

Belgian Section of CIRIEC, activities 2014-15 and projects 2016

CIRIEC-Belgium is one of the 11 national sections of CIRIEC International, whose objectives it shares, namely the collection of information, scientific research and the publication of works concerning sectors of the economy and activities directed towards the service of the general and collective interest. Created in 1951, asbl Belgian Section of CIRIEC has provided (since 1957) the permanent secretariat services to the international association at the same time as pursuing its own activities.

Attendance of the 30th International CIRIEC Congress, Buenos Aires

(29-31 October 2014)

***"The Public, Social and Cooperative Economy:
Innovative responses to global issues"***

For the first time in its history, the CIRIEC Congress was held in Latin America, in Buenos Aires where it was organized by CIRIEC-Argentina end of October 2014. Around the general theme: "The Public, Social and Cooperative Economy: innovative responses to global issues", nearly 350 congresses from more than 25 countries, sixty of whom were Belgians, had the occasion to hear more than 70 speakers and exchange ideas on varied themes, ranging from solutions proposed by the public, social and cooperative economy in favour of development, societal inclusion, sustainable regional or local development, the environment, etc.

Among the Belgian speakers at the Congress, we may mention:

- the intervention in the Opening Plenary Session of Jean-Claude Marcourt, Vice-President of the Walloon Government and Minister of the Economy, SMEs, Foreign Affairs, New Technology and Higher Education, on "The Role of Innovation and the Social Economy with regard to World Issues";
- Leona Detiège, senator, President of the Belgian Section of CIRIEC who chaired two plenary sessions, one on CIRIEC's Research network and its achievements, the other one on the Return to state ownership and re-municipalisation;

- the innovative experience presented by Koen Albregts, former Director of the ACW (Christian Workers' Movement), on "Limburg's Climate fund project" in the workshop 'Public policies related to Energy';
- the participation of Christophe Claes, Secretary General of Intradel, in the workshop 'Employment and youth' with the experience of his enterprise: "From environment to inclusion: from words to action at Intradel, intermunicipal waste treatment company";
- and William Janssens, Managing Director, FEBECOOP, who introduced the case of the Cooperatives pharmacies in Belgium in the workshop 'Access to healthcare'.

The contributions and conclusions of the congress are available on the website:

<http://www.ciriec.ulg.ac.be/en/event-ciriec/30eme-congres-international-buenos-aires-argentine/>

Attendance of the 5th International CIRIEC Research Conference
on the Social Economy

(Lisboa, 15-18 July 2015)

"The Social Economy in a World System"



The 5th International CIRIEC Research Conference on Social Economy was organised with the kind and able assistance of CIRIEC-Portugal; it was held in Lisbon from 15 to 18 July 2015. It drew an audience of more than 400 interested persons, mostly professors and scientific researchers from forty different countries.

The general theme of the conference was "The Social Economy in a World System" around 4 main secondary themes:

- New trends, new concepts;
- The social economy and society (social movements, regional and local issues and development, governance);

- New/old experiences and challenges in the social economy (measure, sustainability, NICT);
- The social economy and the State (public economy, public/social partnerships).

Among the Belgian scientists having presented a contribution, several took an active role in the organisation of the 4th edition that CIRIEC-Belgium had carried out in October 2013 in Antwerp:

- Simon De Nys-Ketels, Nathalie Vallet, Michelle Bylemans (Universiteit Antwerpen): *Development of strategic-spatial blueprints for different types of inclusive economic participation-sites: social economy organisations in synergistic networks*
- Saskia Crucke, Adeliën Decramer, Tine Claeys (Universiteit Gent): *The development of an assessment tool for organisational performance of social enterprises*

The contributions summaries presented to the conference can be found on the website:

<http://www.mundiconvenius.pt/eventos/2015/ciriec2015/resources/files/CIRIEC%202015%20%20ABSTRACTS.pdf>

Research and publications 2014-16

Issues and socio-economic importance of public utilities / The Future of public enterprise - national studies
 Social economy: statistics / Organisation & governance /
 Co-construction and territories

Since mid-2015 the Belgian Section has been working alongside CRISP (Centre de Recherche et d'Information socio-politiques) to conduct together with FAR (Form'Action André Renard) a study about the big issues and socio-economic importance of public services. This project was commissioned by CGSP-ACOD (Centrale Générale des Services Publics - ACOD) with a view to producing, some time between now and summer 2016, a basic document on the contribution and importance, in terms of socio-economic policy, of public services; this document should then allow a series of discussions spread over 2016 to 2018 on the fundamentals and values of public services. Several aspects are considered: the concepts and definitions, the forms of politico-institutional organisation of the public service, a survey of the missions and obligations of the public service, the organisational models, the provision and financing of these services, the questions involved in the application of the European rules, etc. This work is then closed by a more forward-looking part in connection with the values of the general / collective interest for the users and citizens, also implying the setting of the necessary new perimeters of solidarity. This study will be the subject of a number of publications.

