

SEE Strategy 2026-2030

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Introduction

Co-creation Methodology to Design the New Strategy

The secretariat together with the President proposed a methodology of co-design of the SEE strategy 2026-2030 with members of the network. This approach was validated by the board in November. The secretariat shared the [methodology note](#) with members and invited them to different collective intelligence sessions. The first one was an in-person session organised in Brussels in January 19. 19 persons from 17 associations participated. Participants assessed the implementation of the previous strategy, elements to be improved and the points that need specific attention that should be addressed in the next strategy. As the geopolitics have widely reshaped the world and the EU priorities in the last years, the SEE President proposed to tackle overarching trends and threats that are jeopardising the great momentum SE gained with the adoption of the SEAP in the last EC mandate.

First of all, it is clear that a campaign to raise awareness about SE is essential not only to grow SE but also to make sure adapted policies continue to be implemented. To guarantee the adoption of adequate policies that reinforce SE's visibility, it is important to obtain political support. When it comes to overarching trends to be addressed, two mutually reinforcing ones were identified: democracy and digitalization. Democracy and social justice are under threat when they are both a nurturing ground of SE and boosted by SE. On the other hand, digitalization can be both a driver of SE competitiveness as much an infrastructure in which the SE (and democratic values) can be jeopardised. SE has a role to play in driving the EU digital autonomy and digital space in line with its values of democracy, sovereignty of people and common wealth. Members agreed these 3 topics should guide SEE's activities in the coming years.

Following these results, the secretariat organised 2 online sessions to move the strategy towards more concrete objectives and actions. These were organised February 23 & 27, with different members (to allow a wide participation) and same elements with moments for presentation, votes and debates.

The present strategy is the result of this methodology and is being presented to the executive board for validation/amendment and will then be presented at the GA organised 20 May 2026.

Assessment of the Previous Strategy

The current SEE Strategic Plan 2023–2026 focuses on **three strategic challenges priorities** and **10 strategic objectives** and many strategic lines of action:

1. Sustainable Growth



2. Internal Cohesion





Overall, the strategic plan has been well implemented.

1. Sustainable Growth

Membership has grown and most of all income of SEE has tripled, mainly thanks to projects. Therefore, growth shouldn't necessarily remain the main objective, while **financial sustainability and stable income** should. A diversification of revenue is fundamental, and a better balance between membership fees and projects is needed.

2. Internal Cohesion

Internal cohesion has been largely strengthened through:

- **Renewed governance:** a new executive board composition and selection replacing the former bureau, it needs to be further monitored
- Thematic **working groups** and regular policy exchanges
- **Internal communication** has improved (newsletters, emails, social media)

3. Incidence on SE Development and Recognition across Europe

SEE plays an important role in promoting the social economy at the European and international levels, including:

- Supporting the **implementation** of the **Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP)**.

- Maintaining **strong links with EU institutions**: European Commission (GECES and meetings), European Parliament (meetings, communication on policy and intergroup secretariat), EESC (through civil society Liaison Group) and Council through the secretariat of the Luxemburg Monitoring Committee.
- Participating in key advisory groups and policy discussions, such as the Code of Conduct of data management in the SE ecosystem and the participation of SEE director in the CCMI of the EESC.
- Conducting **advocacy on major EU policies** (e.g., MFF, public procurement, taxation, state aid...).
- Engaging with international initiatives and partnerships.
- Increasing visibility and communication around the social economy through SM and newsletter.
- Supporting the development of **national social economy ecosystems**, though this may require assessing available capacity.

The work carried out by SEE has gone beyond expectation in many ways (growth of income and team, campaign for SE intergroup, organisation of events like Murcia 2025...) thanks to strong leadership of the President and active participation of our members, which is SEE's real strength. However, some lines of action haven't been achieved, such as supporting national ecosystem development or umbrella organizations or outreach to **young people**. These require further reflection to determine whether they should remain priorities given SEE's resources.

