



# An international network for Public, Social and Cooperative Economy

Centre International de  
Recherches et d'Information  
sur l'Economie Publique,  
Sociale et Coopérative—aisbl

International Center of  
Research and Information on  
the Public, Social and  
Cooperative Economy—aisbl

Internationales Forschungs-  
und Informationszentrum für  
öffentliche Wirtschaft,  
Sozialwirtschaft und  
Genossenschaftswesen—aisbl

CIRIEC—aisbl  
Université de Liège  
Quartier Agora  
Place des Orateurs, 1  
Bâtiment B33 - boîte 6  
BE-4000 Liège  
Belgium

Tél. : +32-4-366 27 46  
Fax: +32-4-366 29 58  
Email: [ciriec@uliege.be](mailto:ciriec@uliege.be)  
[www.ciriec.uliege.be](http://www.ciriec.uliege.be)



CIRIEC is a non-governmental international **scientific** organisation.

Its **objectives** are to undertake and promote the collection of information, scientific research, and the publication of works on economic sectors and activities oriented towards the service of the general and collective interest: action by the State and the local and regional public authorities in economic fields (economic policy, regulation); public utilities; public and mixed enterprises at the national, regional and municipal levels; the so-called « social economy » (cooperatives, mutuals, and non-profit organisations); etc.

CIRIEC aims at being an international meeting point by offering opportunities for mutual enrichment, a locus of research, and reflection networking to **practitioners** and **academics** for promoting international reflection and action. It develops activities of interest for both managers and researchers.



CIRIEC has the status of an international scientific non-profit organization under Belgian law (aisbl). It is organised as a **network** counting at present 15 national sections (Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brasil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Japan, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and Venezuela), nine collective members (Chile, Cyprus, Ecuador, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Romania South Korea, and Sweden), and an observer member (CEDEC). CIRIEC's national sections include members such as agencies, enterprises and organizations forming part of the public, cooperative and not-for-profit sectors of the economy as well as individual experts and university professors. CIRIEC's scientific network counts some 750 active experts and researchers worldwide.

Considering the **ever changing socio-economic environment** (fast changing sectors, transition from national cooperation to networks on a worldwide scale, evolution of governance structures and systems, new modes of regulation, ...), CIRIEC's objective is to address the question of how to cope with these developments.

### OBJECTIVES:

Undertake and promote the collection of information, scientific research, and the publication of works on economic sectors and activities oriented towards the service of the general interest and collective interest:

- action by the State and the local and regional public authorities in economic fields (economic policy, regulation);
- public utilities; public and mixed enterprises at the national, regional and municipal levels;
- the so-called "social economy" (cooperatives, mutuals, and non-profit organizations), etc.

CIRIEC groups its research activities according to various **components**:

- firstly, its international scientific journal, the ***Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics***, which was founded in 1908 and which publishes on a quarterly basis articles on themes of interest to CIRIEC;
- secondly, its **research bodies** through which CIRIEC conducts and coordinates international research – either on own-initiative or for third parties; this research has a transversal, analytical cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary character, relating to topical themes and international socio-economic problems addressing the general interest and the collective interest;
- finally, dissemination of the results of research through **conferences** and **seminars** or in the form of publications, intended for academic and practitioners.

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| President:          | <b>Alain ARNAUD</b> , Former President of Mutualité Fonction Publique (MFP); President of CIRIEC-France                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Honorary President: | <b>Léopold BEAULIEU</b> , Former President and CEO of FondAction, Development Fund for Cooperation and Employment of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU); President of CIRIEC-Canada                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Vice-Presidents:    | <b>Erich HAIDER</b> , Director General, Linz AG; Vice-President of CIRIEC-Austria<br><b>José Luis MONZÓN CAMPOS</b> , Professor, University of Valencia; Executive Director of CIRIEC-España; President of the Scientific Commission of CIRIEC-España<br><b>Munenori NOMURA</b> , Professor of Economics at the Kwansei Gakuin University; President of CIRIEC-Japan<br><b>José Pablo PUZINO</b> , Labor and Mechanical Engineer; President of IAIES – CIRIEC-Argentina |
| General Director :  | <b>Bernard THIRY</b> , Professor at Liège University                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Managing Director : | <b>Barbara SAK</b> , Belgium                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