In 2015 the Belgian Section was also associated with some multidisciplinary consortiums to conduct, via subcontracting, some part aspects of consultancy missions:

- Research on the economic redeployment of decommissioned steel production plant in the Liège Basin (Seraing and Chertal), following a call for tenders put out by the Foncière Liégeoise - involvement in the economic discussion and guidance and advice for the project conducted mainly by architects and town and country planners.
- Support in the development of the Network Plan 2020 following a call for tenders put out by the SRWT (Société régionale wallonne du Transport) - subcontracting for Transétude-MTI Conseils (France) to guide and support the discussion in matter of economics of transport. The purpose of this research is to arrive at a new cartography designed to rationalise intercity bus routes (former SNCV orange lines) and, thus, to increase their commercial speed by, for example, clustering the stops in strategic, much-frequented areas and/or by favouring express lines. It should be noted, however, that the mission was ended prematurely in late 2015, following a change of management in the SRWT.

At **international level** some fifteen experts - academics and practitioners alike - associated with the Belgian Section are also regularly involved in all the scientific and research activities of CIRIEC International.

- * The CIRIEC's International Scientific Commission "Public Services / Public Enterprises" follows and discusses the recent developments in the governance of enterprises tasked with the provision of public services. This Commission has some 40 specialists (economists and legal experts) among whom three Belgians (Henry-Jean Gathon and Nicolas Thirion, Université de Liège; and Christophe Goethals, CRISP).

Following the three-year research programme (2012-2014) hinging on **the future of public enterprise**, 15 European and American case studies of public enterprises were accepted for publication. Those case studies were structured along a model grid allowing later on comparative analyses: identification of the enterprise; recent track record in its sectoral, institutional, national, context; public mission; activities and operations; economic and social performance; governance; regulation; scheduled charges/prices, investments, financing and redistribution capacity in connection with its public mission; specific open section/section particular to enterprise; lessons learnt and conclusions drawn.

A more detailed presentation of this bilingual book (French/English) and its table of contents can be found on the website of Peter LANG:

<https://www.peterlang.com/view/product/61915> .

A Belgian case study is taken. It deals more particularly with 25 years of relations between the Brussels public transport operator (STIB) and the Brussels Capital Region. This highly documented study - published in French - is the outcome of research by Christophe GOETHALS, Coordinator of the 'Economy' Sector of CRISP (Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques) and Assistant at the Université Libre de

Bruxelles (ULB) and Associate Researcher at the Centre Emile Bernheim (SBS-EM - ULB).

- * The second theatre of operations proposed by CIRIEC is for the most part developed by the International Scientific Commission "Social and Cooperative Economy". This Commission has some fifty members (economists, sociologists, socio-economists, ...) among whom six Belgians (Fabienne Fecher, Université de Liège; Astrid Coates and Wim Van Opstal, Leuven University College; Nathalie Vallet and Josse Van Steenberghe, Universiteit Antwerpen; Marek Hudon, Université Libre de Bruxelles). The members of the Commission actively follow the latest developments and emergent research themes in the social economy in the broader sense.

Besides the members above, additional Belgian experts are involved in working groups prolonging their activities in 2014-16:

- **"The Weight, Size and Scale of the Social Economy - International perspectives for the production of statistics for the social economy"**

In the first working group, Prof. Fabienne Fecher and Wafa Ben Sedrine-Lejeune (Université de Liège) published a contribution on satellite accounts for cooperatives, mutuals and companies with a social purpose in Belgium in the collective work, Publishers Peter LANG, in 2015, under the editorial responsibility of Marie J. Bouchard and Damien Rousselière. A second Belgium contribution on measuring concepts and variables for the production of statistics for social economy enterprises by Michel Marée and Sybille Mertens (Université de Liège) is also included. For a presentation of this book, see:

<https://www.peterlang.com/view/product/62041>

- **"Organisation and governance of enterprises of the social economy"**

The second working group is jointly led by Profs. Gani Aldashev (Université de Namur, Belgium), Marco Marini (Sapienza - Università di Roma, Italy) and Michael Kopel (Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, Austria). This group aims to increase understanding of the management practices adopted by the enterprises of the social economy.

G. Aldashev and M. Marini edited a first publication containing theoretical and empirical articles centred on the management of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and their specific governance in the form of a thematic number of the international review of CIRIEC, *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, Vol. 86, 1, 2015. Four Belgian academics are authors or co-authors: Marc Jegers (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) and Gani Aldashev, Cecilia Navarra and Astrid Similon (Université de Namur).

- **"Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE). Between interactions and co-construction"**

Two axes served as the main themes of this research (2013-15):

- the territory as social construction

- the new statutes of the SSE and the renewal of systems territorial constructions.

A seminar held in Lisbon in July 2015 allowed discussion of the various resultant contributions, one of them a contribution from the Belgian Section of CIRIEC; it concerns social economy sites looking to a more inclusive economic involvement in an urban environment and results from research work conducted in the new Design Science faculties at Antwerp University Antwerp by Michelle Bylemans, Nathalie Vallet and Simon De Nys-Ketels. The objective is to bring out either a collective work or a theme number of the CIRIEC Review in 2016-2017.

