



Letter of the President

2019 and 2020, two key years for the future of the social economy in Europe

In May 2019 the European Union will start a new mandate, bringing new opportunities and challenges, in which the 2.8 million social economy enterprises and organisations, representing more than 13.6 million jobs, must play a leading role.



The Social Economy is committed to the achievement of a more social Europe, with a focus on competitiveness and innovation at the service of the people. Social Economy promotes fairer labour markets, advancing towards full employment and a digital revolution that opens up new opportunities for all entrepreneurs and citizens. We are committed to make the EU an actor of change and to fully achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in 2030.

This is the project that Social Economy Europe will enhance, being the voice of social economy enterprises and organisations. It is a project that puts Social Economy at the centre of the EU's socio-economic policies, creating an environment which promotes and improves its visibility and supports its growth in the European single market.

The foundations of this favourable ecosystem for the social economy have been put in place during the 2014-2019 EU mandate, ending with a positive balance for the Social Economy.

Since the re-establishment of the European Parliament's Social Economy Intergroup in January 2015, the EP has hosted 15 public hearings on strategic issues for the development of social economy enterprises and organisations, in which more than 1,400 people have participated. The Intergroup is a strategic working group for the Social Economy, in which joint initiatives are put forward together with the European Institutions, Member States and social economy representative organisations. Its continuity is a key factor for the development of the Social Economy in Europe.

The European Commission has also been a decisive actor in the development of the sector, moving from a policy tailored for social enterprises to a policy englobing the whole social economy ecosystem. As a result of the Start-Up and Scale-Up Initiative of 2016, the European Commission has put in place a set of measures in favour of the social economy. Moreover, the Commission has created a task force composed of representatives of more than 22 Directorates General which coordinates and implements the set of European policies in which the Social Economy plays an important role: entrepreneurship, employment, industry, social affairs, energy, financing, education, innovation, cooperation and development, foreign and neighbourhood policy, regional policy, etc.

All these actions are carried out in coherence with the Council Conclusions of December 2015 on “The promotion of the social economy as a key driver of economic and social development in Europe”, which were adopted unanimously by the 28 Member States.

Member States have made a significant contribution in placing the social economy among the EU’s working priorities. In the framework of the Presidencies of the Council of the EU, there have been 4 European Social Economy conferences (Rome 2014, Luxembourg 2015, Bratislava 2016 and Sofia 2018) and the Madrid Summit in 2017 “The Social Economy, an enterprise model for the future of the European Union” that have set the pillars for the European initiatives for this enterprise model.

Likewise, and on the occasion of the European Social Economy Conference in Luxembourg at the end of 2015, 6 EU Governments created a permanent Monitoring Committee on social economy policies, involving 14 States in its activities. France currently chairs this Group and Spain will take over in 2020, ensuring its continuity.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), which has a Social Economy Category and which, in 2015, established a permanent study group on social economy enterprises, celebrates since 2016 the European Day of Social Economy Enterprises, thus ensuring a great visibility and bringing together all the EU Institutions, Member States, organisations and enterprises of the Social Economy, as well as all the actors involved in its development, such as the local and regional powers.

These milestones show the relevance that social economy has attained in the EU’s agenda. In all these events, Social Economy Europe has played a leading role through dialogue with the European Institutions and taking initiatives to move towards a European policy which favours all social economy enterprises and organisations.

In October 2018, Social Economy Europe adopted the document “The Future of EU policies for the Social Economy: towards a European Action Plan” which includes a public policy proposal agreed by all the SEE



members and that I had the honour to present to the Vice President of the European Commission, Jyrki Katainen, in January 2019.

The leadership of SEE throughout this process has been possible thanks to the commitment of all its members, which has been expanded, with the adhesion of 4 new members that have reinforced the representativeness of SEE, making stronger the voice of the European Social Economy.

I would also like to thank the work done by the members of our Board of Directors, with special mention to Emmanuel Verny, our vice president representing EES France (French Chamber of the Social and Solidarity Economy) who retired in 2018. Emmanuel has been a key player in building Social Economy Europe since the very beginning and has strongly promoted the development of the Social Economy in Europe, expanding its values to the other side of the Mediterranean.

