

## Introduction

After a trying and distressing year 2020, 2021 was approached with many hopes, - that of the control of an unprecedented health crisis which weighs on the living conditions, the economic situation and the morale of the populations, - that of a political awareness that it is essential to modify the model of thinking on which a globalised, poorly regulated economy is based, which has highlighted our weaknesses and exacerbated inequalities, - that of an awakening of consciousness in the face of the rise of conspiracy ideology and nauseating theories that flood the so-called social networks.

Despite the fine words spoken by political leaders, it is clear that disillusionment has outweighed hope, which is not good news in a context of heightened fears and tensions. However, for a long time now, many organisations have been warning about the growing inequalities, the decline of the middle classes, the rise in poverty, the damage to the environment and the future of the planet. For its part, CIRIEC is not to be outdone, as its international network of researchers has been demonstrating, year after year for 75 years, that a change of economic paradigm is needed to better organise the sharing of value creation. We will not hesitate to say that this is the best way of preserving democracy and peace, as its founder, Edgard Milhaud, fundamentally believed. It is no longer disputable that the widening gaps, increasing inequality and injustice, calling into question the way we live together and democracy, are all breaking points in a society that nevertheless still has important resources to bounce back.

This was also the thought of Jacques Fournier, an emblematic figure of CIRIEC, who died in August 2021. Jacques Fournier was an exceptional man. He spent his life in the service of the collective interest. A great servant of the State, a tireless campaigner for the general interest, he never ceased to promote public service, to campaign and to act to make it more efficient and accessible to all, wherever destiny took him. But it is also with the deep conviction that the economy must above all respond to the fundamental needs of the people, that beyond the prestigious mandates he has been in charge of, he has engaged in a more in-depth reflection on the challenges of society and on the economic models that allow for a better human development, and that preserve democracy. It was with this conviction that he joined CIRIEC, for which he was an enlightening and inspiring guide, both through the relevance of his analyses and through his constant quest to understand the evolution of the world. He was particularly convinced that in the current crisis, it was necessary to go beyond the measures taken by the public authorities to save the economy and employment compromised by the health crisis, by giving public action the means to regain control in the long term in order to give a truly human meaning to the economic, social and ecological transition underway in France and throughout the world. He was also convinced, as was CIRIEC-France,

that this public action could be a partner of social and solidarity economy organisations to create, in an intelligent and timely alliance, another world and give a more social and solidarity-based meaning to our Republic.

Major issues are at stake: the subsistence capacity of individuals and the future of paid work, the sharing of value creation to reduce inequalities, the preservation of natural resources and the environment, access to health care, etc. Now, the economic and financial system that governs the world today has reached a dead end and does not guarantee that people's basic needs will be met in the future. It no longer offers hope for better days for people, which carries the seeds of major risks for democracy.

The context of the health crisis, which is disrupting our habits and lifestyles, with its economic and social consequences, nevertheless offers a great opportunity to change the situation. The crisis has amply demonstrated the need to organise more synergies, interactions and co-constructions between public action and the SSE, but also with the so-called intermediary organisations and citizen representations whose capacity for voluntary commitment is remarkable. CIRIEC-France is part of this process and is determined to contribute to this change through its research and initiatives on forms of collective interest economies, represented by the public economy and the social and solidarity economy.

## **1. Activities 2020-2022**

### **1.1. Research and information**

Since its creation, the common thread running through CIRIEC-France's work has been research and information on collective interest economic models and the idea of implementing better synergies between public action, particularly at the local level, and the general interest activities carried out by social economy organisations.

