

Social Economy Europe reaction to the Mid-Term Review of the Social Economy Action Plan

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1. Introduction

Social Economy Europe (SEE) welcomes the publication of the European Commission's Mid-Term Review of the Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP) and acknowledges the important work carried out by DG EMPL, together with the other Commission services involved in its implementation. SEE also recognises the strong commitment shown by the social economy ecosystem across Europe during this first phase to **make the SEAP a concrete and transversal European policy agenda**. SEE also welcomes the evidence-based and **consultative** approach underpinning the review, including the external assessment of the SEAP implementation, the consultation of stakeholders and the exchanges with key EU bodies and expert groups. This confirms that **the SEAP has become a shared European framework for policy dialogue and co-creation**.

The European Parliament has also played an essential role, particularly through the **Social Economy and Services of General Interest Intergroup**¹ and the commitment of its members, both in the adoption of the SEAP and in its follow-up. Likewise, Member States have helped maintain political momentum, notably through the **Luxembourg Declaration Monitoring Committee**².

As recalled in the Mid-Term Review, the social economy is a key pillar of Europe's economy and society: **over 4.3 million entities provide at least 11.5 million jobs, representing around 6.3% of total EU employment**. They operate across many sectors, from care and finance to agri-food, industry, retail, culture, education and training, housing, energy and the circular economy.

2. Key achievements

The Mid-Term Review rightly highlights major achievements made possible by the SEAP and the political commitment to its implementation. SEE particularly welcomes the **2023 Council Recommendation** on developing social economy framework conditions, which has become a cornerstone and is already supporting national strategies. The Commission notes that end of 2025, **21 Member States had adopted or were preparing national or regional strategies for the social economy**. However, as recognised in the mid-term review, implementation remains uneven across Member States. More broadly, the SEAP contributed to **international momentum of social economy**, also promoted by the UN, OECD and ILO.

EU-level tools have also been essential. The **EU Social Economy Gateway** provides a web space where information on social economy is centralized. The **Youth**

¹ *Intergroup on the Social Economy and Services of General Interest [IG10-23] | About intergroups | MEPs | European Parliament*. (n. d.). <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/intergroup/details/7907/Intergroup%20on%20the%20Social%20Economy%20and%20Services%20of%20General%20Interest>

² *Monitoring Committee of the Luxembourg Declaration*. (n.d.). EU Social Economy Gateway. https://social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu/monitoring-committee-luxembourg-declaration_en

Entrepreneurship Policy Academy has been a positive attempt to provide visibility about social economy to younger generations. The continuation of the **GECEs** has been instrumental in providing a for a of exchange between the Commission, Member States, the ecosystem and institutions such as the Committee of the Regions and EESC. The development of **guidance and mutual learning activities** on State Aid, taxation, public procurement, data and impact measurement are also much welcome.

Another important achievement in terms of visibility and recognition is the publication of the first **Special Eurobarometer on “Social Economy in the life of Europeans”**³. This survey provides, for the first time at EU level, a clearer picture of **public awareness** of the social economy among **Europeans**. It shows a moderate level of knowledge of the ecosystem, with important differences between Member States, but **also a strong public endorsement of measures to strengthen the social economy** once its role and principles are explained. In particular, 75% of Europeans recognise the importance of the social economy for the well-being of society in their country; 88% support dedicated strategies and legislation; 86% support awareness-raising initiatives and assistance to help people set up social economy organisations; and 80% support direct public financial support.

Indeed, SEE particularly welcomes progress on **access to finance** through InvestEU’s Social Investment and Skills Window, as well as ESF+ and EaSI funding. SEE also appreciates the creation of **specific business support and capacity-building tools**, including the **Enterprise Europe Network sector group on social economy**, the **Pact for Skills partnership** for the Proximity and Social Economy ecosystem. These could be much more effective, and provide a multiplier effect with appropriate support.

SEE would also like to underline major achievements that might not be sufficiently highlighted in the Mid-Term Review. The establishment, through the Council Recommendation, of **a common European definition of the social economy is a milestone**. This is a necessary foundation for **advancing adapted frameworks** for the Social Economy in key areas such as **State Aid, taxation or access to funds and finance**. SEE identifies this common definition as one of the most important achievements of the SEAP, as it provides a common understanding of a diverse economy in different economic, social, and cultural contexts.

