

Annual Report 2023

Social Services Europe

1. Internal meetings

- The SSE General Assembly 2023 was held on 31 May 2023.
- An Extraordinary General Assembly was organised on 14 December 2023, i.a., to approve the SSE Work Programme 2024 and the SSE Budget for 2024.
- In 2023, the SSE Board met 8 times (25 January, 31 March, 28 April, 31 May, 7 July, 30 August, 4 October, and 14 December).
- In 2023, the General Working Group (GWG) came together 7 times (8 February, 21 March, 16 May, 27 June, 24 August, 17 October, and 30 November).
- In 2023, SSE operated two Taskforces, one on the European Care Strategy (TF ECS) and the other on the Social Economy Action Plan (TF SE AP). The second met 5 times (1 March, 20 April, 14 June, 14 September, 26 October).
- The Work Programme 2023 was elaborated by the Coordinator, based on written and oral feedback from the Board and the GWG. The final approval took place at the SSE Board meeting on 1 February 2024.
- The Treasurer, supported by the Coordinator, prepared the SSE Budget for 2024 – adopted at the Extraordinary General Assembly on 14 December 2023 – and the SSE Budget Forecast for the years 2024 to 2028.

2. Networking and (strategic) partnerships

- SSE is a member of the Liaison Group Civil Society Organisations (LG CSO) of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) –since May 2021 represented by the Coordinator. He participated (in-person or online) in most of the meetings.
- SSE is a member of the European Commission's Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship (GECES), with a mandate until 2024 – since October 2021 represented by the Coordinator. Lucy Anns, Caritas Europa, represented SSE in the (online) meeting of 15 June, Mathias Maucher in the (in-person) meeting on 5 December. He regularly shares the minutes of the GECES meetings with the TF SE AP and, where relevant, also with the GWG. He reports back all the important information to the SSE Board, the GWG and the TF SE AP.
- In 2023, SSE (Policy and Project Coordinator) and the Social Platform Secretariat (Secretary General; Policy Coordinator) continued their informal and ad-hoc exchanges on a number of policy dossiers.

- On 5 July, Mathieu de Poorter and Mathias Maucher met with Sarah de Heusch, the new Director of Social Economy Europe. SEE was represented by one of its Vice-Presidents, too, Patrizia Bussi, Director of ENSIE.
- Mathias Maucher represented SSE in two meetings (on 20 September 2023 and 25 October 2023) of the Expert Group for the Social Economy Conference "The social economy at the core of transitions" on 12 and 13 February 2024. He supported a thematic focus on, i.a., state aid and funding and on socially responsible public procurement. This involvement led to the invitation for SSE to make a contribution to the Round Table 2 "Social Economy Facing State Aid" on 13 February 2024.

3. Elaboration of SSE Position Papers and SSE Statements

SSE drafted 4 position papers or statements:

- [SSE Reaction to the Social Convergence Framework of the European Semester](#) (31 May 2023)
- [SSE Statement on the EC proposal for a Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions](#) (6 July 2023)
- [SSE Reaction to the State of the Union Speech](#) (13 September 2023)
- [SSE Reaction to the Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions](#) (10 October 2023)

4. Contributions to EC Public Consultations/Calls for Evidence

SSE drafted 2 contributions to EC public consultations/calls for evidence:

- [SSE Contribution to EC Consultation on revision of SGEI de minimis Regulation](#) (1 June 2023)
- [Joint Reply by ENSIE, RREUSE, SEE and SSE to EC Consultation on revision of SGEI de minimis Regulation](#) (1 June 2023)
- [EC Proposal for a Directive on European Cross-Border Associations \(COM\(2023\) 516 final\) - Reply by SSE to the EC Call for Evidence](#) (28 February 2024)
- [EC Proposal for a Directive on European Cross-Border Associations \(COM\(2023\) 516 final\) – Joint Reply by AIM, CEDAG, CSE, PHILEA, SEE and SSE to the EC Call for Evidence](#) (1 March 2024)

5. SSE events (conferences; webinars/seminars; workshops)

SSE (co-)organised 3 events on EU areas of interest:

- Joint [EASPD](#) and [SSE](#) Webinar "How can state aid best support inclusive employment and social impact" (7 November 2023) to present and discuss the EASPD Study "[Impact of State Aid on the Development of the Social Economy and on Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities](#)"
- Joint [Eurodiaconia](#) and [SSE](#) Seminar "Sustainable and Socially Responsible Public

Procurement in Europe in the field of social services” (8 November 2023), i.a. to present and discuss the Eurodiaconia Position Paper “[Reserved Contracts in Public Procurement](#)”

- [SSE Workshop](#) “Non-for-profit social service providers: a crucial social economy actor offering solutions and facing challenges” at [Social Economy Conference, San Sebastián/Donostia](#) (14 November 2023)