In 2020 and 2021, the health constraints and the difficulties of meeting each other have not altered this desire to work on this thread, on the contrary. The main activities carried out over the last two years have been as follows:

- **Publication of the collective book entitled “Numérique, action publique, et démocratie” (Digital, public action and democracy)** drawn up in 2020 and published in May 2021

This book, to which thirty-seven experts from high administration, academic community, trade unions and the SSE have contributed, highlights the impact of digital technology on sectors as essential as sovereignty, democracy, political life and public services (education, health, mobility, administration, etc.). According to the publisher, PURH, *this book provides a conceptual insight into the digital revolution, a major phenomenon of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and an overview that cannot be found anywhere else. As an imposing compendium of knowledge*

*and expertise, it is an indispensable tool for understanding our times. The first part, devoted to public action, shows how the strategies of the various actors (public authorities, market platforms, digital commons) are articulated for the conduct of public policies, the establishment of infrastructures and the protection of the environment. In the second part, which focuses on collective services, major actors in this new digital world present an in-depth analysis of the applications implemented in the various sectors of the public and social economy. The third part deals with the interactions between digital technology and democracy, and describes the huge prospects opened up by the digital revolution, but also the risks it entails for law, justice, the protection of freedoms, and the functioning of our institutions.* This book is the fifth in the series "Économie publique et économie sociale" published by PURH under the aegis of the scientific commission of CIRIEC-France. It was edited by Philippe Bance and Jacques Fournier, with the collaboration of Olivier Boned, General Delegate of the Institut Montparnasse and Yannick Prost, President of the Association Services Publics.

- **Launch of the "Collective economy and territories" study**

The starting point for this initiative was the contribution of Michel Papaud, a member of the CIRIEC-France Orientation Council, then Director General of Services of Grenoble-Alpes-Métropole, entitled "Introduction à une réflexion sur économie collective et territoires" (Introduction to a reflection on the collective economy and territories) published in CIRIEC's Cahier No.2 in 2020. A research group, coordinated by Jean-Louis Cabrespines, was set up, made up of academics, experts and practitioners from large public and private organisations, with the ambitious objective of analysing the dynamics that are organised in the territories with the actors of public authorities and the social and solidarity economy. The aim is to identify the place of these actors, their motivations and the nature of their behaviours, their appetite for working together for the general interest and the Commons in the various sectors that correspond to the fundamental needs of the populations, in particular: Health - education - employment - protection - mobility - energy... The research also focuses on the place reserved for new tools, digital, financial, monetary, as well as on the territorial impact of large national companies, in the perspective of a collective economy that adapts to the evolutions of our time, taking the best of it, and also organising itself for more citizen participation and governance. The objective is to produce a collective work by the end of 2022, with intermediate publications on the themes that have been finalised as the research progresses.

- **The CIRIEC-France monthly newsletter**

This downloadable electronic newsletter was designed in 2008 to report on the activities of our section and those of CIRIEC International, and to provide information on events and publications of organisations whose vocation is similar to that of CIRIEC. The Newsletter is distributed every month to more than 2,100 contacts in the CIRIEC-France database.

- **The CIRIEC-France Cahiers (Booklets)**

The Cahiers aim to publish studies carried out within the framework of CIRIEC-France's activities, in a lighter format and with a more regular distribution than the collective works. After the publication in 2019 of the Cahier no.1 on "Les autorités de régulation des services publics en France" (Regulatory authorities for public services in France), in 2020 of the Cahier no.2 entitled "Mutations de l'action publique et démocratie : capital, numérique, territoires" (Changes in public action and democracy: capital, digital, territories), the year 2021 saw the publication of the Cahier n°3 entitled "Mutations du monde, enjeux et défis" (World changes, issues and challenges), a document constituting the proceedings of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary Conference of CIRIEC-France organised on 26 October 2020. At the same time, the Cahier no. 4 on "Les coopérations entre économie publique et ESS au service de l'intérêt collectif" (Cooperation between the public economy and the SSE in the service of the collective interest) has been finalised and published in early 2022.

<https://www.ciriec-france.org/ciriec/cms/7125-7564/les-cahiers-du-ciriec-france.dhtml>

- **The CIRIEC-France Entretiens (Interviews)**

Distributed within the CIRIEC network and published in the *Ideals and debates* section of the website ([www.ciriec-france.org](http://www.ciriec-france.org)), the Entretiens are intended to raise awareness of CIRIEC among key figures in the public economy and the SSE, and to give them and the heads of the association's member organisations the opportunity a voice.