Another important achievement was the **cross-sectoral and cross-DG cooperation** developed during the first implementation phase, notably between DG EMPL and DG GROW. This reflected the transversal nature of the social economy and should be understood as a best practice. In this context, SEE considers that DG GROW’s role in the implementation of the SEAP is crucial and the loss of this support *de facto* weakens the SEAP implementation in the years to come. While SEE acknowledges the continued coordination efforts of DG EMPL, **the dismantling of the Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship Unit within DG GROW represents a step backwards**

³ European Commission. (2025). *Special Eurobarometer 567: Social economy in the life of Europeans*. Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3356>

for the institutional mainstreaming of the social economy within EU internal market, industrial, SME and entrepreneurship policies. The **SEAP can only be completely implemented if social economy is recognized as an integral part of the industrial and competitiveness policies.**

The recognition of Proximity and Social Economy as one of the EU's strategic industrial ecosystems and the development of the Transition Pathway were also major advances, raising awareness about the entrepreneurial, industrial and territorial dimension of the ecosystem. However, **there is now uncertainty regarding the continuity and operational follow-up of this industrial ecosystem**, which has been a major tool – from European to national level – to give recognition to the social economy as an economic and industrial actor, and not only as a social policy stakeholder. SEE considers that preserving and updating **this approach would be key for the next implementation phase of the SEAP.**

Finally, SEE welcomes the new tools and commitments announced or reinforced in the Mid-Term Review. The **progress tracker** is a particularly useful instrument to increase transparency, monitor implementation and allow the ecosystem to follow the delivery of the SEAP in a more structured way. SEE also welcomes the stronger **sectoral approach** proposed by the Commission, notably in areas such as circular economy, tourism, energy, housing, democracy and digitalisation, where social economy entities already play a strategic role and can further contribute to EU priorities. In addition, the intention to promote **workers' buy-outs** is an important step to preserve jobs, skills and productive capacity in local communities, while supporting business transfers towards democratic and participatory ownership models. The development of **toolkits for regional and local social economy policies** is also highly relevant, as many of the most effective support measures for the social economy are implemented at local and regional levels, where public authorities are closest to communities and social economy actors. SEE recommends this future toolkit to be **co-designed with the social economy ecosystem** – including representative organisations – in order to ensure that it responds to the needs of enterprises and organizations on the ground.

3. What needs further implementation and attention

While SEE welcomes the positive direction of the Mid-Term Review, several areas would benefit from further development.

First, SEE pledges to reinstall **the links between the social economy and EU industrial policy**. The social economy is not only a proud provider of services or a driver of inclusion; it is also a set of diverse business models contributing directly to local production, value chains, economic autonomy, strategic sectors and competitiveness. In this respect, **the elimination of the Social Economy and Social entrepreneurship Unit and the reduced involvement of DG GROW with SE ecosystem is a major setback**. This is particularly concerning at a time when the EU is redefining its competitiveness, industrial and internal market agendas. **Without a clear interlocutor within DG GROW, there is a real risk that the social economy**

will be insufficiently reflected in files that are decisive for its future and its contributions to the EU, including SME policy, industrial ecosystems, access to markets, entrepreneurship, the Single Market and competitiveness instruments.

Second, SEE considers that **a balanced and proportionate approach across all social economy families** is essential. The Mid-Term Review places a very strong focus on social enterprises, while **the traditional families of the social economy** — cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations (including charities), and foundations — **are less specifically addressed** in relation to their own needs, legal traditions and policy challenges⁴. While social enterprises are an important part of the ecosystem, they are synonym of **the social economy**. For the SEAP to fully implement, a balanced approach is needed between the different social economy families and their representativity. **An excessive focus on only one family risks weakening the objectives of the SEAP, diluting the meaning** of the social economy, and **missing the full potential** of cooperation between its different families. Moreover, in the recent policy files such as GBER and MFF, when social enterprises are mentioned, the definition used is not that of the Council recommendations. This is a major setback. Finally, SEE invites the Commission **to carefully frame the discussion around impact-driven businesses** so as not to blur the identity or compromise the unique added value and challenges that principles and legal traditions of the social economy encounter. Specifically, when it comes to democratic or participatory governance – which is a fundamental characteristic of social economy entities – they aren't part of the impact-driven businesses, while they are both a cost and advantage of social economy entities in terms of added value. The SEAP is about providing a level playing field for the social economy because of these specificities.

