van der Stoep (FMS)
23. Humanitas
24. Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC)
25. Institut für Sozialarbeit und Sozialpädagogik (ISS)
26. Institute for Social Integration (ISI)
27. Instituto de Soldadura e Qualidade (ISQ)
28. Instituto Sindical de Cooperación al Desarrollo (ISCOD)
29. International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA)
30. International Solidarity Foundation (ISF)
31. International Union of Tenants (IUT)
32. Internationaler Bund (IB)
33. IRIS Association Network of providers of social services (IRIS)
34. Istituto Sindacale di Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (ISCOS)
35. Johannes Mihkelsoni Keskus (JMK)
36. La Liga Española de la Educación y la Cultura Popular
37. La Ligue de l'Enseignement
38. Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees (LIZDA)
39. Lithuanian Labour Education Society (LLES)
40. Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad (MPDL)
41. Multicultural Center Prague (MKC)
42. Olof Palme International Center (OPIC)
43. Pour la Solidarité (PLS)
44. Progetto Sud-UIL
45. Samaritan International (SAMI)
46. Samariter-Bund (ASBÖ)
47. Solidar Suisse (SAH)
48. Solidarité Laïque (SL)
49. Solidarité Syndicale (OGBL)
50. Solidarity Overseas Service (SOS)
51. SolSoc
52. Sosial demokrasi Vakfri (SODEV)
53. Union Aid Abroad (APHEDA)
54. Volkshilfe Österreich Bundesverband (VH)

- 55. Volunteering Matters
- 56. Willi-Eichler Bildungswerk (WEB)
- 57. Worker's Educational Association (WEA)

### **SOLIDAR Foundation Board**

Board members are representatives of SOLIDAR Foundation full members who are appointed by the Annual General Assembly.

#### President

- Francisca Sauquillo - Movimiento por la Paz - MPDL, Spain

#### Vice-President

- Sergio Bassoli - CGIL, Italy

#### Treasurer

- Vacant - Vice- President Sergio Bassoli acts as Treasurer, until end of the mandate of the current Board (2021).

#### Board members

- Jean-Michel Ducomte, La Ligue de l'enseignement, France
- Claus Larsen Jensen, Forum for International Cooperation, Denmark
- Isabelle Palanchon, CEMEA, France
- Francesca Chiavacci, ARCI, Italy
- Zuzana Schreiberova, Multicultural Center Prague, Czech Republic
- Klaus Thieme, SOLIDAR Suisse, Switzerland
- Alain Canone, Solidarité Laïque, France
- Anna Sundström, Olof Palme International Center, Sweden
- María del Rosario Sánchez, La Liga Española de la Educación (Cádiz), Spain

#### Secretary General

- Mikael Leyi

## **Projects overview**

### **SOLIDAR Foundation**

#### **Erasmus+ (Operating Grant)**

1/1/2018 – 31/12/2020

Promoting the cross-sectoral cooperation between stakeholders involved in education and training Education and Lifelong learning Forum (ELF)  
Activities of ELF – Education and Lifelong Learning forum

#### **ECO-IN**

Algorithm for New Ecological Approaches to Inclusion – Erasmus +  
01/01/2020 – 31/12/2022

Setting up good practices for the whole-school approach enabling learning environments to be more inclusive and, at the same time, developing effective monitoring tools. The project will draw conclusions in the form of a white paper for policy makers.

#### **#YouthAgainstCyberBullying**

Erasmus +  
02/09/2019 – 01/09/2021

International Training for young people to become multipliers at the national level of anti-cyber bullying techniques.  
Development of a dedicated application.  
Drafting of an e-brochure addressing the issue of cyber bullying among young people.



## Partnerships and Alliances

In the reporting period we have continuously been active within the different platforms and civil society gatherings. The cooperation with the Trade Union movement is also continuously consolidated.

### **S&D Group**

- SOLIDAR Foundation have taken care of its ties with the group in the aftermath of the European elections to guarantee the visibility of the organisation among the newly elected members
- SOLIDAR Foundation organised a number of conferences in cooperation with the Group to present and discuss the outcomes of our publications (e.g. Civic responsibilities online and offline) and to debate current policy developments. As a result, SOLIDAR Foundation was invited to stakeholders consultations, and in general to share our vision, on a number of major issues (e.g. European Semester; Impact of A.I. on civil society as well as on education).

### **Party of the European Socialists (PES)**

- SOLIDAR Foundation continues to be invited to presidency meetings, coordination meetings and the policy network meetings of PES.