In conclusion, the years 2019-2020 will be of vital importance to launch a European Social Economy policy. From Social Economy Europe we have a strategy to put forward an ambitious European policy based on the progress made so far and with the support of all the actors, enterprises and organisations of the Social Economy, because alone we are invisible, but together we can continue contributing to the progress of our European Union.

1

Social Economy Europe

Social Economy Europe (SEE) is the voice of the **2.8 million social economy enterprises and organisations** in the European Union. Created in November 2000 under the name of CEP-CMAF -the European Standing Conference of Cooperatives, Mutuals, Associations and foundations- with the purpose of establishing a permanent dialogue between the social economy and the European Institutions, in 2008, CEP-CMAF changed its name and officially became Social Economy Europe.

SEE members include the European organisations of: mutual and cooperative insurers (AMICE); non-profit healthcare players, health mutuals and health insurance funds (AIM); industrial and service cooperatives (CECOP); foundations (EFC); associations of general interest (CEDAG); work integration social enterprises (ENSIE); paritarian institutions of social protection (AEIP); ethical banks and financiers (FEBEA); and the European Cities and Regions for the social economy (REVES). SEE also represents the national social economy organisations of France (ESS-France), Italy (National Third Sector Forum), Portugal (CA-SES), Spain (CEPES) and Belgium (ConcertES).

SEE believes in a European Union that is determined to promote the economic and social progress of its Member States, and that acknowledges its key role as global social economy leader. SEE believes in:



A diverse economy at the service of people. A democratic, sustainable and inclusive economy, strongly committed to society.



A more favourable ecosystem for the development of the European social economy, that will keep offering innovative solutions in response to societal demands.



The social economy's active participation in the development and implementation of the main socio-economic policies of the European Union.

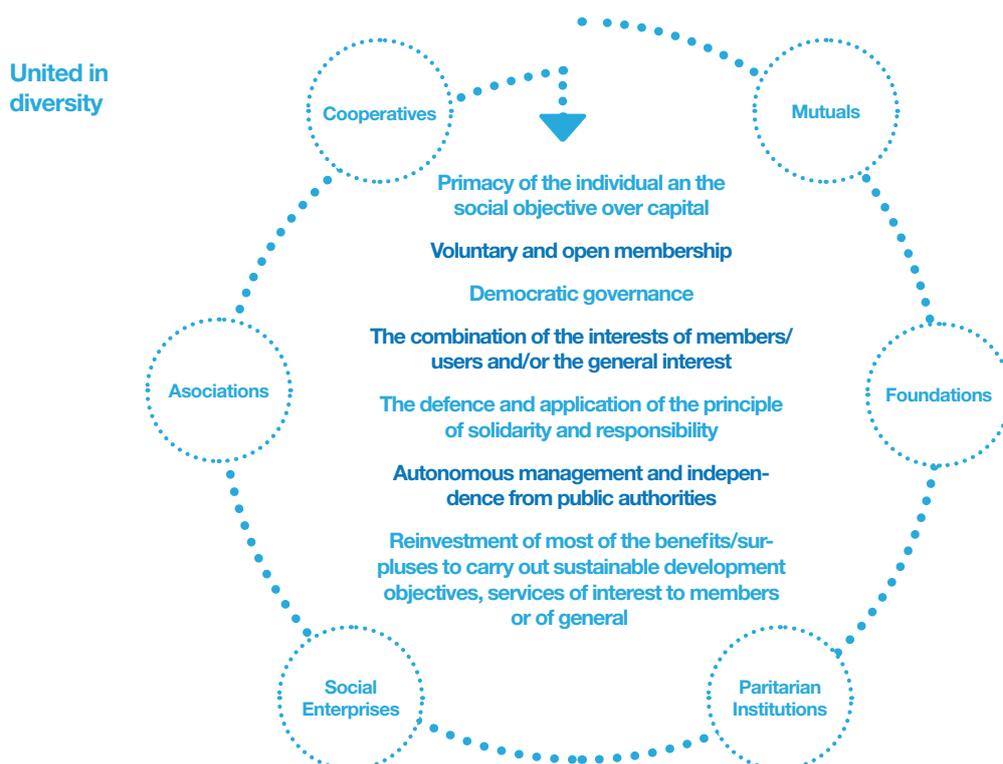
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Social Economy, an enterprise model for the future of Europe

The European Union and the rest of the world are experiencing disruptive technological, social and economic changes. The emergence and progress of digitalisation, blockchain and big data, or the global rise of inequalities and job insecurity, are trends quickly changing our world, bringing new opportunities but also new challenges, and urging us to debate about the future that we –Europeans– want to build collectively.