Third, the Mid-Term Review could go further in **proposing structured tools to co-design the post-2030 agenda** with the social economy ecosystem. The current SEAP runs until 2030, and the **coming years should already be used to prepare**, together with the ecosystem, **the next European policy cycle** for the social economy. This requires dedicated spaces for **dialogue**, clear **governance** mechanisms, and a shared **reflection** on the future **objectives, instruments** and **priorities** that should follow the first Action Plan. The SEAP has created momentum, and the next stage should already open a shared reflection. A post-2030 agenda should be a co-created European roadmap with the social economy ecosystem.

SEE also notes that references to future budget allocation in **the next MFF** remain limited in the mid-term review, while key instruments such as **National and Regional Partnership Plans** and **European Competitiveness Fund** and specifically **InvestEU** could have been more thoroughly addressed⁵. Additionally, the Social and Skills

⁴ According to the study *Benchmarking the socio-economic performance of the EU social economy* (EC, 2024), there are more 246 000 social enterprises in the EU (less than 43 000 are actually ex lege and the rest 'the facto'); in comparison to the 4.3 million entities of the social economy as a whole.

⁵ See SEE's position papers and contributions on MFF (NRPPs, ECF and Performance) and other topics here: Social Economy Europe. (2026, May 11). *EU policies - Social Economy Europe*. <https://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/eu-policies/>

Window of the InvestEU instrument disappeared from the draft regulation of the next MFF. Political recognition, and particularly an Action Plan, needs to be matched with adequate and accessible financial resources. This concerns not only social economy, but also the **broader EU investment for social objectives broadly** such as the fight against poverty, implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, addressing the housing crisis, supporting the clean and digital transitions, creating quality jobs and strengthening social and territorial cohesion. The mid-term review shows how the implementation of the SEAP has been channeled through a wide range of instruments – including ESF+, ERDF, Interreg, JTF, InvestEU, EaSI, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe and the Single Market Programme. This diversity of funds and instruments to support the social economy ecosystem is positive, and also confirms the need for **simplification, certainty**, clearer pathways and stronger **continuity in the next MFF**. **This is particularly important in the current context of increased social challenges**. Social services and communities have not fully recovered from the pressure generated by the COVID-19 crisis, especially in areas such as mental health, care, inclusion and support to vulnerable groups. At the same time, **the current geopolitical tensions are increasing cost of living, putting** pressure on communities, local authorities and **frontline service providers, making resilience, social cohesion and community-based responses more necessary than ever**. The next MFF should therefore adequately support social services, local communities and social economy actors that are essential to Europe's social resilience. Likewise, SEE also considers **that discontinued or reoriented actions or initiatives should be transparently discussed with the ecosystem**, (to avoid situations like the abrupt cancellation of COSME calls) especially when they concern areas of strong strategic relevance for the EU such as circular economy, social investment or cross-border financial cooperation. **Predictability** and certainty are essential for enterprises, organisations and networks that need to plan long-term partnerships and actions.

The role of the social economy could be further explored in strategic fields such as **preparedness and civil protection**. **Social economy entities are often among the first actors responding to social needs in times of crisis and war**, whether through care, social services, mutual aid, housing support, employment pathways or community-based infrastructures. **This contribution should be better reflected in EU preparedness and resilience agendas**.

Finally, the role of the social economy **finance from the supply side** should be further supported given their specific role. Actors such as cooperative and ethical banks, microfinance actors are the ones that most support social economy actors and locally rooted economy. These are often smaller financial intermediaries with big added

value⁶, which need proper and adapted financial instruments such as a continued **InvestEU social and skills window** and a proportionality rules to their size⁷.