### **Young European Socialists**

- SOLIDAR Foundation attended the summer camp in Bulgaria and organized a workshop on the cooperation between progressive CSOs, social movements and progressive youth organisations.

### **Foundation for European Progressive Studies**

- FEPS and SOLIDAR Foundation are engaged on a partnership basis.
- The 2020 edition of SOLIDAR Foundation annual publication “Citizenship & Lifelong Learning Monitor” was released jointly with FEPS, and the online conference to present and discuss the main outcomes was jointly organised as well.

### **Progressive Alliance**

- Since its creation in 2014 SOLIDAR Foundation is involved in the Progressive Alliance, a global progressive network. SOLIDAR Foundation’s former Secretary General, Conny Reuter, is now the PA Coordinator so there is a permanent opportunity to be in touch with the activities of the network.

### **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)**

- Despite Conny Reuter not being co-chair of the Liaison group due to his change of role, SOLIDAR Foundation continue to be part of the group.
- We have been formally invited to the Civil Society Days 2020, on April 22-23 that have so far been postponed in which have co-organised a workshop in collaboration with Social Platform.
- SOLIDAR Foundation was also invited, as usual, to several working groups of the EESC.

## **Lifelong Learning Platform**

- SOLIDAR Foundation was actively involved in working groups, particularly on ET post 2020 and the future of Erasmus+ where we advocated for better inclusion and accompanied mobility
- SOLIDAR Foundation attended high-level meetings with EC on the future of operating grants for Civil Society

## Building Learning Societies

### Members-centered activities

Following up on SOLIDAR Foundation's mission, we have implemented actions and contributed to the policy-making processes to strengthen lifelong learning. In doing so, we also reinforced SOLIDAR Foundation's commitment to ensure quality public policies in the field of education and training, to contribute to building just and equal societies in which education is a base for providing equal opportunities to all.

This has been reflected by activities of which the themes and formats were planned in line with the current developments in the EU and its agenda (Brexit and the debate on the Future of Europe, the aftermath of the European elections in 2019, Developments in the proceedings stemming from Article 7, Shrinking Civic Space, European Pillar of Social Rights, future of EU enlargement, Rise of the far-right extremism, a New Skills Agenda and the Digital Education Action Plan). The COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020 has changed the priorities and the calendar of the European institutions and, notably, it has also profoundly affected members' activities. Therefore, the 2020 work-plan of SOLIDAR Foundation has swiftly adapted to match the emerging members' advocacy needs, to give visibility to the work on the ground that members' carried out to support their communities and to make sure that the network stayed relevant and sustainable in such defining times.

By bringing together experts and representatives of organisations and institutions who are part of education and training associations at local, national and European level, and by facilitating the work towards comprehensive and mutually beneficial outcomes, SOLIDAR Foundation carried out a number of activities that strengthened our network and brought tangible outcomes to contribute to the EU policy-making. These include the organisation of:

- [The annual Training Academy](#) (Athens, Greece)
- Conferences ([International Conference in Bratislava, Slovakia](#);) and online conferences ([Civic responsibilities online and offline: Lifelong Learning for Digital and Traditional Citizenship](#));
- Study visits (Bratislava, Slovakia; [Limerick, Ireland](#));
- The active participation in partners' conferences as well as institutional ones, where members could showcase their best practices and gain peer learning opportunities ([YES Summer Camp in Varna, Bulgaria](#); [European Vocational Skills Week 2019](#) in Helsinki, Finland; [Biennale of the 'NEW Education'](#) in Brussels, Belgium; [ENVISION 4.7 Conference](#) in Helsinki, Finland; [LLL Week 2019](#) in Brussels, Belgium)
- On top of these organisational efforts stood, of course, the members' forum meetings, which were called on a regular basis (June 2019 - Bratislava, Slovakia; December 2019 - Brussels, Belgium; March 2020 - Limerick, Ireland; June 2020 - online).

Members were involved in the development of the SOLIDAR Foundation initiative on increasing funding for Erasmus+ program, as well as in the information loop on the consultation processes. We encouraged members to participate in the consultation and we simultaneously participated, bringing in the position and propositions discussed in the statutory and experts meetings. Enhancing members' participation in the EC Fora and Policy debates was also a remarkable stream of last year activities, as well as members'

involvement in conferences organised by the European Institutions, as well as by other stakeholders, by inviting them to speak and present their perspectives on policy developments.

The collection of our members' case-studies remain key, collecting, disseminating and up-scaling at the EU level the best practices identified through a diverse set of tools (e.g. by serving as a model for writing Erasmus+ project proposal; using them in position papers; submitting them for different awards etc.).