Europe needs the social economy to reach out to its citizens, detect their real needs and make them part of creating solutions to a number of challenges, such as unemployment or precarious work, social exclusion, discrimination and racism, climate change or the lack of social cohesion. Likewise, the social economy needs the European Union to improve its visibility, as an alliance of virtuous enterprise models, and to support its recognition and development –on equal footing with other forms of enterprise– throughout the European Single Market.

The social economy is an essential part of the European economic and social landscape. In the European Union, there are **2.8 million social economy enterprises and organisations** in the European Union that employ **13.6 million people** and account for **8% of the EU's GDP**.



The social economy is formed by enterprises and organisations of all sizes, ranging from SMEs to large companies and corporations that operate in all the economic sectors.

According to the European Parliament, **the social economy is one of the pillars of the European social model** which “plays an essential role in the European economy, by combining profitability with solidarity, creating high-quality jobs, strengthening social, economic and regional cohesion, generating social capital, promoting active citizenship, solidarity and a type of economy with democratic values which puts people first, in addition to supporting sustainable development and social, environmental and technological innovation”.

As the European Commission’s reflection paper **“For a sustainable Europe by 2030”** points out, the social economy is an opportunity and a driver for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 sustainable development goals, especially for the achievement of objective 8 “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. The social economy is also a key actor for the **European Pillar of Social Rights** to be a useful instrument to ensure the economic and social convergence, and to improve the welfare of the more than 512 million EU citizens. In short, thanks to its commitment with society, the social economy offers innovative solutions to the main economic, social and environmental challenges of our time:





3

Social Economy Europe 2018 in figures

**2**

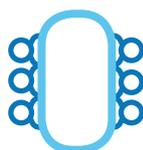
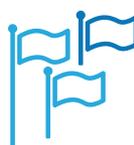
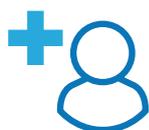
General Assemblies

**3**

Boards of Directors

**3**

European Parliament's Social
Economy Intergroup public
hearings
(attended by more than 450
participants in total)

**3**Meetings with the Commission's
Head of Unit for social economy**1**Meeting of the European
Commission's Taskforce on
social economy**2**Meetings of the Monitoring
Committee of Luxembourg
Declaration**1**Plenary meeting of the European
Commission Expert Group on social
economy and social enterprises**+30**EU and international social
economy events**1**

New member (GECOP)