4. Priorities for the coming years

For the coming years, SEE considers that the implementation and monitoring of the **Council Recommendation** must remain a central priority. The **2028 stocktaking report will be a key moment** to assess progress and identify remaining gaps. This should be accompanied by **continued support for Member States** and stronger multilevel cooperation.

It would be also valuable to advance **adapted frameworks linked to taxation, public procurement and State Aid**, reflecting the specific features of social economy enterprises and organisations. Adapted frameworks could also be developed regarding the **European Cross-Border Associations Directive** (ECBA Directive), as a key instrument to facilitate cross-border civic and social economy action, and careful consideration of **how social economy families can be included in** future Single Market tools such as the **28th regime**. The 28th regime could be stronger if it were designed for all types of companies and not only conventional one. By enlarging the regime to cooperatives, mutual benefit societies and social enterprises, it would ensure the regime benefits enterprises that have a track record of providing innovation. It would also be a way of ensuring that the EU doesn't breed champions that would then be bought by other players. Because in social economy doesn't practice exit strategy by design, it ensures the EU money stays in the EU.

In terms of sectorial policies, social economy is a key actor of training and education. On the other hand, **skills partnerships** are essential **for social economy actors** as there is a need to increase education (at all stages) and training programmes linked to the specific skills needed to work, manage and volunteer in the ecosystem, but also to support it as public authority. The specific skills in question can be identified as democratic governance, adapted management, identification of social and societal issues, transforming it into a sustainable economic model, financial literacy etc...

SEE encourages the Commission to clearly embed the social economy in the future **Circular Economy Act**, since many social economy entities are already active in reuse, repair, recycling, upcycling, waste prevention and circular business models that combine environmental impact with social inclusion.

⁶ FEBEA, Fundación Finanzas Éticas, & Fondazione Finanza Etica. (2025). 8th Report on Ethical Finance in Europe: Capital for Common Good.: Ethical banks and the social economy for the future of Europe. In <https://febea.org/publication/8th-report-on-ethical-and-value-based-finance-in-europe/>. Retrieved May 18, 2026, from <https://febea.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/8-Report-on-ethical-finance-in-Europe.pdf>

⁷ Social Economy Europe. (n.d.). *Social Economy Europe's Contribution to Multiannual Financial Framework Consultation*. Retrieved May 18, 2026, from <https://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Social-Economy-Europes-contribution-to-Multiannual-Financial-Framework-Consultation.pdf>

Improving data and statistics also remains a priority, including through satellite accounts, observatories and co-designed impact measurement frameworks. The Commission's planned support for Member States in developing **satellite accounts** and using **statistical business registers** could be reinforced if closely co-designed with the ecosystem to ensure that data collection reflects the diversity of social economy families and avoids excessive administrative burdens.

SEE also calls the EU to include social economy in its **democracy and civic space**, as it is a key player in these fields. In particular, the social economy should be identified as a key actor to implement **the European Democracy Shield, the EU Civil Society Strategy** and other similar initiatives. More broadly, the social economy could be integrated into the wider civil society agenda, recognising that **many civil society organisations are also part of the social economy ecosystem**. Social economy organisations foster participation, trust, community ownership and democratic engagement, and this role could be better integrated into EU policy. This is particularly relevant **in a context where, in some Member States, there are growing tendencies to restrict the support, operational space or even rights of civil society organisations**, including social economy actors such as associations. With the excuse of countering extremism or protecting public order, these trends are weakening civic space, democratic participation and the ability of communities to organise collectively.

In the coming years further attention could be given on the **legal recognition** of social economy families, including tools such as the **European Cooperative Society statute** or the already mentioned **European Cross-Border Associations Directive** and legal frameworks for associations, foundations and mutual benefit societies. More broadly, the social economy would benefit from been operationally integrated into EU **rules** governing enterprises in the **Single Market**.

SEE also reiterates the importance of adequate **social investment in the next MFF** and real **access to EU funds**. The next MFF could not only preserve existing support, but scale up resources dedicated to the social economy and to the services, infrastructures and communities it supports. This includes ensuring that social economy actors can effectively access the National and Regional Partnership Programmes, and particularly the European Social Fund Plus, cohesion policy instruments, the European Competitiveness Fund and its InvestEU instrument, as well as future instruments supporting housing, care, mental health, skills, social innovation and territorial resilience. Likewise, the social economy would benefit from better integration into the **European Semester, industrial policy, macroeconomic frameworks, the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, external cooperation and international dialogues**. Social economy should be integrated as a key player in the **Rural Action Plan, Cohesion Policy, Interreg and the Just Transition framework**, given the proven role of social economy actors in rural development, social innovation, territorial resilience and support to communities affected by economic and climate transitions.