## MEANS

- International secretariat (located in Liège, Belgium) with a “hub” function between all correspondents of CIRIEC’s international bodies, national Sections and their members and with the members of the scientific network.
- International scientific journal, the *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* with top quality articles of interest to both scientist and practitioners
- Documentation centres
- International network of scientific experts and working groups on specific topics
- Publication of books, special issues of scientific journals, working papers and research results
- Organisation of scientific events and conferences
- Activities inside the respective national sections of CIRIEC (national scientific committees, platform for political debates, auditions by the executive authorities, achieving of researches for government agencies,...) and contacts with their members who sometimes hold leading functions in national governments, European bodies, international and apex organizations.
- Regular **international contacts** with:
  - international and European institutions and their official bodies
  - international and European umbrella and sectoral organisations/networks active in the field of public, social and cooperative economy (including the non-profit voluntary sector)
  - international trade unions and associated organisations dealing for instance with education, employment or public services
  - interest groups and associations dealing with matters of interest for CIRIEC (e.g. local and regional authorities, solidarity, sustainable development, ...)
  - various specialised research centres.

### A short history

CIRIEC originally called "International Center of Research and Information on the Collective Economy" was founded in 1947 by Professor Edgard MILHAUD, a French economist teaching at the University of Geneva.

In 1908 Edgard Milhaud had founded the journal then known as the "Annales de la Régie directe" and created CIRIEC to ensure its continuity. With the active assistance of Swiss friends, Milhaud kept CIRIEC going in Geneva until 1957.

The head office of the association is then transferred to Liège (Belgium) in 1957. Professor Paul Lambert was appointed Director of CIRIEC and later President. After his death in 1977, Professor Guy Quaden was appointed Director of CIRIEC until 1990. Since then Bernard Thiry holds the position of Director General CIRIEC.

### The “Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics”



The *Annals* were founded in 1908 and directed until 1960 by Edgard Milhaud (Geneva). Since 1947, the scientific review has been edited by CIRIEC, and since 2018 via its Edgard Milhaud Foundation.

Since 1995 the *Annals* are published by [Wiley-Blackwell](#) Oxford (UK) with the support of HEC - Management School of the University of Liège. The objective of the *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics / Annales de l'économie publique, sociale et coopérative* is to feature theoretical and empirical quality articles of interest to scientists and experts, in the following fields: cooperatives, social enterprises, economic democracy, public services, collective entrepreneurship, governance, social innovation, Commons, mutual societies, regulation and action by the State, non-profit organizations, public enterprises, social economy, and related topics.

## CIRIEC's NETWORK AND EXPERIENCE / FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

### Geographical network and contacts

CIRIEC itself is also a network of National Sections, themselves consisting of various members:

- enterprises and organizations associated with network-economics, either socio-political networks (government agencies, public administrations, socio-professional federations, trade unions, ...), or technical networks (public utilities, public or regulated enterprises, ...);
- enterprises and organisations from the “social economy” sector (cooperatives, mutuals, associations, foundations, non-profit or not-for-profit enterprises and organisations);
- experts and individual researchers from universities and research centers interested in CIRIEC's activities.

CIRIEC has an original feature since, in the above mentioned fields, it develops activities of interest for both managers and researchers. CIRIEC aims at being a meeting point and a locus of research and reflection networking, without lobbying for any particular interests. CIRIEC acts as a platform for exchange of information and experiences in a spirit of cooperation and mutual enrichment for practitioners, managers and academics.

CIRIEC has brought together numerous members and has created a worldwide network of academics and experts concerned by public, social and cooperative economy. CIRIEC's scientific network leads an analytical and comparative reflection on topical selected themes and also has a watch activity giving a critical review on current developments.

As scientific research centre CIRIEC undertakes interdisciplinary research in wide-ranging matters and issues at stake in the field of general and collective interest from a socio-economic perspective. Numerous studies – of a sectoral nature – were conducted on themes and issues related to services of general interest, but also on social and health services, and all types of services offered by social economy providers.

## RESEARCH

CIRIEC's main feature of research is its cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary character. CIRIEC not only contributes to a better knowledge of the public, cooperative and social economy sectors, but it also allows cross-fertilising ideas and knowledge with a view to generate common understanding of concepts. In doing research, CIRIEC strives as much after scientific rigour as for social and societal relevance.

The research feature focuses on **general and collective interest** present as much in the **public**, as in the **social and cooperative economic sectors**. The open questions and problems arising in those sectors appear to be close from one sector to another or from one country to another, especially when considered in the long run.

