PERIOD 2018-2020

ACTIVITY REPORT
TEMPORARY STUDY GROUP ON "SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTERPRISES"

DIRECTORATE C – LEGISLATIVE WORK

PRESIDENT: ALAIN COHEUR
Introduction

The 2018-2020 term of the Permanent Study Group on Social Economy Enterprises enabled it to continue on the basis of the 2015-2018 term of office and to draw up an inventory of the measures to be taken to complete the establishment of a favourable ecosystem for the development of social economy enterprises. The major success of the 2018-2020 term of office was the commitment of the European Commission to develop a social economy action plan by autumn 2021.

After two rich and successful mandates, the PSG has fully fulfilled its mission. The structure of the permanent study group has enabled the social economy to become more assertive and position itself as a key player in a more sustainable and resilient society, particularly in the post-crisis health context. Indeed, during the health crisis, the social economy has played a key role in adapting and responding to the needs of people according to the areas in it could act. It is now up to us to enable it to play its part in a longer-term response.

I wish the EESC to continue to closely monitor the social economy agenda, which is now fully equipped to become a major and cross-cutting issue, thanks to the support provided by the permanent study group over the last 5 years.

Alain Coheur
President of the permanent study group
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Activities & main findings

Monitoring and evaluation of policy developments at EU, Member State and international level

At EU level:
- co-organisation with the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions of the “Social Economy for the Future of Europe” event in February 2019;
- active participation in meetings of the European Parliament’s Social Economy Intergroup.

At Member States level:
- participation and co-organisation of the European Social Entrepreneurship Forum (EFSE) in Plovdiv in 2019;
- participation as an observer in several meetings of the Luxembourg Declaration monitoring committee;

At international level:
- observer at the meetings of the Commission’s Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises (GECES);
- participation in the Spanish Social Economy Academy, in cooperation with the ILO, in 2019.

Elaboration of opinions:
- own-initiative opinion INT/871 "Towards an appropriate European legal framework for social economy enterprises";
- exploratory opinion INT/875 "Social economy enterprises' contribution to a more cohesive and democratic Europe", at the request of the Romanian Presidency;
- own-initiative opinion INT/880 "Blockchain and distributed ledger technology as an ideal infrastructure for Social Economy";
- exploratory opinion INT/906 "Strengthening non-profit social enterprises as an essential pillar of a socially equitable Europe", at the request of the German Presidency.
Collection, compilation and dissemination of best practices in the Member States and organisation of an annual event

- The permanent study group participated in fact-finding missions (notably to Madrid, Prague or Bucharest) and met young innovative social entrepreneurs.
- The European Day of Social Economy Enterprises is a participatory event that lets civil society air its views. It is an opportunity not just to list the measures still to be taken to improve the sector’s ecosystem, but also to highlight innovative social entrepreneurs whose projects have been a success. In 2018, the EESC has chosen to address the issue of changing the scale of the social economy. The 2019 edition aimed at raising the awareness of the new European Commission and the new European Parliament on measures to unlock the potential of social economy enterprises.

Raising the sector’s profile and work on its image

- The dissemination of activities at European and national level to the twitter account @EESC_SocEnt, which the EESC has set up to promote the social economy, has strongly contributed to improving the visibility of the sector. Today, the account brings together 2690 followers.

Strengthening links with think tanks representing the sector and seeking collaboration with the European institutions

- The study group has strengthened its links with partners such as Confrontations Europe, the Rencontres du Mont-Blanc, Pour la Solidarité, Le Labo de l’ESS, ESS Forum International. It has also stepped up its cooperation with Social Economy Europe, the umbrella organisation for the continent’s social enterprise networks.
- The study group continued its cooperation with the European institutions: Synergies have been clearly developed and it can be said that at the end of the 2018-2020 term, the same message is being conveyed, namely the need to redouble efforts to ensure that the action plan for the social economy is being stepped up in autumn 2021.

In general, the activities carried out by the permanent study group have enabled the EESC, in particular through its European Days of Social Economy Enterprises, to
position itself as the voice of civil society and to relay to the European Commission the call for an action plan for the social economy. The organisation of the joint EESC/EP/CoR “Social Economy for the future of Europe” event in February 2019 has helped to unite around this interinstitutional call. The organisation, together with France, of the "Pact for Impact” event in July 2019 provided the basis for a global alliance around the social economy. Finally, the European Day of Social Economy Enterprises, co-organised in Strasbourg on 27 November 2019, by the EESC, the City of Strasbourg and the Eurometropolis, and the French Ministry for the Ecological and solidary Transition, was a first regional declination of this Pact around the social economy. At this event, the EESC handed over to Nicolas Schmit the Strasbourg Declaration and 15 days later, the action plan for the social economy was announced.

At the end of the 2018-2020 term of office, the social economy is able to establish itself in the EESC as a major and cross-cutting theme. In the next term, the challenge will be to continue to monitor the social economy agenda and to further promote this business model so that it can become a key player in the transition towards a more sustainable and resilient world.
### Appendix I – List of meetings and events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>From 18 April 2018 to 31 December 2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>From 1st January 2020 to 20 September 2020</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Group/PSG/Observatory meetings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings in Brussels</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings outside Brussels</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraordinary meetings</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact-finding missions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences and hearings organized or co-organized by the SG/PSG/Observatory</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation of members in events, meetings</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Brussels</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Brussels</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>