Finally, **investment policies** would be strengthened by addressing the social economy both from the demand and supply sides. Many social economy actors are themselves financial providers — ethical and alternative banks, credit cooperatives, cooperative banks, microfinance institutions and philanthropic foundations — able to mobilise savings, provide patient capital and develop financing tools adapted to social economy entities (the demand side), SMEs, social and territorial needs. Likewise, Mutuels have a specific role to play as both being part of the demand for investment and capable of supporting investment in key social areas.

5. Social Economy contribution to European Competitiveness

Key achievements in this first implementation phase of the SEAP must be recognized, as well as the key role of **DG EMPL, especially in coordinating efforts with other Commission DGs and agencies. Nevertheless**, the contribution of the social economy to competitiveness, industrial autonomy and economic sovereignty deserves further attention. This requires re-establishing a strong connection between the social economy and the Commission services dealing with internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SMEs, notably DG GROW. The withdrawal of DG GROW from structured work on the social economy is already weakening one of the most strategic dimensions of the SEAP: **the recognition of the social economy as a key player of the EU industrial system**. Another tangible consequence of such attitude was the withdrawal of the COSME calls, which left many social economy actors with less means to develop actions at European level.

As mentioned in the introduction, the social economy is a major economic actor, representing over 4.3 million entities and at least 11.5 million jobs in the EU. It contributes to employment, GDP, innovation, territorial cohesion and the resilience of key sectors.

The social Economy contributes to Europe's economic autonomy. Energy communities and cooperatives help develop decentralised and locally anchored environmentally sustainable energy systems. **By enabling citizens, municipalities, SMEs and local actors to collectively produce**, manage and benefit from renewable energy, social economy models contribute to energy democracy, **reduce dependency on external suppliers and geopolitical turmoil, strengthen local acceptance of renewable projects and help address energy poverty. They also keep economic value within territories, fight rise of greed-induced energy cost** and can support local jobs in installation, maintenance, advice, renovation and energy efficiency services. **This makes them strategic actors for a fair, accessible, secure and resilient energy transition.**

Industrial, service and rural cooperatives as well as associations, foundations, mutuels, social enterprises and social finance actors reinforce local value chains and support strategic sectors such as industry, agri-food and digital. They contribute directly to **industrial autonomy, cohesion policy, and social and territorial cohesion**. By anchoring economic activity in territories, social economy actors help **preserve**

productive capacity, reduce regional disparities, support local employment and ensure that economic development benefits communities. In the **agri-food sector**, cooperatives and other social economy entities play a key role in strengthening farmers' bargaining power, preserving local production, supporting short supply chains, reducing territorial inequalities and ensuring access to quality food. They help anchor value in rural and peri-urban areas, support generational renewal and contribute to food security and economic resilience. **In a context of fragile global supply chains and climate and geopolitical risks, these models reinforce Europe's strategic autonomy.**

The social economy also contributes to developing **entrepreneurship and business development across Europe**. By supporting **collective entrepreneurship, inclusive start-ups, worker buy-outs**, social innovation and locally rooted enterprises, the ecosystem helps create viable businesses that respond to social, environmental and territorial needs. This is particularly relevant for Europe's "**Right to Stay**" agenda: social economy enterprises and organisations **create opportunities in rural, remote and underserved areas**, helping people to live, work and build their future in their own territories. Social economy actors operate in areas left out by the market and underfunded public services, where community-led initiatives are better suited to provide services and generate investments. This particular added value could be strengthened if properly addressed and supported within the **Right to Stay** initiative. In this sense, the social economy is not only a social policy partner, but also a driver of local enterprise creation, business continuity and territorial attractiveness.