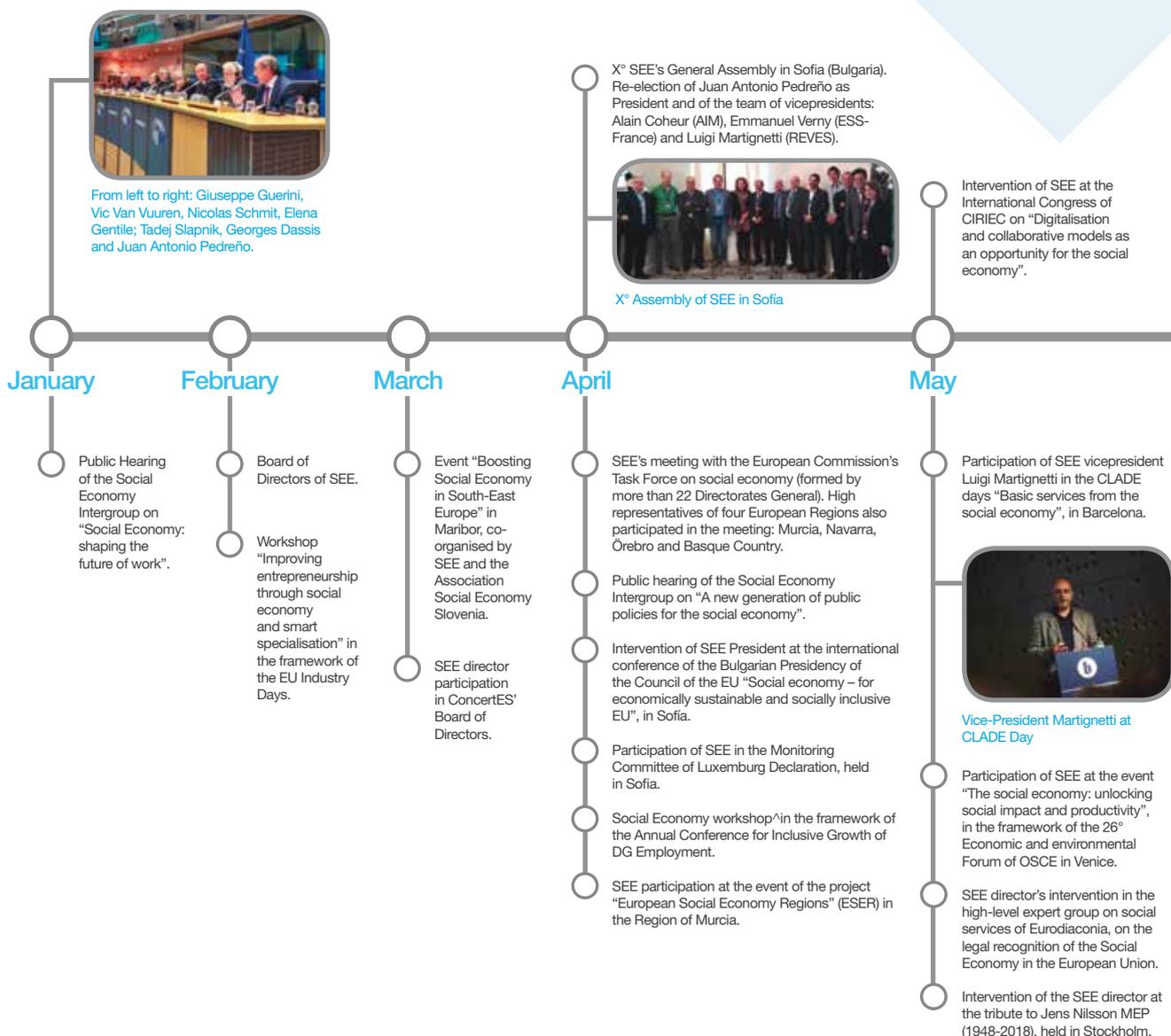
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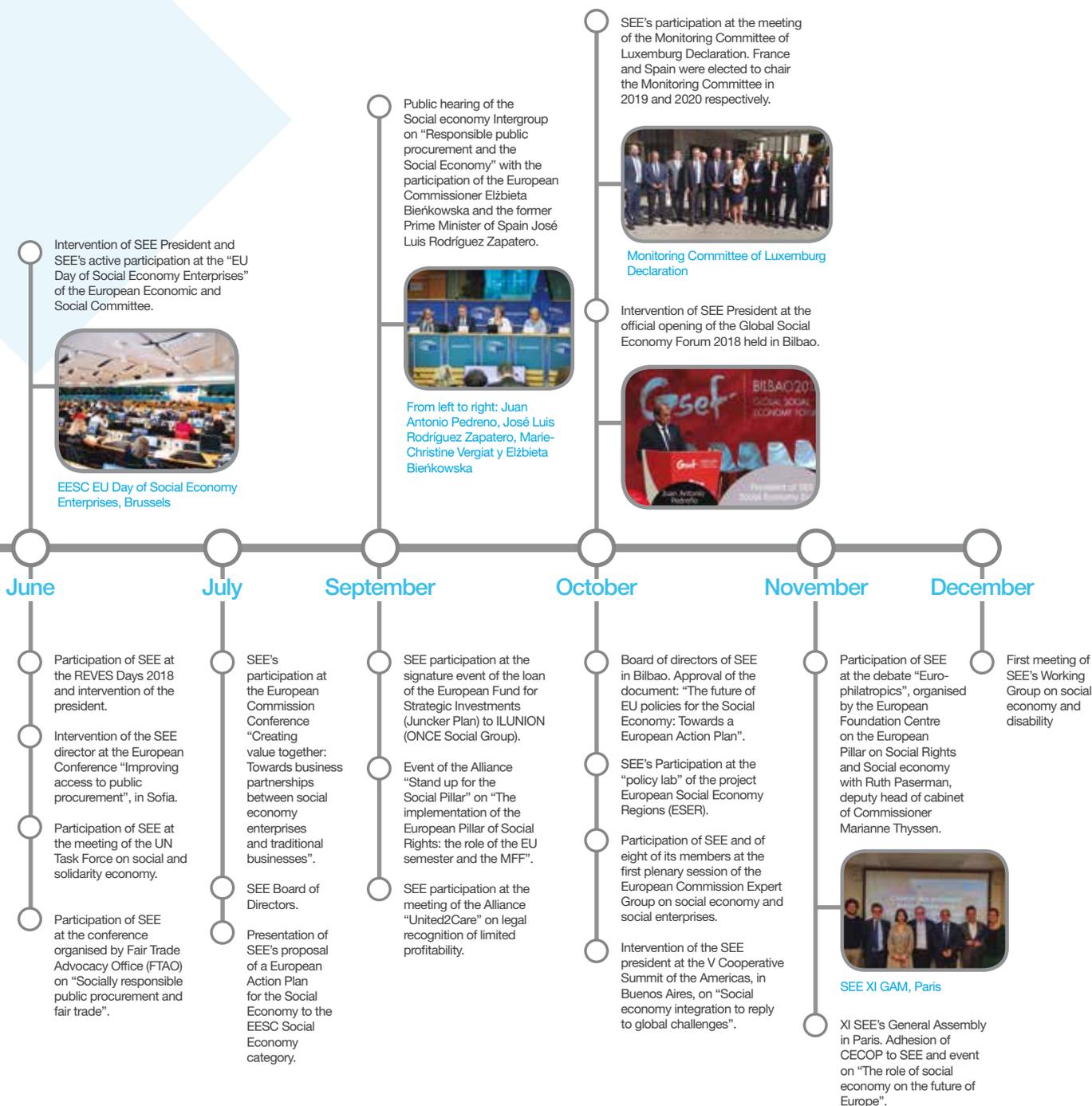
New followers on Twitter

