



STATEMENT

FORUM DES PLATEFORMES COOPÉRATIVES

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Organised with the support of the City of Paris.

For the development of platform cooperatives
Alliances to build and nourish, resources to mobilize



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Digital platforms have disrupted the way we move, buy, travel... Gigantic players such as Amazon, Uber or AirBnb are about to “platformize” almost any aspect of our lives, including the most sensitive ones: our personal opinions, our daily activities, the functioning of our democracies. The new practices of direct intermediation, transforming our access to resources (energy, transportation, local services, housing...), data and territories, concern all citizens, public authorities and economic organizations.

Against these giants, dozens of projects of platform cooperatives are developing alternative models. They share an original approach, based on strong territorial links, dense networks of partners, a particular care for users’ wellbeing, the creation of commons and positive social and environmental impacts. The digital platforms involved in an alternative logic to the one of the GAFAM have an essential role to play in the convergence of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE), the free software economy, the development of the commons, and the defence of democratic principles. They differentiate themselves through various values and practices: democratic governance, fair share of the created value, ethical use of data, creation of commons to enhance social utility and environmental protection, inter-cooperation between like-minded projects.

In France, many of these projects are connected through **Plateformes en communs**, a network initiated and backed by the association La Coop des Communs in relation with the different movements supporting platform cooperativism worldwide. As a matter of fact, around the globe (New York City, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, London...), several communities and activist networks are actively committed to promoting alternatives to the dominant platforms.

However, a lot remains to be done so that these alternatives can compete on a level playing field with the dominant platforms and are able to attain sustainable economic models. It is therefore necessary to find the means to keep on federating these initiatives in their search for resources, to connect these projects with the actors willing to make them visible, and to support platform cooperatives concretely.

To allow the emergence of viable alternatives to dominant platforms, it is of course compulsory to **enforce and reinforce regulation on big platform companies** that, by circumventing labor, tax and competition laws, are obstructing the expansion of good practices within the sharing platforms that are becoming essential parts of our lives.



But it is also highly important to join forces to **conceive and give platform cooperatives the proper tools for their deployment** as well as **favoring public/commons partnerships**.

To that end, we recommend several measures :

1- CREATE A FAVORABLE ECOSYSTEM TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLATFORM COOPERATIVES

The challenges that all platform cooperatives face require a collective work and it seems that the individual success of some will depend on the success of others. We recommend the consolidation of local ecosystems to generate alliances between the platforms themselves and with their partners, in order to reinforce the agency of these communities as well as the development of new forms of SSE organizations.

We invite all the **platform cooperatives** to cooperate, at the local level, with other actors, especially in the SSE, and at a global scale through the development of free digital technologies, the documentation of their best practices, and advocacy actions.

We invite **public authorities** to support ecosystems dedicated to platform cooperatives (matchmaking, knowledge production, creation of shared resources), to strengthen the production of general interest commons (free software, open data policies, third places...), to co-build incubators for platform coops, as was done for example in Barcelona, to replicate the italian model of the urban commons charters, allowing the co-elaboration of public policies and infrastructures between citizens and the municipality.

We invite **researchers** to investigate the models and practices of platform cooperatives in order to better understand them, to help the platforms enhance their projects, and better convince investors, institutions, public authorities to back them.

2 – ACCOMPANY AND SUPPORT THE CONCRETE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE PLATFORMS

We need to find and develop the resources (expertise, contacts, fundings...) that these platforms need concretely. We need to make the platform cooperative model more known, invent new mechanisms to support them. Particular work can be done in several domains :

FUNDINGS AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Support the individual and collective solicitation of key partners (banks, public authorities, clients, suppliers...), map key partners and available resources, create dedicated financial mechanisms for platform coops (especially for seed fundings), mobilize more public fundings and patient capital, develop new financial indicators to integrate the social and environmental value generated by these platforms.

DATA POLICY:

Encourage democratic governance in the collection and use of user data, envision the creation of data cooperatives, incorporate practices of data interoperability facilitating inter-platform cooperations (new standards such as the Solid protocol,...)

VISIBILITY:

Consider the opportunity and feasibility of a label or any kind of acknowledgment of the platform coops' standards of quality (fair working conditions, fair wages, ethical use of data, positive impact on the local territory, use of free software, transparency, democratic governance...)

SUPPORT BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES:

Design public procurement guidelines favoring platforms respecting quality and ethical standards, encourage direct investment by public authorities and institutions in platform coops (such as French SCIC multi-stakeholder coops),...