Digitalization is a key aspect of competitiveness, in this field the **EU** is lagging as it **must reduce its dependency** from infrastructure and software developed in other areas if the world. The EU would gain from **designing a digital world in line with its values**. In this field, the social economy contributes to a more inclusive, democratic digital transition in which **sovereignty** of people over the use of their data is respected. Platform cooperatives, digital commons, community-based data initiatives, social tech enterprises offer alternatives to extractive and monopolistic digital models. They develop common-good digital services and infrastructure that ensure innovation serves social and economic needs rather than market concentration and monopolies, that negatively affect the overall market and democracy. Furthermore, these social economy digital actors play a crucial role in reducing the digital divide, promoting access to digital skills and protecting users' rights. In fact, open and free open-source technology, share the same values as social economy and are the power house of the internet and AI development models. **The social economy could therefore be better integrated into EU digital policies**, including artificial intelligence, data governance, digital skills and platform work. **The Commission's work on the Code of Conduct for data use and management in the social economy** can be used as a basis to shape the EU digital sovereignty based on trustworthy, inclusive and rights-based digital innovation models.

Housing is another important sector in which the social economy provides solid and structural solutions to ongoing crisis. Social economy housing models — such as social housing, **housing cooperatives, community land trusts and non-profit or limited-**

profit providers — are **designed to structurally limit speculation and preserve affordability**. This helps address the housing crisis and its negative impact on competitiveness⁸, including **skills shortages, the funneling of financial resources towards speculative housing markets, and the high share of household income absorbed by rents**. By reducing this pressure, these models can help free household income and investment capacity for more productive and strategic sectors, thus contributing the Savings and Investment Union and addressing the huge investment gap identified in the Draghi Report⁹. Likewise, supporting household income is crucial to prevent poverty, thus participating to the anti-poverty strategy and the European Pillar of Social Rights).

The social economy plays a crucial role in delivering essential social services. WISEs, mutual benefit societies, foundations, associations — including charities — and cooperatives contribute to care, health, inclusion, training and labour market integration. **Delivering social services means delivering social cohesion**: these organisations support people throughout different stages of life, strengthen communities, reduce inequalities and ensure that essential services remain accessible, affordable and rooted in local needs. In doing so, they **strengthen participation in the labour market, contribute to the fight against poverty and build pathways out of poverty**.

These added values show that the EU would highly benefit from better integrating the social economy into EU competitiveness and industrial policies. Regarding competitiveness, it is essential to address the financial gap through an adequate integration of social economy actors and social finance entities into the **Savings and Investments Union**. **The social economy should not be treated as peripheral to competitiveness, but as a strategic component of Europe's capacity to deliver resilient value chains, quality employment, territorial cohesion, social innovation and long-term investment**. Social economy models combine economic activity, democratic governance, territorial anchoring of activities and long-term reinvestment, making them a strategic component of a competitive and resilient European economy.

⁸ See: OECD/European Union (2025), *Social Economy in Europe: Contributing to Competitiveness and Prosperity*, Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED), OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/3432de93-en>.

⁹ Draghi, M. (2024). *The future of European competitiveness: A competitiveness strategy for Europe*. European Commission, https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/draghi-report_en

6. Conclusion

Social Economy Europe recognises the essential role played by the Social Economy Action Plan and the important progress achieved since its adoption. The **European definition of the social economy**, the Council Recommendation, progress on access to finance, and tools such as the Social Economy Gateway are instrumental for the social economy ecosystem. The continuation of the GECES, which even if it is an instrument that preceded the SEAP, is an important forum to monitor the implementation of the action plan.

SEE also welcomes the SEAP midterm review willingness to properly address **framework conditions** as an essential driver to create a level playing field for the social economy. At the time this paper is written, key files such as **public procurement and State Aid** (or more precisely **GBER**) are under negotiations, and while these were part of the SEAP, the social economy is not addressed in these files, nor the definitions linked to the SEAP, which is a setback for the implementation of the action plan. **Taxation** is another file that will be crucial for the ecosystem, as well as the attention given to democracy, monitoring of the Council Recommendation, and sectoral approaches in housing, energy, digitalisation and circular economy.