The ongoing pandemic was also the opportunity to stress the essential role that SOLIDAR Foundation members play to support their communities: they have been putting solidarity into social distancing, and the [Briefing Notes](#) that were drafted to report this work were also the basis for a contribution to the consultation launched by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU (FRA) on this matter. SOLIDAR best practices were featured in the dissemination endeavour of such best practices carried out by FRA.

### **EU Policy analysis and evidence-based policy recommendations**

Throughout 2019 and 2020 we worked with outcomes and policy recommendations that resulted from [Citizenship and Lifelong Learning Monitor 2018](#) and [2019](#). The Monitor is a tool that was designed by an internal working group and aims to explore three thematic areas, directly derived from the Paris Declaration's objectives, and to monitor the situation in different countries as well as the situation and positions of members of SOLIDAR Foundation.

Having derived the 2017 edition of the Monitor from three thematic issues reflecting the Paris Declaration's objectives – i.e. Ensuring that people acquire civic and intercultural competences; Enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly regarding the use of the internet and social media; Promoting intercultural dialogue – and to further highlight the successful work of our members, the 2018 and 2019 editions went further into understanding the processes and methods for the promotion and delivery of citizenship education in Europe by non-formal education providers. The collected data and analysis were used to address members' needs; to identify best practices; and to support our advocacy demands. The Online conference *Civic responsibilities online and offline: lifelong learning for digital and traditional citizenship education* represented a high-level opportunity to present and discuss the outcomes of the comparative report thanks to the participation in the discussion of 18 experts, including members of SOLIDAR Foundation as well as policy makers, researchers and partner organisations, joined by 70+ participants.

The publication came to its 4th edition, and for the first time it was jointly released by SOLIDAR Foundation and FEPS. The 2019 edition of the report culminates with recommendations, stemming from a comparative analysis of [the 8 country reports conducted](#) (featuring Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Serbia, Spain, and the UK as investigated countries).

The monitor revealed the need for Member States to better support NFIL practitioners providing the learners with skills and educational tools complementary to those available in a formal education system. Consequently, the Monitor identifies the need to develop a whole school approach and to foster cross-sectoral cooperation in the educational process. This includes digital literacy for active citizenship, about which the Monitor highlights the lack of

adequate equipment of competences for learners to be critical thinkers when using digital tools but also for teachers and more at large for the infrastructures to enable learners to acquire these competences. The 2019 edition of the Monitor highlighted in particular the best practices coming from SOLIDAR Foundation member organisations and built on that basis a comprehensive set of policy recommendations.

Following up on developments around European Education area 2025 as well as proposals for Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and in light of the upcoming Digital Education Action Plan, and based on our past positions and interest of members we issued positions and contributed to numerous public and stakeholders consultations held in the EP, EESC, CoR and EC.

Members were provided information and updates on the EU policy developments during the statutory meetings and through our communication channels. In so doing, the awareness related to the decision-making mechanisms and the adopted policies have increased, especially with regards to ET2020 (and post 2020), European Pillar of Social Rights (Implementation), European Education Area 2025, Multiannual Financial Framework (Erasmus+), Digital Education Action Plan and the European Green Deal.

## Communications and Events

### Communications Strategy Development

In January 2020 a draft document was created, and revised in May 2020. It briefly presents the state of affairs and proposes a strategy for the external communications in SOLIDAR Foundation, mainly addressing audiences, online channels, social media tools, issues per “pillar” and monitoring.

It intends to be a useful guideline and first familiarisation for any person taking a role in the communication’s department or working related to the communications of SOLIDAR Foundation. **It should be completed more extensively**, including input of the Board Members, new Secretary General and staff, as well as edited and **revised periodically - at least once a year**.

The content proceeds from a compilation and editing of previous archived material, and newly developed ideas, emerging from the short analysis done by the current communications officer (on the role since 22 October 2019).

This strategy aims to show how effective communications can:

- help us achieve our overall organisational objectives of advocating for social justice in EU and beyond.
- engage effectively with key identified stakeholders.
- showcase the success of our work and ensure people understand what we do in SOLIDAR Foundation.
- change behaviour and perceptions, advocating for SOLIDAR Foundation’s values, when and where necessary.

In the transition period (Jan 2020-April 2020) some issues identified as urgent were addressed and solved. Work remains to be done in **key areas such as planning, monitoring and strategic development, the latter in close cooperation with SG Mikael Leyi**.

