

THE GOTHENBURG MANIFESTO

adopted during the EU conference of Social Economy

Building a stronger and resilient Europe

The social economy is regarded as a European success story. Today we, the social economy stakeholders, are gathering in Gothenburg to embrace the European Social Economy Action Plan and the ambitious agenda on EU level to unleash the full potential of the social economy in Europe, carrying the EU's fundamental values of democracy and citizenship also into the economic sphere. Furthermore, we welcome the United Nations resolution of promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development and urge the EU Commission to further deepen international cooperation for better Social Economy policy development.

Europe has faced several challenges in the last decade, including complex societal challenges such as environmental threats, pandemic issues, migration, and more recently war in neighbouring countries, historic inflation and high energy prices. We, the social economy stakeholders, are willing to collectively build a true social market economy that reconciles economic performance with social progress and environmental sustainability. This should be done by promoting the diversity of forms of organisations in the social economy and jointly identifying solutions to address the main challenges of our time, such as climate crisis, the digital transition, decent work and fight against inequalities, to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Although we welcome the important work in the European Social Economy Action Plan for social economy, we still need further political ownership, enabling policies and committed EU institutions, with a strong European Parliament Intergroup on the Social Economy, a dedicated function within the European Commission and engaged Member States, regions and cities. The future work for an even stronger social economy in Europe needs to further strengthen the harmonisation of legislation and finance, full inclusion in the EU market and make the social economy impact more visible, bearing in mind the diversity of the sector as well as different conditions for social economy around Europe.

Therefore, we call on the European institutions to further provide a comprehensive and coherent policy dedicated to the social economy, continue the important work of Social Economy Action Plan implementation as well as to include the following aspects:

- Mainstreaming social economy into all **Single Market, SME and entrepreneurship policies**, ensuring that these policies take into account the specific characteristics of Social Economy Enterprises as well as bearing in mind their cross-sectorial nature and heterogenic culture of social economy in different EU countries;
- Continue developing the most appropriate financial ecosystem and promoting **strategic investments** in innovative and sustainable social economy initiatives throughout their lifecycle at local, regional, national and EU levels, *demanding member states to prioritise the social economy* in national EU funding programmes, ensure leveraging effect at EU-level for existing social economy financial instruments.
- Increasing awareness, visibility and recognition partly by demanding satellite accounts reporting on the social economy across Europe.
- **Realising the full potential of social innovation brought about by social economy** by encouraging the creation of cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary partnerships to jointly identify inclusive and sustainable solutions.

- Provide adequate policy and financial support for the green and digital transition of the social economy, in order to make sure that social economy does not lag behind and that the transitions are just and inclusive.
- Ensuring that all public institutions at local, regional, national and EU levels implement **socially responsible public procurement, promote social economy partnerships as well as social economy favourable procurement.**
- **Promoting co-construction and policy innovation** to take full advantage of the social economy's capacity to scale up and respond efficiently to social and societal needs and contribute to social inclusion, cohesion and sustainability, bearing in mind the important role of social economy for resilience and response to needs.
- Promotes social economy models for “future of work” challenges (eg. platform cooperatives etc).
- Supporting public authorities in **mainstreaming social economy at all levels of education** as well as ensuring that **social economy is a natural part of the EU skills agenda;**
- **Stress the development of instruments for reporting on the social, economic and environmental impact and progress** in parallel by elaborating on social economy development in the European Semester process.
- A yearly assessment of the implementation of the Social Economy Action Plan and long-term targeted objectives to be achieved by 2030

To unleash the full potential of the social economy for the peoples of Europe, the recognition of the sector, the financial ecosystem, the knowledge as well as the innovative impact valuation of the sector needs to further be strengthened. **Therefore, it is important to continue supporting the development of the social economy and implementation of the Social Economy Action Plan, by building a conducive ecosystem for the social economy rather than fit the social economy into existing systems.** This can only be achieved through action and cooperation and by building synergies between institutional and social economy stakeholders.

Gothenburg, 8 June 2023