A New Geopolitical Context: balancing everyday work recognition of Social Economy and addressing overarching threats for the ecosystem's future

The new world (dis)order and its geopolitical consequences are reshaping the EU priorities and impacting SE policies and recognition. This context is characterized by increasing geopolitical tensions, fragmentation of international cooperation, and growing competition between economic and political models. The reconfiguration of globalization translates in a shift from an open, multilateral system towards more fragmented one reshaping supply chains, industrial policies and international partnerships. For the EC, this means shifting priorities from “fair digital and green transition” towards “Defence and competitiveness” with a specific focus on industrial autonomy. **For SE, this means losing momentum and having to raise awareness about the key role SE can play in the field of societal resilience, preparedness, competitiveness and industrial autonomy.** It also means **raising awareness about the importance of inclusiveness, democratic accountability and the balance between economic efficiency and social objectives** to safeguard the EU values¹ “of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail”. For SEE these values are more under threat than the EU competitiveness.

A key element that has contributed to the weakening of Democracy and EU competitiveness is **digitalization**. The digital world is a **key economic, informational and social infrastructure**. On the one hand it is a powerful source of innovation and economic dynamisms, it could be key supporting a green and fair society. But the EU is highly dependent on US technological infrastructure and Chinese raw material (and cheap IT products). The **EU therefore needs to gain autonomy in this field**. On the other hand, the tech infrastructure is highly pollutant and currently being shaped by

¹ Article 2 of the EU Treaty

greed and power capture. Social media in particular is designed to capture as much attention span as possible conducting to addictive behaviours, and algorithms are pushing people towards the extreme tendencies of their beliefs, trends that negatively affect health, society and democracy. In fact, the collision between tech-billionaires and autocratic forces flood the net with fake news and hatred. This digital world is a **threat to democracy** in a context of geopolitical competition and pre-existing distrust in institutions and public decision-making processes.

In such a context, SEE cannot just focus on the implementation of the SEAP or on regular advocacy work. While it must pursue this essential work, it **must also tackle the overarching trends linked to democracy and digital world**, to ensure **SE can continue to thrive and design a prosperous economy and fair society**. SE is a **pillar of democracy** as it fosters democratic governance and at the same time **democratic institutions are enabling grounds for SE**. SE, as any economic actor, needs a **digital world to continue to be competitive** and to better serve its constituency. But **SE also needs a digital infrastructure that is in line with its values** of sovereignty of people over the use of their data, redistribution of wealth and democratic governance. And the EU has an abundant provision of developers of such a digital world. SE therefore should lead by example and support the development of such digital world driven by common good approach.

Within this context, the SE appears as a relevant and distinctive model. Beyond its economic contribution, the **SE can play a strategic role in reinforcing democratic values, fostering social cohesion, and anchoring economic activity in local communities**. However, its role remains unevenly recognized and supported across policy frameworks. Therefore, SE must **raise awareness** about what it is and its strength. It must raise awareness and a sense of belonging within its enterprises and associations and toward the society at large.

Overall, the EU is at a strategic inflection point, where economic, political and social dimensions are increasingly intertwined. In this context, **positioning the social economy within broader debates on democracy, digitalisation and global competitiveness may offer an opportunity to strengthen its role as a key actor in**

shaping a more inclusive and sustainable European model. Strengthening social resilience and ensuring that transitions are fair and inclusive are increasingly recognised as essential not only for social stability but also for geopolitical credibility and legitimacy. These reflections will be integrated in the SEE strategy, as it is key to creating an enabling environment for SE to flourish fully.

SEE Strategy 2026-2030

New Objectives and Actions

Building upon the previous strategy, it was decided to keep the same structure of priority areas:

1. **Economic sustainability** (rather than Sustainable Growth)
2. **Internal cohesion**
3. **Incidence on SE development and recognition across Europe**

The first 2 priority areas need continued attention as they ensure the independence and means of the network (through sound economic model) and ensuring a proper participatory governance and involvement of members in the network's activities (through internal cohesion). The third priority area is the one that is the most essential as it is the core of SEE's *raison d'être*: supporting and enabling environment for Social Economy and raising awareness. Given the changing geopolitical context and unfriendly environment for SE, this priority isn't just about implementing the SEAP, it is also about tackling overarching topics that can influence SE development.

1. ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Objective 1: To ensure the minimum revenue for core functioning of SEE by members

To properly pursue its advocacy work, the secretariat has identified it needs a stable income of 300 000 euros per year. This covers the wages and costs of a team of 4 people employed full time and the fixed costs related to office rental, IT support and software, external accountant and bank costs, travel allocation as well as organization of SEE GAs and executive boards. This allows to properly carry out the policy work and the internal cohesion (priority areas 2 & 3).

- ⇒ Over the next years, the objective is that **membership fee covers at least 50% of this basic running costs of the secretariat (150 000€).**

There is no intention to increase the membership fee, the idea is rather to increase the number of members, particularly from:

- National umbrella organisations, which would allow SEE to cover more geographical areas and be even more representative. Target: Germany, Baltics, Northern and Eastern countries.
- The new category of “associate members”.

The effort requires a recruitment of about **new members by 2030**.

The other 50% of basic costs should be covered by donations and sponsorship from members and big Social Economy actors as well as by income generated by services and training (see objective 2). A portion of SEE’s income should also be covered by projects or financial aid from the EU (Easi Grant).

This would allow SEE a minimum of autonomy, to diversify its sources of revenue (in line with objective 2) and to be less dependent on projects (especially in a time in which these are clearly shrinking).

Objective 2: To diversify SEE sources of income

To ensure a certain economic stability, it is important to diversify the network’s sources of income. At the time being, SEE’s revenue is highly dependent on the membership fee (see objective 1) and projects. The issue with projects is that they are time consuming, volatile and sometimes divert attention from the actual advocacy work. To be able to focus on its core activities, SEE therefore needs to attract other sources of revenue. The following have been identified:

- ⇒ Donations & sponsorship from members and big Social Economy actors. Some foreseen activities such as SE campaign, targeted policy work and events, could attract such external support.

Specific target: by 2030, donations, philanthropy, consultancy and training services should cover the minimum income of 300 000€ mentioned in the previous objective (1) not covered by membership fees.

- ⇒ SEE could also develop specific services built on its expertise and advocacy work, such as Training and Consultancy on SE.

Specific target: Develop training on SE – at least 2 consultancy/training services provided per year from 2028 onwards.

2. INTERNAL COHESION

Objective 3: To strengthen SEE capacity by assigning coordination roles

SEE does not have the capacity to follow all the policy areas affecting SE, but the network has great expertise. Therefore, when an expertise is necessary, members specialized in specific sectors or thematic areas could be given a coordination on specific topics. This expertise could be mobilized to mutualise efforts, anticipate developments, and improve collective insight.

Actions:

- Identification of topics in which the secretariat need support.
- Appointment of the person who can coordinate, among members and based on expertise. Priority for such role would go to board members.
- Definition of clear mandates and validation of content process for each coordinator.

Objective 4: To create a Working Group on Communications

During the EU elections of 2024, SEE mobilized a communication WG to co-design messages and coordinate dissemination. A regular communications WG could provide more impact to SEE's work and feed into the 3rd policy pillar (SEE campaign, see objectives 14 & 15, below).

Objective 5: To improve the coordination between European and national level actions

SEE members have political contacts and are eager to use these to push key policy topics of common interest. In particular, they could mobilize national MEPs and governments (to influence the Council) on specific topics.

Actions:

- Identify or define the topics in which we need support.
- Coordinate actions with members through clear targets and deadlines.

3. INCIDENCE ON SE DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION ACROSS EUROPE

Objective 6: To continue to work on institutional recognition of SE

This is the core action of SEE and of the 3rd strategic objectives of the SEE strategy. It concentrates at least half of the team's efforts.

