



# ***The Statistics on the Social Economy in Europe***

***The EISMEA report coordinated by EURICSE and CIRIEC international***

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Funded by  
the European Union

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

**Lack of reliable and up-to-date statistical information on the scope, size and impact of the social economy in Europe.**

**European action plan for the social economy -  
EAPSE, Dec. 2021, European Commission**

Call for tenders December 2022 - European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA)

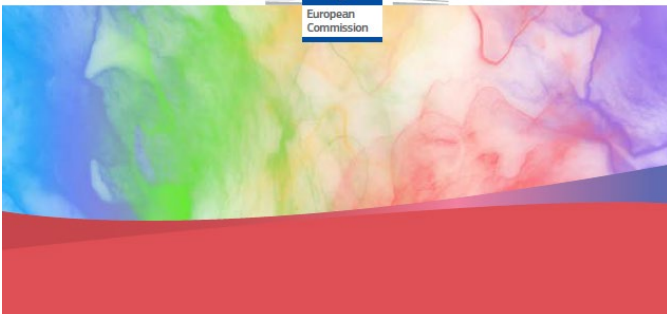
# 5. ENHANCING RECOGNITION OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY AND ITS POTENTIAL

## European Action Plan for the Social Economy

COMMUNICATION DE LA COMMISSION AU PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN, AU CONSEIL, AU COMITÉ ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL EUROPÉEN ET AU COMITÉ DES RÉGIONS

Construire une économie au service des personnes: plan d'action pour l'économie sociale

{SWD(2021) 373 final}



Recent Evolutions of the Social Economy in the European Union

STUDY

Building a social economy that works for people: an action plan for the social economy

Since 2011, the Commission has contributed to raising the visibility and profile of the social economy, social enterprises and social innovation across the EU through various actions, in particular with regard to funding or research<sup>40</sup>. In Member States as well, public authorities and stakeholders have adopted interesting initiatives to boost the visibility and understanding of the social economy, including specific labels and certification mechanisms, or large-scale communication campaigns.

Evidence shows that **the general public, including young and disadvantaged people, social partners, stakeholders and funders, still have an insufficient awareness of the positive impact of the social economy**<sup>41</sup>. As this affects the development of relevant support policies and market opportunities, boosting the visibility of the social economy needs to remain a priority. The Commission will use this Action Plan to engage with relevant stakeholders at all levels to maintain momentum.

The Commission will:

- Carry out regular communication campaigns under a long-term communication strategy, emphasizing the role and specific value of the social economy, also in cooperation with economy stakeholders.

The Commission also encourages the organisation of regular social economy summits hosted by Member States and other actors.

and difficult to compare. For example, only a few Member States have adapted their national accounting systems to collect supplementary data ("satellite accounts") on the social economy, despite the financial support available from the EU budget. As a result, statistics on the size, workforce, development and challenges of the social economy are missing. At EU level, a few comparative, but non-exhaustive, data collection exercises have provided estimates but would require updating<sup>42</sup>. Data is also lacking on the potential size and weight of philanthropic donations and the potential to leverage this kind of private investment to further social economy and other EU policy goals. The Commission will therefore continue to support evidence-based policy making by collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative information on the social economy in all Member States. This will also contribute towards monitoring the Proximity and Social Economy industrial ecosystem.

• Commission will:

- Launch a new study to collect quantitative and qualitative information on the social economy covering all EU Member States.
- Launch a specific study on philanthropic donations in the EU.

... academic interest in the social economy has grown, but dialogue and cross-fertilisation of ideas with the policy-making world could be improved. The Commission will seek to facilitate such exchanges.

<sup>40</sup> Examples include a label for European social entrepreneurship funds (Regulation (EU) No 346/2013), the 2020 European Commission comprehensive mapping study of social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe, as well as the European Social Innovation Competition (<https://asic.challenges.org/>).

<sup>41</sup> European Commission, *Impact of the Commission's Social Business Initiative (SBI) and its follow-up actions*, by Haarich, S., Holstein, F., Spule, S., Galera, G., Franchini, B., Borzage, C., Chiomento, S., Splies-Knafl, W., Scheck, B., Salvatori, G., Luxembourg, 2020.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, European Economic and Social Committee, *Recent evolutions of the Social Economy in the European Union*, by M. and Cheves R., 2017 and European Commission, *Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe - Comparative synthesis report*, by C., Galera G., Franchini B., Chiomento S., Nogales R. and Carini C., Luxembourg, 2020.