4

The Social Economy progresses in Europe:

Main activities of Social Economy Europe in 2018





5

SEE 2018 in pictures



Board of directors of SEE



Boosting social economy in south-east Europe, Maribor



Meeting of the European Commission Task Force on Social Economy



Family picture: International Conference on social economy of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU



“Social Economy European Regions” (ESER) event in Murcia. From left to right: Víctor Meseguer, Juan Antonio Pedreño, Ulla Engelmann and Luigi Martignetti



Members and SEE team at the International Conference on social economy of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU



EESC EU Day of Social Economy enterprises. From left to right: Christophe Itier, Ariane Rodert y Nicolas Schmit.



Public hearing of the Intergroup on “Responsible public procurement and the social economy”.



Board of directors of SEE in Bilbao



Inauguration of the Global Social Economy Forum in Bilbao



Intervention of SEE president at the V Cooperative Summit of the Americas



ESS-France and SEE event on “Social Economy and the future of Europe”. From left to right: Sarah El Hairy and Juan Antonio Pedreño



Marzena Rogalska, Juan Antonio Pedreño, Elżbieta Bienkowska and Marie-Christine Vergiat.



Martignetti, Pedreño and Javier Celdrán at ESER policy lab in Brussels

6

Brief assessment of the mandate 2014-2019

6.1

European Commission

During the 2014-2019 mandate, the European Commission has intensified and expanded its support to social economy enterprises and organisations.

In October 2016, the former Group of Experts of the Commission on social entrepreneurship (GECES) adopted its report **“Social enterprises and the social economy going forward”**, which argues in favour of the elaboration of a European Action Plan for the Social Economy.



Daniel Sorrosal, Ann Branch, Juan Antonio Pedreño and Ulla Engelmann.

In November 2016, the Commission presented its **“Start-up and Scale-up Initiative”**, which includes a chapter dedicated to entrepreneurship through the social economy. Based on this initiative, the Commission services launched more than thirty actions to promote the Social Economy in the European Union, structured around 5 pillars:

1

Access to
funding

2

Access to
markets

3

Improving
framework
conditions

4

Social
innovation,
technologies
and new
business
models

5

International
dimension

6.2

European Parliament's Social Economy Intergroup



Sofia Ribeiro, Sven Giegold, Beatriz Becerra, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Elena Gentile, Alain Coheur, Patrizia Toia and Jens Nilsson, in December 2015.