Actions

- Continue to develop actions for SEAP's implementation (policy & advocacy work)
- Strengthen institutional relations with EU bodies:
 - Luxembourg Declaration Monitoring Committee's Secretariat (MS)
 - EC (GECES and meetings),
 - EP through intergroup,
 - EESC through CSLG & CCMI,
 - develop links and organise events with CoR
- Support SE at international level through UNTFSSSE & RIFES and others (while remaining mindful of our available resources and maintaining SEE's primary focus on Europe; in such international structures, SEE only represents the EU Region).

Objective 7: To strengthen links with European Committee of the Regions (CoR)

The CoR is the only EU institution in which SEE has no strong or institutionalized relations (e.g. through a working group). Given the importance of local level (city or regional) for SE development, and the EU need for an industrial autonomy –which can only happen with proper local policies–, it is crucial now more than ever to increase ties with local governments, particularly through the CoR.

Actions:

- Improve information flow and alignment around locally rooted economy and industrial autonomy.
- Provide CoR members with our policy input.
- Set-up a structural link (like GECES with EC, intergroup with EP) with CoR to coordinate work with delegates that support SE (work to do in relations with REVES).
- Continue SEE awards for cities and regions with a strong SE strategy and involve the CoR.
- Organise joint events relevant to the SE

Objective 8: To improve visibility of Social Economy among the youth

SE is not widely known, and if we want to raise awareness about it, and to make sure young people engage with it, it is crucial to work with young people. This can be done through concrete projects and experiences, as much as through education and training.

Actions:

- Involve students (arts, communication, politics...) in our campaign on SE (see Objectives 9, 14 & 15 below).
- Support education and training initiatives on social economy for youth through funded projects.
- Co-create Youth SE networks.

Strategic Vision 2026-2030 to Support SE Development and Recognition

The strategic objective 3 of *Incidence on SE development and recognition across Europe* must continue to be the key focus of SEE. This involves the regular activities that fall under this strategic objective, such as institutional relations with EU bodies, advocacy for enabling environment and raising awareness about SE. Nevertheless, the political scope within this strand of work is so large, and focusing on specific topics might make us lose sight of the overarching trends which impact the development of SE. Therefore, SEE proposes to adopt **three transversal guiding pillars**: democracy and counter narrative, digitalization, and a broad campaign promoting SE. These are mutually reinforcing actions that complement each other. Below are the defined objectives and actions per pillar.

As a preliminary remark, it is important to keep in mind that this strategy covers the period 2026–2030. The objectives and actions outlined below are therefore intended to be progressively developed and implemented over these four years, rather than achieved immediately.

1. DEMOCRACY AND COUNTER NARRATIVE

Social economy is **an economy of peace**, but peace and **democracy** are under attack in the EU. Without democracy it is difficult for SE to thrive, and SE reinforces democracy in the economic sphere. Democracy needs social justice as much as a new socio-economic offer. Strengthening democracy cannot be a task carried out by the social economy alone; to increase impact and build a strong counter narrative, **we need to work within broader coalitions**. This pushes us to move **beyond our usual networks and engage in broad, cross-sectoral alliances with actors who share common values and goals**. This approach would also allow SEE to demonstrate its capacity to work with a broad range of actors, for a common purpose: an economy that works for the people, the planet, businesses and democracy.

To this end, SEE should participate actively in alliances that bring together actors around common values of democracy and social justice, to push together for an

enabling environment as well as to frame SE as the best example for such a socio-economic model. It is the opportunity to strengthen the idea of an “**EU competitiveness way**” that balances focus on big enterprises with a locally rooted economy, an approach that combines classic economic indicators with wellbeing ones.

In this regard, some members also highlighted the EU competition law as an important area, suggesting that SEE should build alliances in this space to ensure that the social economy is represented in discussions on “Made in the EU” and competitiveness. Defending democracy also means promoting democratic practices within the economy, not only in political or social institutions. In this context, principles of social justice and decent work should also be present.

Objective 9: To participate in alliances that support democracy, social justice and inclusion

It was agreed upon that such an approach would require an analysis of the existing coalitions, as SEE should not be a leader in this matter, but participate actively in existing coalitions. Several members emphasised the need to prioritise the most relevant actors, suggesting that SEE should focus on not more than **three key groups** at the beginning to build strong alliances.