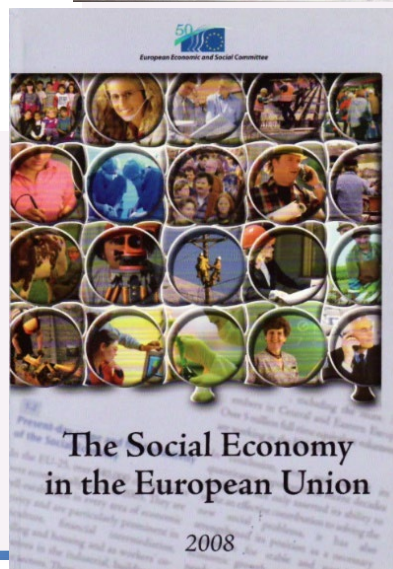
Launch a new study to collect quantitative and qualitative information on the social economy covering all EU Member States.



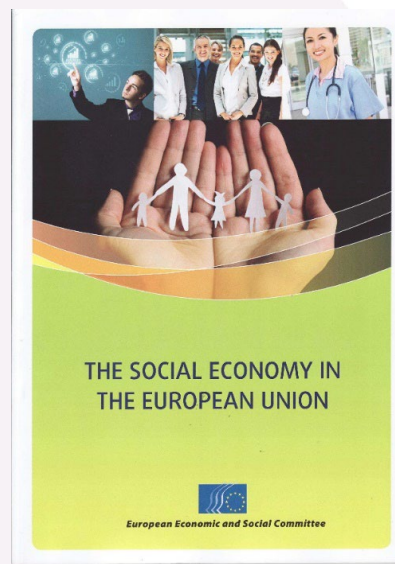
# Background: European statistic reports on the Social Economy carried out by CIRIEC



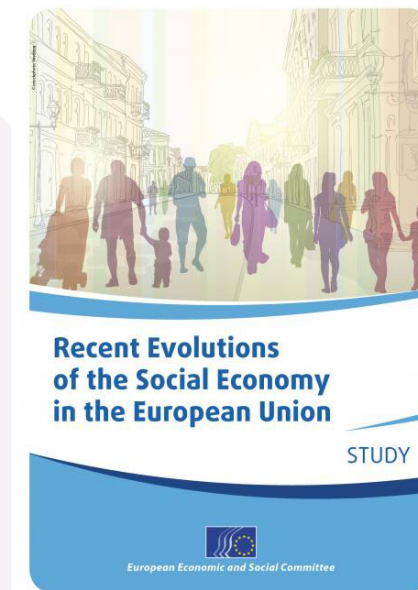
2000



2008



2012



2017



2024 (with EURICSE)

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) **Measuring the size of the social economy**
- 2) **analyse a number of relevant aspects of the social economy, including (a) its tradition and national recognition, (b) *the impact of COVID-19* on the sector and its ability to recover, (c) its contribution *six ecosystems (Agri-food, Cultural & creative ind., Energy-renewables, Health, Tourism and Retail)***
- 3) **Overview of the methods and indicators to assess better the contribution of the social economy**

# STATISTICAL OBJECTIVES

To present an overview of the figures for the social economy in Europe in 2021:

1. The number of social economy **entities**
2. **People involved** in the social economy
  - Employees
  - Volunteers
  - Members
- 3 - The **economic weight** of the Social Economy (sales, added value)
- 4 - **Legal forms** of the Social Economy (including Social Enterprises)
- 5 - Distribution of the social economy by **sector of economic activity**
- 6 - The **size** of Social Economy entities



# THE TEAM AND CONSORTIA

## More than 100 people involved



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August – 2024

# METHODOLOGY (1): The field under radar

Field of the Social Economy covered:

- ✓ European definition of the social economy (EAPSE, 2021)  
All CMAFs (Cooperatives, Mutual Societies, Associations and Foundations)  
+ social enterprises (EU definition).
- ✓ Operational definition of social enterprises.

The term social economy refers to four main types of entities providing goods and services to their members or society at large: cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations (including charities), and foundations. Social enterprises are now generally understood as part of the social economy.