Created in 1990 and continuously active since then, the Social Economy Intergroup serves to ensure a permanent dialogue between all European Institutions, Member States and the social economy sector and is of vital importance to mainstream social economy's perspective into the legislative and non-legislative work of the EU Parliament.

In December 2014, the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament approved the re-establishment of the Social Economy Intergroup thanks to the determined support of **80 MEPs** from **6 political groups**.

In January 2015 the board of directors of the Social Economy Intergroup was created, composed of 5 co-presidents:

- **Jens Nilsson** ( , Sweden)
- **Ramón Luis Valcárcel** ( , Spain)
- **Beatriz Becerra** ( , Spain)
- **Sven Giegold** ( , Germany)
- **Marie-Christine Vergiat** ( , France)

And two vicepresidents:

- **Sofia Ribeiro** ( , Portugal)
- **Elena Gentile** ( , Italy)

Jens Nilsson ensured the coordination and management of the Intergroup until his sad loss in 2018. Marie-Christine Vergiat took over as coordinator, Elena Gentile replaced him as S&D co-president, and Georgi Pirinski became the new S&D vice-president. Likewise, Social Economy Europe, as the EU-level representative organisation of the social economy, was entrusted with the Intergroup's technical secretariat.



Intergroup meeting with Vicepresident Katainen and Commissioner Thyssen, in October 2017.

During the 2014–2019 mandate the Intergroup organised **15 public hearings**, attended by more than 1,400 people in total, on relevant issues and policies for the social economy.

The Intergroup also held **6 high level meetings** with key EU leaders like Vicepresident Jyrki Katainen and Commissioners Thyssen and Bieńkowska; the Minister for Labour and Social Economy of Luxemburg, Nicolas Schmit, and with the special advisor of the European Commission for European Pillar of Social Rights, Allan Larsson.



Jens Nilsson, Věra Jourová, Izaskún Bilbao and Marie-Christine Vergiat.

In 2017, thanks to the support of 39 MEPs from different groups, a debate on the proposal for a European Action Plan for the Social Economy was held at the plenary of the European Parliament. Nine MEPs participated in it and Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality represented the European Commission. The Intergroup has also actively worked to mainstreaming social economy's perspective into the legislative and non-legislative work of the European Parliament and reports of key importance such as:

- » **European Parliament legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), including an operative legal definition of the European Social Economy, 2019.**
- » **Report of the European Parliament on the European Pillar of Social Rights, 2017.**
- » **Report on the Single Market Strategy, 2016.**
- » **Report on social entrepreneurship and social innovation in the fight against unemployment, 2015.**

In addition, the Intergroup strongly supported the adoption of the Council Conclusions on Social Economy, the actions of the European Commission for these enterprises and organisations, as well as the agenda of various governments and presidencies of the Council of the European Union to promote the Social Economy in Europe.



6.3

Monitoring Committee of the Luxemburg Declaration



During the 2014-2019 mandate, Member States and the Council of the European Union have played a very important role in promoting the Social Economy in the European Union.

In November 2014, the Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU approved ***“The Rome Strategy: unlocking the potential of the Social Economy for EU growth”***, which already called for an Action Plan for Social Economy, the re-establishment of the Intergroup and the improvement of access to funds and the financing.

In December 2015, in the framework of the Luxembourgish Presidency of the Council, **six Member States** (France, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovakia and Spain) adopted the Declaration of Luxembourg ***“A roadmap towards a more comprehensive ecosystem for social economy enterprises”***, in which they requested the establishment of a shared Social Economy understanding in the EU and to reinforce the EU’s support for these enterprises and organisations. These 6 countries committed themselves to maintain a regular political dialogue in the field of Social Economy.



Nicolas Schmit in 2015.

Also in December 2015, the 28 Member States unanimously adopted the Council’s historic conclusions on ***“The promotion of the Social Economy as a key driver of economic and social development in Europe”***. This is an essential document that urges the Commission and the Member States to cooperate in order to promote the development of the Social Economy and establishes a series of recommendations and work priorities.

In 2016, the Slovak Presidency of the Council organised a European Conference on Social Economy in Bratislava and promoted the adoption - by 10 EU Member States - of the declaration ***“Social Economy as a key player in providing effective answers to current societal challenges in the EU and the world”***. Moreover, the establishment of the Monitoring Committee of the Luxembourg Declaration was formalised within the framework of the conference.



