



## One Single Market, a diversity of social enterprises

- Social enterprises are based on shared characteristics with main objective to have a social and societal impact.
- As economic operators, they produce goods and services, often of general interest, but any surpluses are mainly used to achieve these social objectives.
- They are run by social entrepreneurs in a responsible, transparent and innovative way, involving staff, customers and relevant stakeholders impacted by their activities.
- Their legal form may vary due to diverse national contexts and are often associations, cooperatives, foundations, mutuals, or new legal forms emerging and they have their roots in the social economy sector.



**Forum:** <http://bit.ly/1o0TFTi>

**Webpage:**  
[www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.social-entrepreneurship-make-it-happen](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.social-entrepreneurship-make-it-happen)

**Twitter:**  
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**European Economic and Social Committee**

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**EN**



# Social Enterprise

Make it happen!

**INT**  
Section for the Single  
Market, Production  
and Consumption



**European Economic and Social Committee**

## The EESC and Social Enterprise

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), which has considerable expertise in the Social Enterprise field, has drafted a substantial number of opinions in this area. Actively involved in the European Institutional Social Enterprise and Social Economy Agenda, the EESC supports social enterprise growth and development as a key element of the European Social Model.

The EESC has actively contributed to and supported the European Commission launch of the Social Business Initiative (SBI) in 2011. This action plan is designed to provide an ecosystem for the growth and development of the social enterprise and social entrepreneurship in Europe.

### The SBI in 3 areas of action:

- **Improving access to funding**
- **Increasing visibility of social entrepreneurship**
- **Improving the legal environment**

To further unlock the potential of this sector, the EESC calls for a more supportive environment for social enterprises and for their better integration into all EU policies. Partnerships with regional and local authorities, as well as social entrepreneurs themselves will play an important role.

## The Strasbourg Event

On 16 and 17 January 2014, the EESC, the Commission and the city of Strasbourg co-organised an unprecedented event: more than 2000 social entrepreneurs and supporters gathered to jointly identify new ways of boosting the sector. They called for new, innovative funding sources, business support, networking, and clearer EU-wide regulations.

The event concluded with the Strasbourg Declaration, a milestone that captured a wide range of areas where social entrepreneurs want to see further changes.

### The 10 priorities

1. **Develop a second phase of the SBI**
2. **EU Institutions : ownership and deliver on the actions**
3. **Co-create new policies to support social enterprise (SE)**
4. **Creation of an eco-system for SE**
5. **Partnership to support SE**
6. **EU and Member States reinforce the role of SE in reforms**
7. **Better cooperation between SE and between public authorities**
8. **Suitable public and private financial instruments**
9. **Further research and national statistical collection**
10. **Inclusion of social indicators when reporting progress**

Acting as a bridge to the civil society, the EESC is in an optimal position to ensure that the Strasbourg Declaration is implemented.

## The Social Enterprise Project

Based on the Strasbourg Declaration, the EESC is now in the lead in this policy area and has launched the Social Enterprise Project to define policy directions and concrete actions to be forwarded to the next Commission and Parliament.

Consisting of a project group of 9 EESC members, the Social Enterprise Project comprises actions including a strengthened cooperation with social enterprise supporters, the participation of the project group members in European events, and the consultation and involvement of various social economy stakeholders and supporters of social enterprise.

### Action points guiding the Social Enterprise Project

1. **Co-create new policies to support social enterprise**
2. **Partnership to support social enterprises**
3. **Develop a second phase of the SBI**

Following a going local strategy, the Social Enterprise Project is also taking part in local events spread around Europe to conduct fact-finding missions, collect best practices and investigate policy ideas and recommendations for the EU institutions.

To build awareness, create discussions and foster dialogues between stakeholders, a web page, a forum and a Twitter account dedicated to the project were created.