# METHODOLOGY (1): The field under radar

Features	Social economy	Social enterprise
Objectives	Carry out activities in the interest of members/users or society at large	Carry out activities aiming to meet the needs of vulnerable groups or of the community at large <b>(social objective in the statute)</b>
Distribution of profits	Primacy of people and social purpose over capital in the distribution and use of surpluses and/or profits as well as assets, including reinvestment of most of the profits.	<b>Reinvestment of all/most of the profits</b> and compliance with asset lock
Governance	Democratic and/or participatory governance	<b>Democratic and/or participatory governance</b>
Resources	Resource mix depending on whether an organisation is a commercial entity (cooperatives, mutual aid societies) or not	In addition to non-commercial resources, social enterprises use production factors typically functioning in the monetary economy

## Problems of the ‘frontiers’: which can (not) be considered ‘in scope’:

### Core Team work

- Analyse the Laws on Social Economy / Social enterprises
- Discuss with national experts and other experts
- > **need to activate Working Groups for the ‘scope’**

### Market producer

Cooperatives, mutual benefit societies and conventional companies pursuing explicit social aims; associations and foundations that conduct economic activities

## **METHODOLOGY (2): Technical agreements**

### **Agreements and main issues:**

- ✓ **Year of reference: end of 2021**
- ✓ **Active entities, not registered entities**
- ✓ **Market entities (operational criteria)**
- ✓ **People involved: operational criteria. Country factsheet.**
- ✓ **Issues with members & volunteers (doble accountability, formal/informal,.)**
- ✓ **Two types of Social Enterprises: ex legge and de facto**
- ✓ **Lack of data on value added, economic activity sectors, size**

## Portugal

### Social economy data overview

	Number of Entities	of which social enterprises <sup>(1)</sup>	People employed (headcount)	Female employees (headcount) <sup>(2)</sup>	Turnover (EUR million)	Number of Volunteers (annual average)	Number of Memberships
Cooperatives	2 174	436	24 309	13 200	1 867.10	n/a	828 454
Mutual benefit societies	91	91	4 906	2 993	491.10	n/a	1 084 363
Associations <sup>(3)</sup>	70 315	7 117	156 034	111 211	5 824.00	502 098	18 335 430
Foundations	618	331	14 764	11 334	865.80	n/a	121 327
Other legal forms	376	376	40 369	34 260	1 055.30	n/a	116 434
<b>Total</b>	<b>73 574</b>	<b>8 350</b>	<b>240 382</b>	<b>172 997</b>	<b>10 103.30</b>	<b>516 187</b>	<b>20 486 000</b>

### Entities by sectors of economic activity

	Cooperatives	Mutual benefit societies	Associations	Foundations	Other legal forms
Agri-food	557	0	1 010	2	0
Industry	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Energy and utilities	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Construction and real estate	18	0	10	0	0
Transport	80	0	21	0	0
Retail	291	0	10	1	0
Food and accommodation	17	0	88	1	0
Financial and insurance services	88	16	6	0	1
Cleaning and landscape activities	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Education	154	0	4 619	62	2
Human health activities; Residential care and social work activities	213	67	8 105	271	370
Creative, arts and entertainment	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other sectors	756	8	56 446	281	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 174</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>70 315</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>376</b>

### Entities by size<sup>(4)</sup>

	Cooperatives	Mutual benefit societies	Associations <sup>(5)</sup>	Foundations	Other legal forms
Micro	1 189	24	54 500	292	20
Small	654	47	5 460	179	71
Medium <sup>(6)</sup>	169	20	1 120	103	286
Large	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 012</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>61 080</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>377</b>

### Employment by size<sup>(6)</sup>

	Cooperatives	Mutual benefit societies	Associations <sup>(7)</sup>	Foundations	Other legal forms
Micro	1 074	22	20 257	231	0
Small	7 614	390	47 022	2 228	1 239
Medium <sup>(7)</sup>	16 398	4 815	112 639	12 831	41 279
Large	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 086</b>	<b>5 227</b>	<b>179 918</b>	<b>15 290</b>	<b>42 518</b>

### Data sources

Data collected by Eduardo Pedrosa.