Research approaches are varied, wide-ranging and often policy-oriented:

- providing **integrated definitions and concepts**
- **delineating the field**, examining its evolution and showing the multiple overlaps and **interweaved relations and features** between public, social and cooperative economic systems and actions (including mixed systems)
- providing historical perspectives, geographical/economic/institutional **comparative overviews** and this at international scale (Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe)
- **carrying out analytical reflection on selected themes**, among others related to:
  - societal development and social change/innovation, but also more structural paradigm changes and economic, technological or institutional evolutions
  - respective “efficiency” of socio-economic architectures and systems to address collective issues
  - evolving relationships between actors and stakeholders (e.g. economic democracy and cooperation instead of competition, transformation of the role of State, etc.)
  - employment, social exclusion and new social needs
  - infrastructure endowment (including social capital) necessary to provide services and as basis for the functioning of the economy
  - new regulation, organisation and delivery modes of the services
  - public action in favour of the public, cooperative and social economy sector (as a “pole of social utility”) or, on the contrary, hindering the full deployment of its activities
  - ...
- **providing assessment and evaluation**
- **watching/monitoring research and topical issues dealt with by other networks** within CIRIEC's field of interest.

CIRIEC leads researches of two types:

- **internal own-initiatives researches** on themes selected by the members of its international scientific bodies and ad hoc working groups
- **researches for third parties**, in response to calls for tenders / requests for proposals.

CIRIEC's research is carried out by scientists, researchers and experts from various disciplines, sectors and countries. Mutual understanding and enrichment is favoured thanks to mainly physical meetings allowing for in-depth discussions between academics and experts stemming from various cultures and horizons, crossing different research traditions (economics, political science, history, sociology, management, public administration, law, geography, etc.), each bringing in their theoretical or empirical knowledge with their data and real-life experiences.

CIRIEC's research can be presented in three sets:

### 1. Cross cutting topics covering public social and cooperative economy

Studies were initiated from 1997 (at the occasion of CIRIEC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary) to examine more thoroughly "transversal" topics covering public, social and cooperative economy. Various research trends emerged:

- Plural economy, i.e. the cooperation between the private, the public and the social economy sector (non-profit, mutuals, cooperatives, etc.)
- Governance systems/regimes and general interest within social services and health care
- Contemporary crisis and renewal of public action
- Joint production and co-production of public goods and commons: complementarity between organisations and paradigm shift for collective action?

### 2. Public economy (public services / public enterprises)

Numerous studies - of a general or sectoral nature - were conducted on services of general (economic) interest, "services publics" or "public utilities", but also on social and health services, and any other type of so-called 'community/collective' service delivered by social economy organisations :

- Contribution of services of general interest to economic, social and territorial cohesion
- General interest services in the European Internal Market (and issues related to the "Service Directive")
- Provision modes of local services (including social ones) for citizens
- Securing basic investments in infrastructure necessary to provide services of general interest
- Future of Public enterprise: missions, performance, governance, ownership,...
- Economics and management of public enterprises: accountability, remunicipalisation,...

### 3. Social and cooperative economy

CIRIEC has a long tradition of reflection and work on social economy as a whole. It has been the pioneer of the understanding and promotion of this global concept including cooperatives, mutual societies, non-profit organisations and foundations. It has brought a significant contribution to the recognition and awareness of this sector of the economy based on collective private not for profit initiative. Being a kind of "mother house" CIRIEC has given birth to several initiatives and research networks specialised in one or the other field within social economy.

Several research projects have been recently carried out dealing for example with:

- Governance and organization in social economy enterprises
- Satellite accounts of social economy companies : co-operatives and mutual societies
- Situation of the social economy in the European Union
- Promotion of the solidarity concept (at the basis of mutuals and cooperatives), notably through education
- Methods and indicators for the evaluation of the social economy
- Public policies and the social economy
- Weight of the social economy sector
- Social economy and territorial development: interaction and co-construction
- Transformation of social economy enterprises: isomorphism or innovation
- Impact measurement in the social and cooperative economy
- Social economy and sustainable development goals

Considering the far-reaching topics dealt with, CIRIEC is one of the few loci worldwide to intellectually grasp all the economic issues related to collective and general interest.