High-level representatives of 11 Member States

In 2017, the Spanish government assumed the presidency of the Monitoring Committee of Luxembourg Declaration and organised in collaboration with Social Economy Europe and CEPES (Spanish Social Economy Confederation), the Madrid conference **“Social Economy, an enterprise model for the future of the European Union”**, in which **11 Member States** adopted the homonymous declaration requesting to the Commission the set-up of a European Action Plan for the Social Economy,

properly financed, as well as strengthening role of the Social Economy within the European Pillar of Social Rights.

In 2018, Slovenia assumed the presidency of the Monitoring Committee of the Luxembourg Declaration and organised a broad agenda of events in the Slovenian city of Maribor, selected as **European Social Economy Capital 2018**. In addition, the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council also organized an international conference on Social Economy in Sofia.

In 2019, France assumed the presidency of the Committee, selecting the city of Strasbourg the European Capital of the Social Economy 2019. Also, the French presidency announced that the event **“Pact for Impact: a global alliance for a Social and Inclusive Economy”** will be held in Paris on 10 and 11 of July.



Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of Luxembourg Declaration, Starsbourg, 2019

In 2020, the Spain will hold again the presidency of the Monitoring Committee of the Luxembourg declaration.

6.4

European Economic and Social Committee



Luca Jahier, Ariane Rodert and Juan Antonio Pedreño

During the past 5 years, even before the re-establishment of the Social Economy Intergroup of the European Parliament and the start of the new European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee did not cease in its efforts to foster an ambitious European policy promoting the Social Economy.

To this end, the EESC counted on the work carried out by its Social Economy category, formed by more than 80 members of the Committee, and of its study group on Social Economy enterprises.

Since 2016, the EESC organises every year the **European Day of Social Economy enterprises**, whose next edition is scheduled for November 2019.

In addition, the EESC has approved a large number of opinions on topics of great relevance for the social economy and studies on **“Recent evolutions of the Social Economy in the European Union” (2017)** and **“Best practices in public policies regarding the European Social Economy post the economic crisis”**.



Albert Lautman, Marilena Vrana, Giuseppe Guerini, Sofia Ribeiro and Xavier Roberty



Xavier Roberty, Włodzimierz Grudziński and Jan Olsson

7

Future perspectives:

2019-2024 a new key period for the development of the Social Economy in Europe

7.1

Ten proposals of SEE for the European mandate 2019-2024

To further support the development of the social economy all over Europe and to unlock its full potential as a driver of economic and social progress, Social Economy Europe makes ten proposals to the European Institutions:

- 1 Set-up a European Action Plan for the Social Economy.**

- 2 Re-establish the European Parliament's Social Economy Intergroup.**

- 3 Consolidate the structured dialogue between the Social Economy and the EU Institutions.**

- 4 Advance towards a European legal framework for all social economy enterprises and organisations.**

- 5 Improve access to finance and EU funding for social economy enterprises and organisations.**

- 6 Put the social economy at the heart of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU semester, Cohesion Policy, the Sustainable Development Goals and the debate on the future of work.**

- 7 Boost social and technological innovation and inter-cooperation among social economy enterprises and organisations.**

- 8 Improve the visibility of the social economy.**

- 9 Foster the role of the social economy in the external action of the European Union.**

- 10 Promote socially responsible public procurement.**

7.2

Proposal for a European Action Plan for the Social Economy



In October 2018, Social Economy Europe approved the document ***“The future of European policies for the Social Economy: towards an Action Plan”***. A proposal for a European public policy on Social Economy that would serve to boost its visibility; support the social and technological innovation of its enterprises and organisations; improve their access to funding and EU funds; overcome legal barriers that prevent it from growing and operating in the Single Market on equal terms with other forms of business; besides inspiring the public authorities of the EU and its neighbouring countries to promote the growth of the social economy as a driver of economic and social progress for all. In this sense, SEE’s proposal of Action Plan pursues three priority objectives:

- » **Recognise the social economy as a key actor in the design and implementation of the main EU socio-economic policies.**
- » **Promote the convergence and coordination of the different levels of public administration involved in the promotion of the social economy by defining strategic objectives and benchmarks at EU level.**
- » **Foster a conducive ecosystem for the growth of the social economy, improving its contribution to key EU objectives and allowing its enterprises and organisations to take full advantage of the European Single Market and EU funds and financial instruments.**

In line with these three objectives, SEE’s proposal for an Action Plan includes **7 pillars, 20 policy measures and 64 actions.**

7.3

Key dates for the European Social Economy in 2019 and 2020

16.01.19

Strasbourg: Meeting of the Social Economy Intergroup and Social Economy Europe with the Vice President of the European Commission, Jyrki Katainen, to present the SEE proposal of the European Action Plan for Social Economy.