In 2016 new research projects will leave the slipway from the Belgian Section of CIRIEC, concerning among other things:

- the social impact social of the work of the socio-professional insertion centres (scientific support and advice from CIRIEC and from the Concert'ES Observatory of the Social Economy for a project conducted by the Fédération CAIPS - Concertation des Ateliers d'Insertion Professionnelle et Sociale), following a call for the project put out by the Walloon Government Minister for Employment and Training;
- analysis and evaluation of the social impact of enterprises in the social economy, conducted in association with the University of Liège and with SAW-B, following a call for tenders put out by the Walloon Government (Department of Economic Development).

Both studies will apply participative methods and conduct inquiries in certain organisations and enterprises of the social economy. Given the support and guidance of a mainly international complexion for the second study, Belgium may then enjoy the benefit of its "prospector" position: what measures are applied in other countries; how might those measures be incorporated into Belgian national law and what, indeed, is the potential impact?

In terms of research publications mention may also be made of eight Belgian productions among the CIRIEC Working Papers over the period 2014-16.

WP14/06 – GOETHALS C. – Relation entre l'opérateur de transport public à Bruxelles (STIB) et l'autorité organisatrice : entre asymétrie et coopération

WP 15/05 – MERTENS S./ MARÉE M. – Que « produit » l'entreprise d'économie sociale ?

WP15/07 – VENABLES T. – Rough Guide to the Impact of the Crisis on the Third Sector in Europe

WP16/03 – VAN PUYVELDE S./ JEGERS M. – Heterogeneity and self-selection into nonprofit management

WP16/06 – CAPONETTI L./ SAK B. – Comment définir le service public à travers ses différentes facettes, missions et principes ?

WP16/07 – CAPONETTI L./ SAK B. – Hoe kan men de openbare diensten door hun verschillende facetten, missies en principes definiëren?

WP16/08 – DEMERTZIS V. – Modes d'élaboration politico-institutionnelle du service public

WP16/09 – DEMERTZIS V. – Politiek-institutionele uitwerkingwijzen van de openbare diensten

WP16/10 – CAPONETTI L. – Le cadre réglementaire européen en matière de services publics : législation, financement et contraintes

WP16/11 – CAPONETTI L. – Het Europese regelgevingskader voor openbare diensten: wetgeving, financiering en dwangen

WP16/12 – CAPONETTI L./ DEMERTZIS V./ SAK B. – Services publics et missions de service public en Belgique – Etat des lieux

WP16/13 – CAPONETTI L./ DEMERTZIS V./ SAK B. – Openbare diensten en opdrachten van openbare dienst in België – Stand van zaken

Prize Joseph Merlot - Joseph Leclercq 2015

This triennial Doctorate Prize is intended to preserve the memory of two pioneer sponsors of the public enterprise and aims to stimulate research on the public economy. Of an amount of 3 500 EUR for a doctoral thesis, the 2015 Prize is financed by Ethias, the Province of Liège and intercommunals from Liège (AIDE, CILE, Intradef, SPI+) and aims to reward a work discussing one or more aspects of the public economy, more particularly concerning services of general interest and tools of public policy and evaluation. These sponsors thus perpetuate the memory of the founders of the Belgian Section of CIRIEC. The calls for candidates were launched in the end of 2015 and the Prize was awarded in June 2016.

The Documentation Centre

The CIRIEC Documentation Centre is specialised not only in the field of the social and cooperative economy, but also in the public economy. The Centre is known for its wealth of documentation, its very substantial scientific literature (10 500 bibliographical references and around thirty scientific reviews) keeps abreast of a consistent grey literature that gives it its intrinsic value. It is accessible to all: not only researchers, professors, students but also enterprises and players active in the field. The available information is multisectoral, international and multilingual (French, English, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, German). The documentary fund of CEDOC is also accessible via internet and is integrated in the digitized catalogue of the Université de Liège (www.libnet.ulg.ac.be/).

CIRIEC-Agora of General Interest and Social Economy

At the request of certain national sections and scientific commissions, CIRIEC has developed a pilot project creating an interactive database for researchers and experts active in areas of the general-interest economy and the social economy. The objective is to bring together persons working on common themes so they might intercommunicate and jointly make headway around an interactive IT tool designed to become a “knowledge platform”.

This new communication tool, known as AGORA, launched in June 2014, is a collaborative portal reserved for use by a community of members. Agora of the General Interest and the Social Economy is now accessible <http://www.ciriecagora.org/> .

The documentary fund already available (15.000 documents indexed and processed semantically) is multilingual and a bimonthly newsletter is sent to the members. 2015 saw technical and IT improvements.

Among the expert members in the database featuring 35 countries, 19 are Belgians coming from 6 universities: Leuven, Gent, Liège, Mons, Antwerp and Brussels.

The Agora project is complementary to the Documentation Centre and, since autumn 2014, an additional documentalist has been engaged to strengthen the team with a view to developing this ambitious Agora project. CIRIEC has thus acquired a new line of dissemination of information with a significant added dimension of strategic watch.