SEE is firmly convinced that in order for the EC to deliver on its current overall objectives, the next implementation phase should further **strengthen the role of the social economy in industrial policy, competitiveness and industrial autonomy**. The reduced involvement of DG GROW is tangible, while the work carried out by DG EMPL is acknowledged. **The dismantling of DG GROW's dedicated Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship Unit could be addressed**, as it risks weakening the cross-DG and cross-sectoral nature of the SEAP. SEE is convinced that in order for DG EMPL to continue to properly implement the SEAP, it should receive more human resources to compensate the one lost with the dismantling of the DG GROW social economy and social entrepreneurship Unit. Any how, a renewed institutional arrangement should ensure that the social economy remains connected to internal market, industrial, SME and competitiveness policies.

SEE also encourages **the Commission to preserve the specific identity and cohesion of the social economy ecosystem**. This requires balanced recognition of all its families — cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations including charities, foundations and social enterprises — and careful attention to concepts that may not fully share the principles, governance models or legal traditions of the ecosystem.

The future **MFF** will be decisive for the success of the SEAP; adequate and accessible funding will be crucial to sustain implementation. In this context, already mentioned first **Special Eurobarometer on the social economy** shows broad **public support for policy action**: 88% of Europeans agree that public authorities should develop **strategies and legislation** to support social economy organisations; 86% support **education and awareness** initiatives; 86% support **resources and guidance** to help people set up social economy organisations; **and 80% agree with direct public funding**. These figures confirm that implementing and financing the SEAP is not only an institutional priority, but also responds to **clear public support across Europe**. This is especially urgent given the reduced means for essential services, the increased socio-economic and health-related crisis following the COVID-19 pandemic, rising cost of living linked to housing speculation and geopolitical tensions, the environmental challenges as well as political pressure on democratic values. **These issues will increase and will impact negatively competitiveness and democracy if not properly addressed**. The EU should recall, and reflect in the next MFF priorities, that **Europe's**

strength depends not only on defense but also on social resilience, not only on European champions but also it's fabric of SMEs, not only on economic growth but also on strong communities. The SEAP was adopted because the social economy has a track record of being a key economic actor that addresses these all together, **by delivering long-term local solutions.** However, at the time, the next MFF draft regulations barely address social economy.

SEE looks forward to a continued SEAP and encourages the post-2030 agenda to be co-designed with the ecosystem and provide clear objectives, governance tools and renewed ambition. In this regard, the **progress tracker and the 2028 stocktaking report could be used not only as monitoring exercises, but also as stepping stones towards a renewed European agenda for the social economy after 2030.**

SEE will continue to work with **the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council, the EESC, the Committee of the Regions, Member States and all relevant partners** to ensure the continued implementation of the SEAP. Building on the progress already achieved, the coming years should consolidate the social economy as a key pillar of a more competitive, democratic, resilient and socially cohesive Europe.

About Social Economy Europe

Social Economy Europe (SEE) is the voice of the 2.8 million social economy enterprises and organisations Europe. Created in November 2000, under the name of CEP-CMAF¹⁰, SEE represents the collective interests of all social economy actors as cooperatives, mutuels, associations, foundations, social enterprises, and other social economy legal forms. Social economy enterprises and organisations of all sizes operate in all socio-economic sectors.

As of 2025, SEE has 25 members:



As the main network representing Social Economy ecosystem at European level, SEE holds the co-secretariat of the Social Economy and Services of General Interest Intergroup of the European Parliament¹¹, is represented at the Civil Society Liaison Group of the European Economic and Social Committee, is part of the Commission Expert Group on the Social Economy (GECES), is observer member of the United Nations Taskforce on the Social and Solidarity Economy and holds the Secretariat of the Luxembourg Monitoring Committee¹².

¹⁰ European Standing Conference of Cooperatives, Mutuels, Associations and Foundations

¹¹ *European Parliament – Intergroup on the Social Economy and Services of General Interest*, official webpage, available at:

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/intergroup/details/7907/Intergroup%20on%20the%20Social%20Economy%20and%20Services%20of%20General%20Interest> (accessed on 10 October 2025).

¹² *Social Economy Europe*, "Institutions we work with", official webpage, available at:

<https://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/our-work/institutions-we-work-with/> (accessed on 10 October 2025).

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