Jyrki Katainen, Marie-Christine Vergiat and Juan Antonio Pedreño

06.02.19

Brussels: Meeting of the President of SEE with the President of the EESC, Luca Jahier.



Karl-Heinz Lambertz and Luca Jahier

06.02.19

Brussels: Joint Event of Social Economy Europe, the Social Economy Intergroup, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "The Social Economy for the future of Europe". Assessment of the 2014-2019 mandate for the Social Economy and presentation of SEE's Memorandum for the European elections.



Ernest Urtasun, Gabriele Zimmer, Víctor Meseguer, Ramón Luis Valcárcel and Iratxe García

29.03.19

Azambuja: Intervention of SEE President in the National Strategic Reflection Day of the Portuguese Confederation of the Social Economy (CPES).

02.04.19

Strasbourg: Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Declaration of Luxembourg and presentation of Strasbourg as the European Capital of the Social Economy 2019.



Ariane Rodert, Juan Antonio Pereño and Christophe Itier in Strasbourg

 **12.04.19**

Texel: SEE intervention at the “Democracy Alive” festival: round table presentation of the alliance “Defend the Social Pillar”.



Federica Pesce, Piotr Sadowski, Liina Carr and Víctor Meseguer in Texel.

 **16.04.19**

Rome: Intervention of the SEE President at the 40° National Congress of Legacoop.



SEE President participates at the 40° National Congress of Legacoop.

 **13.05.19**

Brussels: XII General Assembly of Social Economy Europe.

 **23-26.05.19**

European Elections.

 **03-07.06.19**

Turin: 10° ILO Social and Solidarity Economy Academy.

 **06.06.19**

Brussels: REVES Excellence Awards 2019.

 **07.06.19**

Bucharest: 7° International Research Congress on Social Economy of CIRIEC International.

 **25.06.19**

Geneva: International Conference of the United Nations Task Force on social and solidarity economy “The role of the Social Economy in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals”.

 **10-11.07.19**

Paris: Launch of Pact for impact, a global alliance for a social and inclusive economy.



 **October 2019**

Madrid: 11° ILO Social and Solidarity Economy Academy.

 **22.10.19**

Brussels: Second meeting of the European Commission Expert Group on Social Economy and social enterprises.

 **November 2019**

Strasbourg: European Day of Social Economy enterprises.

 **January 2020**

Spain assumes the chair of the presidency of the Monitoring Committee of the Luxemburg Declaration.

 **25-27.11-20**

Mannheim: European Summit on Social Economy.

**European Social
Economy Summit**
25th to 27th November 2020 | Mannheim

More information coming soon

SEE Members



AEIP: European Association of Paritarian Institutions
www.aeip.net



AIM: International Association of Mutuals
www.aim-mutual.org



AMICE: Association of Mutual Insurers and Insurance Cooperatives in Europe
www.amice-eu.org



CASES: Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social
www.cases.pt



CECOP-CICOPA Europe:
European Confederation of industrial and service cooperatives www.cecop.coop



CEPES: Confederación Empresarial Española de la Economía Social
www.cepes.es



CONCERTES: Plate-forme de concertation des organisations représentatives de l'économie sociale (Belgium)
<http://www.concertes.be>



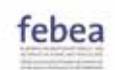
EFC: European Foundation Centre www.efc.be



ENSIE: European Network of Social Integration Enterprises www.ensie.org



ESS-France: Chambre Française de l'Économie Sociale et Solidaire
www.ess-france.org



FEBEA: European Federation of Ethical and Alternative Banks and Financiers
www.febea.org



FTS: Forum Nazionale Terzo Settore (Italy)
www.forumterzosettore.it



REVES: European Network of Cities and Regions for the Social Economy
www.revesnetwork.eu

