

Democracy at Work: Social Economy actors bringing EU values to citizens

*A webinar event organized under the auspices of the Cyprus
Presidency of the Council of the EU 2026*

Dates: Three Parts in three days:

- **Thursday April 9th from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm (CET): Part 1. Social Economy as a Driver of Competitiveness.**
- **Thursday April 16th from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm (CET): Part 2. Social Economy as a Pillar for Democracy.**
- **Thursday April 23rd from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm (CET): Part 3. Implementing the SEAP (mid-term review & next steps).**

Detailed Event Programme

“**Democracy at Work: Social Economy actors bringing EU values to citizens**” is a three-sessions online event that will take place on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Thursdays of April 2026 from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm. These online sessions have as aim to showcase how the Social Economy (SE) advances European Values, active citizenship, and a resilient, people-centred economy. Organized under the auspices of Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU 2026, these webinar sessions align with the Presidency’s policy priorities on Strengthening EU industrial capacity in strategic sectors – including the Social Economy, Improving citizens’ economic and social well-being, and Promoting active citizenship and democratic participation.

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PART 1: Social Economy as a Driver of Competitiveness

Session 1 (2h): Reindustrialisation & Locally Rooted Economies. How SE rebuilds strategic value chains, anchor jobs, and revitalise regions.

Thursday 9th April from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm (CET)

This session focuses on the priority of EU industrial capacity through sharing concrete Social Economy cases that anchor value chains locally, mobilize patient/ethical finance, and foster SME networks and clusters. Therefore, speakers from 5 key economic sectors gathers in this part: Energy, Industry, Digital, Tourism and Ethical Finance.

Introduction:

- **Juan Antonio Pedreño**, President of SEE
- **Michael Damianos**, Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry of Cyprus

Panel:

Moderation: Sarah de Heusch, director of SEE.

Illustrative cases from:

- **Jonathan Bonadio**, Head of Policy of REScoop.eu, the European Federation of citizen energy cooperatives - ENERGY
- **Jeanne Breteher**, CEO and Co-founder of the Social Good Accelerator (SOGA) – DIGITAL
- **Athanasios Michelongonas**, Deputy Regional Governor of Tourism of Region of Peloponnese - TOURISM
- **Daniel Sorrosal**, director of FEBEA (European Federation of Ethic and Alternative Banks) – ETHICAL FINANCE

Conclusions and Closing Remarks:

- **Serge Papin**, Minister of SMEs, Trade, Crafts, Tourism and Purchasing Power of France (VIDEO)
- **Diana Dovgan**, Secretary General of the European confederation of industrial and service cooperatives

PART 2: Social Economy as a Pillar of Democracy

Session (2h): European Democracy & the Social Economy

Thursday 16th April from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm (CET)

This session highlights the dual contribution of the Social Economy to European democracy. On the one hand, SE organisations embed participatory governance models that engage workers, members, communities and, where relevant, public authorities in decision-making. On the other hand, civil society organisations serve as essential pillars of a vibrant democratic ecosystem, ensuring that all communities – including minorities – have a meaningful voice.

Introduction:

- **Sarah de Heusch**, director of SEE
- **Dr. Efi Snow**, Senior Officer on behalf of Andreas A. Gregoriou, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment of Cyprus.

Panel:

Moderation: Sarah de Huesch, director of SEE

Speakers:

- **Ana Umbelino**, President of REVES (European Network of Cities and Regions for the Social Economy)
- **Agnes Mathis**, director of Cooperatives Europe.
- **Christina Flourentzou-Kakouri**, Director of the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities of Cyprus
- **Isabelle Ferreras**, Research Director at the Belgian National Science Foundation and author of *Firms as Political Entities: Saving Democracy through Economic Bicameralism* (2017).
- **Gabriella Civico**, President of Civil Society Europe

Closing Remarks:

- **Pascale Zoetaert**, member of the Executive Board of SEE and member of ConcertES
- **Giuseppe Guerini**, EESC member, President of Cooperatives Europe and Vicepresident of SEE

Part 3: Implementing the SEAP (Mid-Term Review & Next Steps)

Session 3 (2h): SEAP Mid-Term Review — What's Working, What's Missing

Session 3 (2h). Thursday April 23rd from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm (CET).

This final session will focus on the implementation of the Social Economy Action Plan, addressing both EU-level policy measures and the development of national SE strategies. It will bring together stakeholders from across the Social Economy ecosystem to assess progress, identify remaining gaps, and examine emerging challenges. Discussions will cover best practices, policy advancements, and concrete steps to ensure that SEAP meets its objectives efficiently. Framed within the context of the SEAP mid-term review, the session provides a timely opportunity to align strategy, enhance policy coherence, and guide future implementation

Introduction:

- **Marinos Anfitos**, Responsible of Unit for the Promotion and Development of the Cooperative Institution and Social Entrepreneurship. On behalf of Krypos Protopapas Commissioner of Cooperative Societies and Social Enterprises of Cyprus.
- **Patrizia Bussi**, Vice-president of SEE and Director of ENSIE

Panel

Moderation: Gianluca Pastorelli, member of the Executive Borad of SEE and Executive President of Diesis Network

Speakers:

- **Francesco Corti**, member of the Cabinet of the Executive Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu of the European Commission
- **Irene Tinagli**, Co-chair of the Social Economy and Services of General Interest Intergroup of the European Parliament (TBC)

- **Amparo Merino**, Secretary of State for the Social Economy from the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Economy (TBC)
- **Wieteke Dupain**, Chief Executive of Euclid Network
- **Alain Coheur**, member of the European Economic and Social Committee and Vice-president of Social Economy Europe
- **Csaba Borboly**, Vice-President of the Harghita (Romania) County Council and member of the Committee of Regions.

Conclusion and Closing Remarks:

- **Ruth Paserman**, Director-General DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission.
- **Patrizia Bussi**, Vice-president of SEE and Director of ENSIE.