Actions:

- Define the policies we want to support with the alliances and the type of alliances we want to engage with.
- Identifying existing coalitions. From discussion with members, the following potential allies were mentioned: environmental movements, youth organisations, social justice actors, local economy and sustainable competitiveness stakeholders, researchers, housing coalitions, trade unions, civil society, and part of mainstream business, CSR and ESG actors...
- Benchmark the coalitions to identify where to put our energy and resources.
- Engage in these coalitions.
- Work on key joint policy advocacy with the alliance.
- Participate in EU funded projects linked to democracy.

Objective 10: To position the social economy as a key pillar of a socially cohesive, fair, and democratic society

This is also a way to raise awareness about SE and to move beyond our “usual bubble” (pillar 3).

Objective 11: To strengthen our support on safeguard of democracy within the EU

Actions:

- Actively participate in the Civil Society Liaison Group of the EESC.
- Identify work on democracy within CoR and get involved.
- Continue working and deepen our links with EU institutions with which we already have a connection with (European Commission, European Parliament, EESC, Council of the European Union).
- Strengthen the focus on multilevel governance to improve coordination between the EU and local levels.
- Stay up to date (maybe get involved) with initiatives about the European Democracy Shield and the new EU Strategy for Civil Society.

2. DIGITALISATION

Digitalisation is radically transforming the way we produce and consume as well as democracy itself. It is a key element of **competitiveness and innovation**, but it also bears great risks. **Different models of the digital world exist:** one driven by profit maximization, in which data can be captured and sold (which disrupts democratic processes and sovereignty of people over their data); another model in which the state controls digital practices and data; and a commons approach, in which data is considered as a common good and people have sovereignty over the use of their data. The latest shares many common values with SE principles and is an approach the EU is somehow developing, but not sufficiently. It is a digital model that could reinforce the EU autonomy and unique approach, close to its values (as defined in article 2 of the EU Treaty).

For all these reasons, SE has a role to play in supporting the development of a **commons approach to the digital world**. Supporting such digital model participates in strengthening a democratic, resilient, and common good-oriented EU digital space (and infrastructure). It also participates in the political objective of strengthening democracy largely, empowering SE actors as well as the EU's digital sovereignty.

As SEE is not a specialist in this field, the 2 following objectives have been identified:

Objective 12: To strengthen cooperation between digital commons/tech for good actors and Social Economy organisations

The aim here is twofold. On the one hand supporting a commons approach of the digital world, as well as ensuring these digital actors recognise themselves as part of the social economy ecosystem.

Actions:

- Identify actors that develop a commons approach of the digital world.
- Engage with key digital commons actors and networks at European level.
- Support joint advocacy with digital commons actors on digital sovereignty and regulation. SE would not lead but support.
- Organise joint events to raise awareness about the social economy approach of the digital world.

Objective 13: To raise awareness within the Social Economy ecosystem about digital commons, tech for good, and digital sovereignty as strategic and value-aligned choices

Actions:

- Organise joint events with free open-source actors to raise awareness about the social economy approach of the digital world.
- Participate in EU funded projects that support the adoption by SE actors of digital tools and practices in line with SE values.
- Support the adoption and implementation of digital commons tools within SEE and members who want to undertake that transition. Many members showed interest in adopting tech tools in line with SE values.

3. CAMPAIGN AND VISIBILITY

There is a need to strengthen public understanding of the SE as much as to reinforce a sense of belonging amongst SE actors themselves. These are necessary to increase the capacity of SE actors and to promote it as a movement, a socio-economic model that answers the challenges of today (social justice, environmentally sustainable economic practices, democratic practices, competitiveness, and an economy that answers to the needs of locally rooted communities).

A campaign can also **support visibility, alliances, and fundraising**. Most of all, a wide recognition of SE is key to political recognition and to develop level playing field policies and frameworks. Some members also suggested that it would be beneficial to design the campaign around the findings of the [EU Social Economy Barometer](#), given the positive results it shows. This could help reinforce our message and strengthen the credibility of the campaign.