### Silver Rose Awards 2020 – SOLIDAR’s Flagship event

Since the year 2000, SOLIDAR organises annually its Silver Rose Awards in the European Parliament in cooperation with the S&D Group, an occasion to celebrate Civil Society Organisations and individuals whose extraordinary struggles contribute greatly to social justice and solidarity throughout the world.

#### Key points:

- It is 19<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Award, maintaining its “space” in the Brussels medium.
- Granted the patronage from the European Parliament, and our media partner for the ceremony and dissemination of the winner’s stories is EURACTIV.
- Received over 40 nominations (2019 = 29), of which 34 were “valid”.
- The Silver Rose Jury for the 2020 edition is a showcase of the engagement with diverse audiences and their compromise to this progressive award. They also provide their support to the diffusion of the winners’ stories, and the setting up of meetings for them once in Brussels, to aid in the promotion of their work.

1. Biljana Borzan MEP, Croatia
2. Udo Bullmann MEP, Germany
3. Evin Incir MEP, Sweden
4. Pierfrancesco Majorino MEP, Italy
5. Julie Ward MEP, UK
6. Alberto Alemanno, The Good Lobby
7. Victor Báez, ITUC
8. Tanya Cox, CONCORD
9. Zita Gurmai, PES Women
10. Esther Lynch, ETUC
11. Brikena Xhomaqi, Lifelong Learning Platform

The [2020 winners](#) are:

1. Together for Social Europe Award - Daša Šašić Šilović
2. Organising International Solidarity Award - Sea-Watch
3. Building Learning Societies Award - The Creative Communities Group
4. Special Jury Award - Japhet Moyo – ZCTU

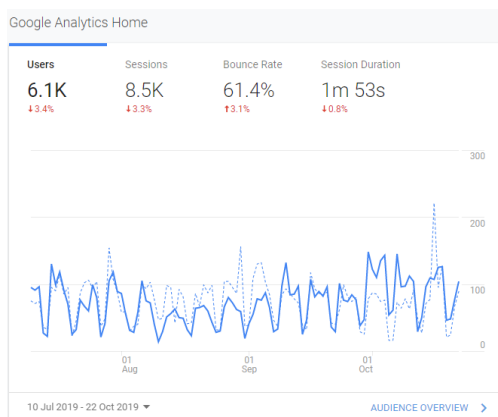
**Postponement:** After the coronavirus crisis and the impossibility of physical events, our Board decided to postpone the ceremony. All stakeholders involved were informed, and the idea of showcasing the Winners' stories on our media is a way to promote their work. We have requested their permission to do so, it has been granted by all winners except Sea-Watch (no answer).

**Future developments:** A draft series of public guidelines as criteria to make the nominations is developed, and the possibility to publish the full list of nominees before the Jury votes will be discussed to aim for transparency to the process and shows the array of choice, giving also visibility to the nominees.

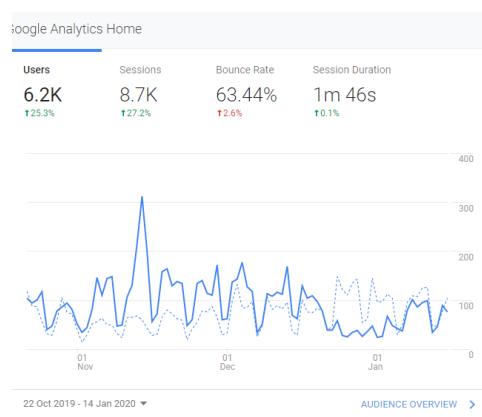
### Social Media presence and reactivation of LinkedIn account

From October 2019, the posts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn became more regular. The stable interaction with other organisations and stakeholders in online platforms has allowed us to gain more followership, plus traffic to our website. In addition, content we shared has been liked, spread and commented by VIPs in the digital context (MEPs, media).

**10 Jul 2019 – 22 Oct 2019**



**22 Oct 2019 – Jan 2020**



Graphics show that the commitment to upload content and link posts to the website, has payed off, receiving a 25% more traffic than in the previous trimester (~1000 more visitors).

LinkedIn deserves a special note, as the issues that could be of service to professional networks are now being published in this channel too. This allows for a more diversified audience accessing our work, and possibly aids in external funding search within the private sector environment.

### **Publications management**

Our main publications are being handled and designed contemplating the members' feedback on the need for a common visual identity for both SOLIDAR and SOLIDAR Foundation. This may lead, in the near future, to the possibility of issuing the 3 Monitors (1 per pillar) as a single package.

Also, together with the designers, we have developed infographics and charts which aid in conveying main messages and make the reports more attractive to readers, helping them focus attention.



Example of Monitor from SOLIDAR Foundation.



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