

European Social Economy Congress

San Sebastián / Donostia, 13 and 14 November 2023

SSE Workshop “Non-for-profit social service providers: a crucial social economy actor offering solutions and facing challenges”

14 November 2023, 15:00-18:00

The Centro Kursaal, Room 3

Zurriola Hiribidea 1, 20002 Donostia - San Sebastián

We will provide simultaneous interpretation from English into Spanish and from Spanish into English

Ofreceremos interpretación simultánea del inglés al español y del español al inglés

Concept Note

The **Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP)** and the EC proposal for a **Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions** have put the social economy and the question of how to design and improve supportive regulatory, policy and funding frameworks for social economy actors on the EU agenda¹.

Both the Action Plan and the proposal for a Council Recommendation address many topics relevant for SSE such as staff shortages and effective workforce recruitment and retention, ensuring high service quality, state aid, public procurement, social impact assessment, taxation and the cross-border activities of associations. SSE welcomed both initiatives² and emphasised our support for their implementation, as well as ways we can work in cooperation with national, regional and local governments³.

The EC has recognised not-for-profit social service providers as being part of the social economy. However, in many cases, we still lack such recognition at national and local level and strive to strengthen our visibility and role in the social economy ecosystem. We also advocate ways that we can be more effectively supported by local and national public authorities and by the Commission, to address the challenges we face and so that we can fulfil our vital role in improving social inclusion and

¹ Looking beyond the EU context, the role of social services has also been recognised in the UN Resolution [“Promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy for Sustainable Development”](#) (A/77/L.60) of 18 April 2023, in the ILO [Resolution and Conclusions concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy](#) of 10 June 2022 and in the [Recommendation of the Council on the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation](#) of the OECD of 10 June 2022.

² [SSE Statement on the Social Economy Action Plan](#) (15 December 2021) and [SSE Statement on the EC proposal for a Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions](#) (6 July 2023)

³ [SSE Proposals for the Implementation of the Social Economy Action Plan - From Ambition to Implementation](#) (28 April 2022); [SSE Reaction on the Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions](#) (10 October 2023)

providing high-quality, rights-based, and person-centred care, support, guidance, education, and training services.

For social service providers to be better supported, it means **addressing the specific challenges we face at national and local level** regarding the:

- social services workforce, the attractiveness of the jobs and careers in the sector and the structures and functioning of social dialogue. Providers across Europe have to find and roll out solutions to ensure effective recruitment and retention policies, to reduce staff shortages and to improve or adapt professional qualifications as well as social and digital skills;
- access to sustainable funding to address increasing investment needs and needs for care, support, guidance, education, and training of vulnerable groups and disadvantaged individuals, including their own service users;
- models of service provision realising person-centred and community-based quality services which respect the human and social rights of their users and aim at increasing their well-being;
- models of trustful cooperation and partnership with governments and public authorities;
- EU-level and national framework conditions for the regulation, organisation, delivery, financing and assessment of social services of general interest, mainly in the fields of state aid, public procurement and taxation.

Objectives

- 1) To **demonstrate how not-for-profit social service providers are crucial yet humble social economy actors**, and to highlight their innovative nature when it comes to responding to crises, and the green and digital transition.
- 2) To **explore the challenges not-for-profit social service providers are facing**, and how they are responding to those challenges
- 3) To **discuss how not-for-profit social service providers can be better supported** at local and national level, through both EU and national policies.

DRAFT Agenda

15:00-15:10: Welcome & Opening Remarks

- *Mathias Maucher, Policy and Project Coordinator, Social Services Europe (SSE)*

15:10-16:50: Session 1: Social service providers: the humble social economy actors: Solutions/promising practice and challenges in relation to effective recruitment and retention, addressing staff shortages and the delivery of quality social services which are accessible, affordable, person-centred and realising the rights, well-being and dignity of the users

- Kira Menaker, Programme Manager, Programme Unit Europe, Caritas Austria *[online]*
- Javier Güemes Pedraza, Director of International Relations, Group ONCE, Spain
- Jose Javier Sanchez Espinosa, Director Social Inclusion Unit, Red Cross Spain
- Margot Renaud, European Project Officer, Confédération intersectorielle des employeurs du secteur à profit social (non marchand) en Wallonie et en Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (UNIPSO), Belgium
- Sylvain Renouvel, Director, Federation of European Social Employers
- Q&A

Moderation: Alicia Gómez Campos, Secretary General, European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) & Member of SSE Board

16:50-17:10: Coffee Break

17:10-17:55: Session 2: Exchange of views: Supporting social services and supportive regulatory and financial frameworks for them at local, regional and national level

2 speakers, policymakers from local, regional, and national level from amongst the participants

- Dana Gabriela Verbal, Team Leader “Social Economy”, DG EMPL, European Commission *[online]*
- Pablo Sánchez Pérez, Subdirector Gerente, Fundación Intrás, Spain & Board Member of EPR
- Q&A

Moderation: Lucy Anns, Policy and Advocacy Officer “Social and Economic Affairs”, Caritas Europa

17:55-18:00: Conclusions

- *Mathias Maucher, Policy and Project Coordinator, Social Services Europe (SSE)*