Objective 14: To raise awareness about SE amongst SE actors, creating a sense of belonging

Actions:

- Co-design a campaign for SE actors: narrative, objectives, target audiences, key messages, visual identity by adapting existing campaigns (e.g. ConcertES), to both the European level and local realities.
- Implement the campaign with members and allies.
- Join forces with the EU Project “Supporting the Development of the Social Economy as a Driver for Growth,” a multi-country initiative involving Portugal, Greece, Croatia, Slovakia, and Belgium (specifically the Wallonia region). This initiative is part of the Technical Support Instrument (TSI), a European Commission programme that provides expertise to EU Member States to help them design and implement structural reforms.
- Strengthen the connection with GSEF

Objective 15: To raise awareness of SE amongst citizens and society at large

For SE to grow, as well as to support the development of an enabling environment, it is crucial that the concept of SE is widely known and understood. This is also important for policymakers to keep supporting SE through development of adapted legislation, actions and funding. Only this way our advocacy can have a bigger impact, and the SE can grow its consumer and member base. Promotion and defence of SE enterprise models in their diversity, including non-profit enterprises (associations and foundations) and not-for-profit cooperatives. There is still limited understanding of what a non-profit enterprise is. Addressing this should go beyond communication and include **knowledge-building, capacity development, narrative work and advocacy**, demonstrating how SE contributes to the internal market, the EU social model, and competitiveness.

Actions (building on the previous campaign for SE actors):

- Co-design a campaign concept (narrative, visual identity, objectives, target audiences, key messages) adapted to the wider public (people).
- Identify partners with whom to develop the campaign (with researchers, communication and arts schools, which would allow to reach out to Youth...).

Objective 16: To raise money and secure resources for the campaign to support its development, implementation and engagement from SE actors.

Actions:

- Define a fundraising strategy linked specifically to the SE campaign (members' contributions, partnerships, grants, sponsorships).
- Engage potential fundraisers and SE funders.

Team effort

The three abovementioned strategic pillars of SEE are important, but they shouldn't mobilize equally SEE's team and members. They should not either reduce the time allocated to the regular policy work of SEE centred on supporting SE, they should support it. These pillars should also be supported by project funding objectives.

A poll allowed participants to vote on team efforts that each pillar should encompass, hereby we identify the overall average of these votes. Members indicated that, among the 3 pillars, the distribution of time dedicated should be:

- 45% to the campaign (first priority),
- 30% to Democracy (second priority)
- 20% to digitalisation (third priority)

It is important to recall that these strategic pillars are mutually reinforcing and complementary and should therefore not be approached in isolation. In addition, the prioritisation of the pillars should remain flexible and adaptable, considering evolving social and political contexts.

These time allocations of the strategic pillars are indicative and are to be considered within the timeframe allocation of the team of projects (within strategic objective 1 of *economic sustainability*) and most of all within the strategic objective 3: *Incidence on SE Development and Recognition across Europe*. As mentioned earlier, the 3rd strategic objective is the heart of SEE's work and is the one that occupies most of the teams' time. The political relations with EU institutions and national governments, as well as the implementation of the SEAP and follow-up of EU policies are and should remain the areas that take up most of the team effort. Project development also contributes to the implementation of SEAP.

The result of the mid-term review of the Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP) will be closely monitored as it will impact the work to be done within the strategic objective 3

An element that isn't in the strategic plan but is part of regular day to day work –and therefore needs to be considered as tasks–, is the time that membership engagement,

administrative, financial and HR require. These amount to approximately an equivalent full-time. The growth of the team requires a special HR policy, strategy and more time, which is not part of SEE's Strategy, but will nevertheless have to be taken into account.

Actions to be continued but not as strategic objectives are:

- Administrative work
- HR policy and management
- 4 regular Working groups
- Governance: GA & executive board meetings
- LSP coordination
- Projects follow-up
- communications
- Regular policy and advocacy work
- EU presidency events
- SE awards

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