In 2020 and 2021, despite the health context, CIRIEC-France could conduct the interviews of:

- \* **Jean-Pierre Farandou**, Chairman and CEO of the SNCF
- \* **Stéphane Junique**, Chairman of Harmonie Mutuelle
- \* **Pascal Michard**, Chairman of the AEMA Group

## **1.2. Events**

- **70<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference of CIRIEC-France: "Mutations du monde, enjeux et défis" (World changes, issues and challenges)**

This event took place on 26 October 2020 at the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, a highly symbolic place for CIRIEC-France given that the two institutions have the same founder, Léon Jouhaux, Nobel Peace Prize winner. The conference was opened by the EESC President, Patrick Bernasconi, who, after recalling the need for civil society representation in our republic, underlined the indispensable role of the EESC, as a public policy council, but also as a drafter of opinions and reports on all subjects concerning the general interest and citizenship.

- **Conference “RSE, raison d’être, entreprises sociales, entreprises à mission : nouveaux modes d’entreprendre autrement ?” (CSR, raison d’être, social enterprises, mission-based enterprises: new ways of doing business differently?),** November 16, 2021 in Paris  
<https://www.ciriec-france.org/ciriec/cms/7134-7673/conference-ciriec-ess-france-aema-groupe.dhtml>

As part of the SSE month, CIRIEC-France, Aéma groupe and ESS France wanted to update the debate on the role of companies in the context of economic, social and ecological transition. A conference was co-organised on 16 November 2021, and brought together 70 people; it was the subject of fruitful exchanges on the role of the company and the evolution of its governance to undertake differently.

- **Participation in the 8<sup>th</sup> International Research Conference on Social Economy of CIRIEC** in San José, Costa Rica  
8-10 September 2021
- **Participation in CIRIEC international bodies**

## 2. Administration and functioning

### Statutory bodies

CIRIEC-France met regularly during the past year:

- ❖ 4 Bureau meetings: 1 February, 31 March, 13 July, 15 November 2021
- ❖ 1 Board of Directors: 28 April 2021
- ❖ 1 General Assembly: 4 October 2021
- ❖ 2 Guidance Councils meetings: 22 January, 16 June 2021

### The governance

The Board of Directors was elected by the General Assembly on 26 October 2020 and is renewable in its entirety every three years. The term of office of the directors will end in 2023 at the General Assembly, which will approve the 2022 accounts. The Board is composed of 24 members and two honorary presidents invited. The 11-member bureau was also renewed. The association's bodies have been rejuvenated and diversified. The list of directors and members of the Guidance Council is attached to this report.

### Partnerships

- At the end of 2021, the association had 89 members, including 25 organisations and 64 individuals. New members have been

registered, as increasing the number of members is a constant concern not only to have sufficient resources for the functioning of the association, but also to bring together those who, sharing CIRIEC's convictions, agree to support its work.

- A new agreement was signed with MGEN on 4 January 2021 and will expire on 31 December 2023. It involves the Institut Montparnasse, an association created by MGEN whose new strategy aims to conduct research on the mutualist identity and the impact of mutuality in France and in the French-speaking world. The aim of this tripartite agreement is to implement an active collaboration based on common interest and to promote the research and information work produced by each of the three parties.

## **The means of communication**

CIRIEC-France's communication tools consist of:

- electronic media:
  - o The website [www.ciriec-france.org](http://www.ciriec-france.org)
  - o Contacts-CIRIEC, electronic file with approximately 2,100 contacts
  - o A Twitter account (440 followers)
  - o A YouTube video channel
- Paper based-materials:
  - o The monthly newsletter is distributed electronically but can be downloaded
  - o The various summary sheets: history, presentation, governance, publications, also available on the website

## **Conclusion**

Despite the difficult context of the years 2020 and 2021, CIRIEC's work has continued in 2022, always with the conviction that it is necessary to combine the strengths and talents of public organisations and those of the social and solidarity economy in order to implement an economic system that meets people's essential needs. This is all the more necessary as the issues of inequality and poverty become more and more glaring and intolerable in this rapidly changing world. At the time of writing this report, war is on the doorstep of Europe, creating great uncertainty for the future. All the more reason for public and social and solidarity economy activists to campaign for peace, just as the founders of CIRIEC, Edgard Milhaud, Léon Jouhaux (Nobel Peace Prize winner), and many others did.