## PUBLICATIONS

### 2021

**Knowledge Creation: New Frontiers for Public Investment** / *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* (coord. FLORIO M.) (special issue: vol.92, n°3, September 2021, Wiley Blackwell)

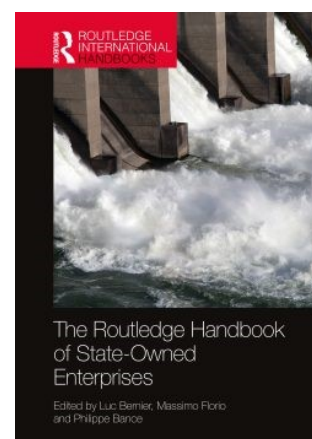
**The New Age of Commons: Innovation or Necessity?** / *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* (coord. BANCE P. and SCHOENMAECKERS J.) (special issue: vol.92, n°1, March 2021, Wiley Blackwell)

### 2020

**Statistics on Cooperatives: Concepts, classification, work and economic contribution measurement** / International Labour Office (ILO); Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC); International Centre of Research and Information on the Public, Social and Cooperative Economy (CIRIEC)

**Cooperatives and the ILO over 100 Years: A selection of 12 Articles** / edited by Marie J. Bouchard, Marieke Louis, *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, 2020, virtual issue

**The Routledge Handbook of State-Owned Enterprises** / edited by Luc Bernier, Massimo Florio, Philippe Bance, ed. ROUTLEDGE, 2020



### 2019

**The Weight of the Social Economy: An International Perspective EDITION CORÉENNE** / CIRIEC, Bouchard Marie J., Rousselière Damien — Traduction en Coréen, 2019, iCOOP Cooperative Institute (Foundation).

**The Performance and Potential of Public Private Partnerships** / *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* (coord. PALCIC D., REEVES E. and SIEMIATYCKI M.) (special issue: vol.90, n°2, June 2019, Wiley Blackwell)

### 2018

**Best practices in public policies regarding the European Social Economy post the economic crisis** CIRIEC, Rafael Chaves & José Luis Monzon (for the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC))

**The Continuing Importance of State-Owned Enterprise in 21st Century: challenges for Public Policy** / *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* (coord. BERNIER L. and REEVES E.) (special issue: vol.89, n°3, September 2018, Wiley Blackwell)

**Social and solidarity-based economy and territory: between interaction and co-construction**, ITÇAINA X. & RICHEZ-BATTESTI N. ed., CIRIEC's "Social Economy & Public Economy" series Peter LANG n° 7

**Providing public goods and commons. Towards coproduction and new forms of governance for a revival of public action**, Philippe Bance ed., CIRIEC Studies Series n° 1

**An Enduring Platform for Public and Cooperative Economics Research** *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* (coord. MARINI M. A. and THIRY B.) (special issue: vol.89, n°1, March 2018, Wiley Blackwell)

### 2017

**Recent Evolution of the Social Economy in the European Union** (for the European Economic and Social Committee)

**Social Economy and Sustainable Development** *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* (coord. HUDON M. and HUYBRECHT B.) (special issue: vol.88, n°2, June 2017, Wiley Blackwell)

## INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

One of CIRIEC's main activities is to organize events, congresses, conferences and seminars for those interested in issues and stakes related to public, social and cooperative economy.

Through this activity, CIRIEC aims at being a locus for discussion and exchange, and the events CIRIEC is organizing also allow to present [research](#) results or recent [publications](#).

Participants to these events come from the academic and research world or are involved in public agencies, enterprises and organizations related to public, social and cooperative economy. They can also be representatives of institutions which, from a scientific or cultural aspect, have an interest for those economic-related activities.

For such persons, CIRIEC organizes or co-organizes every two-years:

- its biennial [international congresses](#) (even years) which bring together some 400-500 participants: economic, social and political leaders and researchers world-wide;
- its [international research conferences on the social economy](#) (odd years) aiming rather at gathering researchers.

In addition to those events, [seminars](#) and symposiums on more specific themes related to public, social and cooperative economy are organized, providing platforms for discussion and exchange of research results, and enabling researchers, experts and practitioners to meet.