Social Economy Satellite Account (SESA) 2019/2020 (2019), except for the number of female employees, number of members and data by size: Social Economy Sector Survey (2018); number of volunteers: Survey on Volunteer Work (2016).

(1) The core research team considered all cooperatives of social solidarity, private institutions of social solidarity (IPSS) and cooperatives with a public interest status other than IPSS as ex lege social enterprises.

Among the de facto social enterprises, the National Expert included:

- Cooperatives and associations engaged in community and economic development, housing and environmental protection activities without IPSS status;
- Associations with public interest status other than IPSS;
- Foundations with public utility status and NGOs with development cooperation, both without IPSS status

(2) SESA does not count the number of female employees. However, in 2018 these figures were obtained through the SESS 2018. The estimate for 2019 has been calculated assuming the same percentages as in 2018.

(3) Associations include Community and self management subsectors, except for data on volunteers and members.

(4) Total figures by size differ from Tab. 1 because data by size refer to 2018 and Tab. 1 to 2019.

(5) Data also refer to large entities.

# Country factsheet

## E.g. Portugal



## Limitations and obstacles

**No data available for several countries and variables (e.g. Germany)**

**For The Netherlands and Malta most of the data are missed  
(and UK is not EU member)**

**‘Grey area’ of entities to be considered ‘in scope’ or ‘out of scope’**



## Main results

### The European social economy represents in 2021:

- More than **11.5 million persons** in Europe, **6.3%** of the total occupied people
- More than 55 million volunteers
- More than 95 million members of cooperatives and  
More than 135 million members of associations,
- More than 4,3 million of entities and enterprises

## Results: number of entities

### 1.- Number of entities

More than 4,3 million of Social Economy entities active in all of the 27 EU MSs

#### **Legal forms of the SE entities**

97% of the SE entities are the traditional CMAF legal forms

2,5% use a plurality of legal forms around Europe

0,6% are Limited Liability Social Enterprises Companies

**Social Enterprises** are more 246 000 entities.

Less than 43 000 are ex lege and over 203 000 are de facto

Social enterprises use mainly the traditional CMAF legal forms



# Employment

## 2.- The people of the Social Economy (1)

### **People employed:**

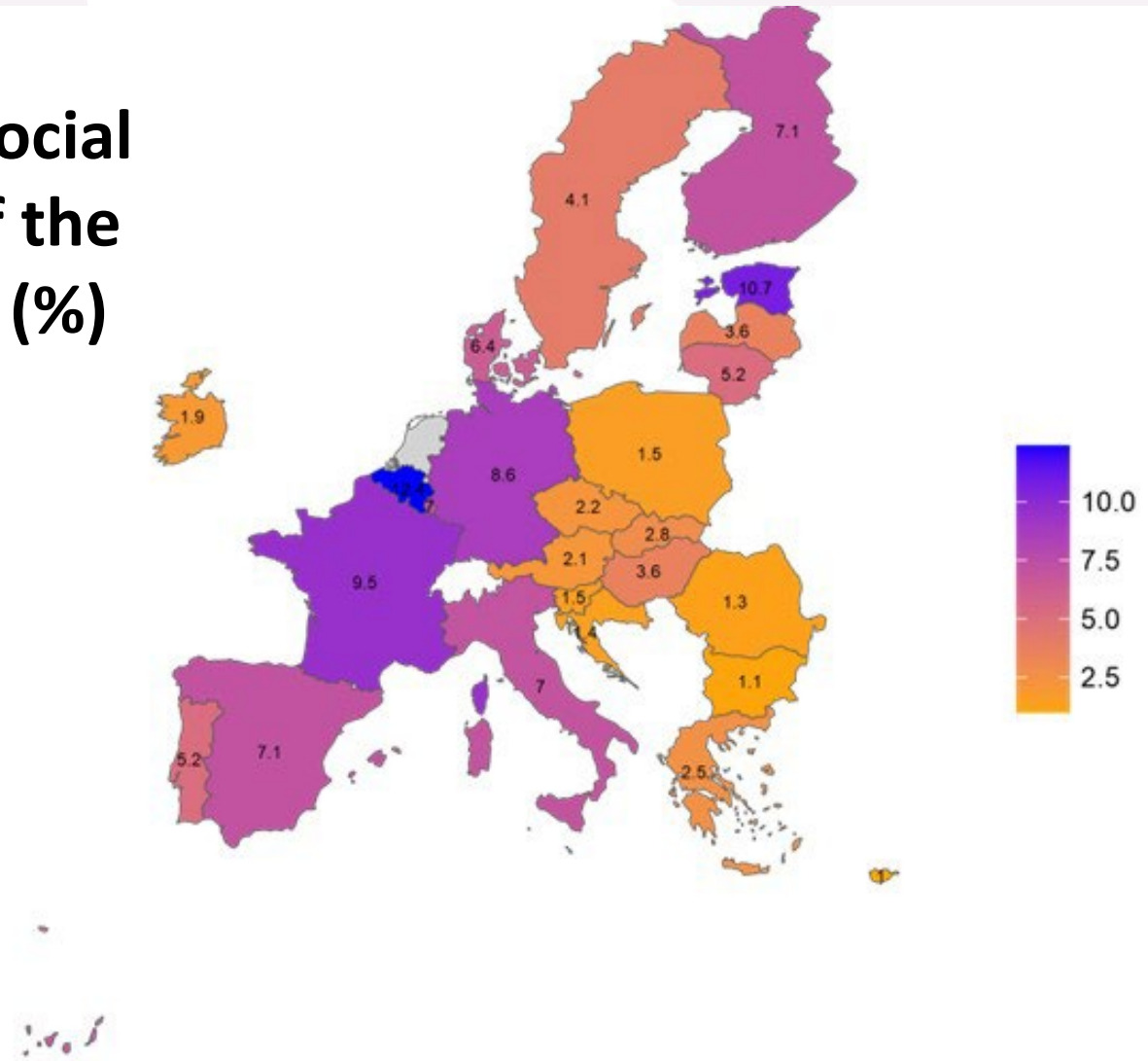
- more than 11,5 million people work in the Social Economy in Europe.
- mainly in Germany (3.4 million), France (almost 2.6 million), Italy (over 1.5 million) and Spain (almost 1.4 million)
- 6.3% of the employed population work in the social economy

