

The EESC and Social Economy Europe call for an ambitious European Action Plan for the Social Economy by 2018



A workshop of the EESC 2nd EU Day of Social Economy Enterprises "Shaping the future of Europe" (Source: EESC PRESS)

Brussels, Friday 30 June 2017.

On Wednesday 28th June took place in Brussels the 2nd edition of the **European Day of Social Economy Enterprises**, untitled "**Shaping the Future of Europe**". This important event was organised by the European Economic and Social Committee and attended by over 130 participants mainly, social economy representatives, EESC members, EU officials, MEPs and high-level representatives of Member States.

EESC members **Michael Smyth**, Vice-President, **Oliver Röpke**, President of the Permanent Study Group on Social Economy Enterprises, and **Martin Siecker**, President of the Section on the Single Market, agreed on stressing the **key role of social economy enterprises and organisations in shaping the future of Europe**. Furthermore, they called on the European Commission to include in its Work Programme for 2018 a **European Action Plan for the Social Economy**. **Martin Siecker** said "*we need an exhaustive Action Plan for Social Economy, for the period 2018-2020 [...] We have had the Start-up and Scale-up Initiative, but we need and we want more*".

Emmanuel Verny, SEE's Vice-President, acknowledged the willingness and the efforts of the European Commission to boost the social economy in Europe, that have crystallised in the [Actions and Strategy for the social economy and social enterprises](#): "*based on these actions we need to co-create a global, ambitious and coherent European Action Plan for the social economy, with adequate financial resources*". Furthermore, he emphasised that the social economy is shaping the future of Europe by creating and preserving high-quality jobs in all the economic sectors, fostering collective and democratic entrepreneurship, ensuring the social and professional integration of vulnerable individuals, leading the energy transition and the

circular economy, and substantially contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals all over the world.

Nicolas Schmit, Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Economy of Luxembourg, underlined that social economy has a great potential in answering three major challenges: climate change, the digital revolution and the social divide. Moreover, he announced that the [9th Social Economy Academy](#) will take place from 25 to 29 September in Luxembourg, focusing on the future of work.

Jens Nilsson, Member of the European Parliament and Co-President of its Social Economy Intergroup, emphasised the potential of the cooperation between a growing number of Member State on social economy and referred to the recently adopted [Madrid Declaration](#) “*The social economy, a business model for the future of Europe*”. Nilsson agreed on the necessity to set-up a European Action Plan for the Social Economy in 2018.

Rait Kuuse, Deputy Secretary General on Social Policy of Estonia, presented the programme of the upcoming Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU on social affairs.

Slawomir Tokarski, Director for Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing at Commission’s Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, underlined that the social economy is a European success story in which the European Union, Member States and regional and local authorities should invest to maximize its impact on sustainable growth, jobs creation and social cohesion.

During the event, **four inspiring social economy ventures** were presented and three participatory workshops on the contribution of the social economy to new economic models, the integrations of migrant and territorial cohesion took place.

For more information, please find [here](#) the EESC Press Release on the 2nd European Day of Social Economy Enterprises.

SEE is the voice of social economy enterprises and organisations in Europe. Its members are the European organisations of mutual insurers and insurance cooperatives, health mutuals, foundations, paritarian institutions, associations of general interest, work integration social enterprises, ethical and alternative banks and financiers and cities and regions for the social economy. At national level, SEE members are the social economy umbrella organisations of Belgium (francophone regions), France, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

There are more than **2 million** social economy enterprises and organisations in Europe - 10% of all EU businesses-employing **14.5 million** people and accounting for **8% of Europe’s GDP**. The social economy is formed by enterprises and organisations -such as cooperatives, mutual, associations, foundations, social enterprises and paritarian institutions- of different sizes, ranging from SMEs to large companies and groups, that operate in all the economic sectors.

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