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**9th CIRIEC International Research Conference on Social Economy**  
**July 2023, Seoul, South Korea**

**33rd CIRIEC International Congress**  
**“New global dynamics in the post-Covid era: challenges for the public, social and cooperative economy”**  
**13-15 June 2022, Valencia, Spain**

**8th CIRIEC International Research Conference on Social Economy**  
**“Social and Solidarity Economy and The Agenda 2030: Inclusive and Sustainable Development through Innovative Social Practices”**  
**8-10 September 2021, San José, Costa Rica**

**XIX CIRIEC-Milan European Economy Workshop**  
**“State-Owned Enterprises and Innovation in Public Services in a Post-Pandemic World”**  
**30 June 2021, Online**

## NATIONAL SECTIONS AND OTHER MEMBERS

### Membership

"CIRIEC membership shall not imply that its members subscribe to any theories of a political, economic or social nature. It shall merely imply that members adhere to the association's statutes." (article 5 of the Statutes)

CIRIEC comprises both individual and collective members:

- Collective members consist of agencies, enterprises and organizations forming part of the public, cooperative and not-for-profit sectors of the economy and also of any bodies with an interest of a scientific or cultural nature in these economic activities.
- Individual members, namely researchers, experts, professors or other persons interested in the activities that CIRIEC develops. Individuals may become part of the [scientific network of CIRIEC](#).

In countries with a national section, it is generally the latter alone which enjoys direct membership of the international association.

In other countries, CIRIEC fosters contacts with collective members or with enterprises, institutions and individuals having an interest in its activities.

Membership involves an annual membership fee. For additional information, please contact [CIRIEC international secretariat](#).

### National Sections

The national sections themselves consist of various collective or individual members.

The national sections, like CIRIEC itself, are primarily concerned with research, publication and the organization of scientific events open to the public.

Several sections have their own reviews and a number of them have established one or more scientific committees.

As a general rule, they take it in turns to organize CIRIEC's International meetings, Seminars, Research Conferences and Congresses.



Currently CIRIEC counts 15 national sections:

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| Argentina  | Germany   |
| Austria    | Japan     |
| Belgium    | Portugal  |
| Brazil     | Spain     |
| Canada     | Tunisia   |
| Colombia   | Turkey    |
| Costa Rica | Venezuela |
| France     |           |

### Collective and observer members

Collective members are agencies, enterprises and organizations forming part of the public, cooperative and not-for-profit sectors of the economy and also of any bodies with an interest of a scientific or cultural nature in these economic activities.

Currently, CIRIEC counts 9 collective members in: Chile, Cyprus, Ecuador, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Romania, South Korea and Sweden. It also has an observer member: CEDEC.



## Understanding CIRIEC: Composition and functioning of the various bodies of CIRIEC

### Administrative bodies

- **General Assembly** composed of delegates chosen by each national section
- **International Board** composed of a maximum of 5 regular members and 5 substitute members for each national Section, and a representation of the collective members. It is renewed every 2 years at each General Assembly held together with the Congress
- **Praesidium** (Bureau equivalent) composed of the President, the Honorary President and the Vice-Presidents designated by the General Assembly as well as the Director and further members designated by the International Board

### Scientific bodies

- **International Scientific Council** chaired by Professor Dorothea GREILING, University in Linz (Austria), composed of 1-2 delegates per national section, one rather specialized in public economics, the second more oriented towards social and cooperative economics.

The International Scientific Council is in charge of the overall scientific strategy and the coordination of CIRIEC's scientific activities.

- **International Scientific Commissions** comprising various scientific experts coming from the national CIRIEC sections or affiliated to CIRIEC's scientific network.

Scientific Commission **“Public Enterprises / Public Services”** chaired by Professor Massimo FLORIO, Università di Milano (Italy)

- ◊ Scientific Commission **“Social and Cooperative Economy”** chaired by Professor Marie J. BOUCHARD, Université du Québec à Montréal (Canada)

- Several **working groups** carry out specific work. For example:

« **Joint production and co-production of public goods and commons: source of a paradigm shift through creative destruction of public action?** », coord. Philippe Bance (University of the French Antilles, France)

« **Impact measurement in the social and cooperative economy** », coord. Marie J. Bouchard (Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada) and Damien Rousselière (AGROCAMPUS OUEST, France)

« **Accountability, anti-corruption and transparency policies in publicly-owned enterprises (POEs)** », coord. Andrea Zatti (Università de Pavia, Italy)

« **Public enterprises in response to climate challenges** », coord. Eoin Reeves and Donal Palcic (University of Limerick, Ireland)

Working languages: English, French and German (+ Spanish for conferences and congresses)

## CONTACT

CIRIEC  
Université de Liège  
Quartier Agora  
Place des Orateurs, 1  
Bâtiment B33 - boîte 6  
BE-4000 Liège  
Belgique

Tél. +32-4-366 27 46  
Fax +32-4-366 29 58  
e-mail : [ciriec@uliege.be](mailto:ciriec@uliege.be)  
<http://www.ciriec.uliege.be>



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