65% of people employed work in Associations

Around 2/3 of the people employed are women

## Persons employed in social economy as a share of the employed population (%)

**Average: 6,3%**



# Members and volunteers

## 2.- The people of the Social Economy (2)

### **Members:**

95 million members of cooperatives and  
45% of the population are engaged in civil organizations

### **Volunteers:**

around 19,3% of EU citizen volunteer formally in organizations  
more than 53 million active volunteers  
(data available only for 15 member states)



# Turnover and value added

## 3.- Economic size of the Social Economy

**Turnover:** more than 912,9 billion € in 2021.

**Cooperatives accounted 71,5% of the Social Economy turnover**

(data available only for 19 MS for coops and 16 MS for associations & foundations)

**Value Added:**

(only available for 11 countries and incomplete)

**75,9% of the EU Social Economy value added is generated by Associations**

## Sectorial distribution

### 4.- Distribution by sectors of economic activity

#### **Distribution of entities:**

Associations are mainly active in 'Other sectors' (including "Activities of membership organisations"), "Creative, arts & entertainment activities", and "Education"

Cooperatives are mainly active in "Construction and real state", "Agri-food" and "Other sectors"

#### **Distribution of people employed:**

Around 50% of the people employed in EU Social Economy work in the "Human health and social care", 15% in 'Other sectors' followed by "Education" and "artistic and creative activities"

## Size of the SE entities

### 5.- The size of the Social Economy entities

**93,5 % of the Social Economy entities are Micro enterprises (<10 Staff headcount)**

**98,1 % of the Social Economy entities are Micro+Small entities (<50 Staff headcount)**



## Main conclusions

- A comprehensive and up-to-date survey of the dimensions of the social economy in all EU countries,
- An assessment of the state of development of statistics on the social economy in each member country,
- An identification of the most problematic areas in the development of statistics (delimitation of the field, design of variables, data collection mechanisms, etc.).
- Proposals to the European Commission to develop SE statistics (e.g. the activation of an international working group of a mixed nature between NSO, academia, umbrella organisations)



**Study downloadable:**

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8aa2a5cb-74a7-11ef-a8ba-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

**MUCHAS GRACIAS | THANK YOU VERY MUCH!**