6. Policy and advocacy work with European institutions

- Work with the European Parliament
 - Coordinated by SSE member Eurodiaconia, SSE submitted in February 2023 via the EP a “Written question to the Commission on funding to support the reception and integration of refugees from Ukraine”.
 - Lucy Anns and Mathias Maucher, as Members of the Taskforce “Social Economy Action Plan”, met with MEPs Jordi Cañas and Leopoldo Lopez Gil, two of the coordinators of the Intergroup Social Economy, to explore possibilities for SSE to intervene in one of the meetings of the Intergroup in 2023.
 - SSE worked with the EP and with other partner organisations (Civil Society Europe; Philea) to follow-up to the [legislative own-initiative report \(INL\) on a Statute for European cross-border associations and non-profit organisations](#), led by EP’s Committee for Legal Affairs [Rapporteur: Sergey Lagodinsky, Greens/EFA, Germany]¹. SSE, again in coordination with CEDAG, CSE and PHILEA, provided input into the EP Report on the proposal for a Directive on European Cross Border Associations (ECBA), led by EP’s Committee for Legal Affairs [Rapporteur: Sergey Lagodinsky, Greens/EFA, Germany] and (co)-drafted amendments prior to the vote in the Committee for Legal Affairs and in the EP Plenary. The [report](#) was eventually adopted by the Committee for Legal Affairs on 13 February 2024 and by the EP Plenary on 27 February 2024.
- Meetings with the European Commission
 - On 24 June, Mathias Maucher met with the DG EMPL colleague responsible for the Social Economy Gateway to discuss about future SSE contributions and SSE’s role in a future Editorial Board for the Social Economy Gateway.
 - On 21 November, an SSE delegation consisting of Heather Roy, Freek Spinnewijn, Thomas Bignal and Mathias Maucher met with Irma Borde, DG EMPL Coordinator for Social Services. The meeting served for an exchange on the political priorities for and main activities of SSE, the first ideas for a Social Services Action Plan

¹ This work built on the [EP Resolution “A statute for European cross-border associations and non-profit organisations”](#) of 17 February 2022 and the EP Report “A Statute for European Cross-Border Associations and Non-Profit Organisations” comprising a Draft Regulation on a Statute for a European Association and a Draft Directive on common minimum standards for non-profit organisations in the EU”.

(finalised on 15 January 2024) and on how a more horizontal approach to social services could be included in EC initiatives building on the EPSR AP.

- Exchange with the Spanish and the Belgian EU Council Presidencies
 - Over the whole year 2023, the SSE Secretariat was in regular exchange (by e-mail and by phone) with selected representatives of the Spanish and Belgian EU Council Presidencies. In the first case the main thematic focus was on “social economy” the Social Convergence Framework of the European Semester, in the second case again on “social economy”, but also on the future of the EPSR (and the role of social services in this context).

7. Interventions at conferences, workshops, seminars, webinars, etc.

- Maria Nyman and Laura Jones intervened on behalf of SSE at [the Launch Event of the Large-Scale Partnership for Skills in Long-Term Care “Driving up Training & Lifelong Learning”](#) on 20 April 2023. Maria Nyman contributed to the Panel Discussion “Why this Partnership for Skills is important?”, Laura Jones did the concluding remarks.
- Presentation by Mathias Maucher on «Lobbying: Quels enjeux en terme des politiques sociales pour des prestataires des services sociaux?» et «Résultats du Social Services Helpdesk Project» on 12 October at a workshop of «Hainaut en Europe» (Intermediary Body, involved in several project activities and the Final Conference), Brussels.
- Presentation by Daniele Bregoli on [“Next steps: Guidance on how to facilitate access to EU funds for Social Innovation”](#) in Workshop 5 “EU Funds: How can they facilitate Social Innovation?” on 12 October 2023 at the EASPD Annual Conference “Enabling Social Innovation: Concepts, frameworks & organisational change”, 12 and 13 October 2023, Helsinki, Finland.
- Joint [EASPD](#) and [SSE](#) Webinar “How can state aid best support inclusive employment and social impact” on 7 November 2023 to present and discuss the EASPD Study [“Impact of State Aid on the Development of the Social Economy and on Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities”](#). Mathias Maucher, as co-author of the report, was one of the two [speakers](#), together with Valentina Caimi.
- Joint [Eurodiaconia](#) and [SSE](#) Seminar “Sustainable and Socially Responsible Public Procurement in Europe in the field of social services” on 8 November 2023, i.a. to present and discuss the Eurodiaconia Position Paper [“Reserved Contracts in Public Procurement”](#). Mathias Maucher was one of the [speakers](#).
- [SSE Workshop](#) “Non-for-profit social service providers: a crucial social economy actor offering solutions and facing challenges” at [Social Economy Conference, San Sebastián/Donostia](#) on 14 November 2023. Alicia Gomez Campos moderated the workshop. Representatives of national members of Caritas Europa, EASPD and EU Red Cross Office as well as of the Federation of European Social Employer provided inputs.

8. Projects

- SSE was continuously and strongly involved all year long in the [“Social Services Helpdesk Project”](#) (ESF+), together with all other SSE members except for the Red Cross EU Office. The main focus was on the finalisation of the [Policy Guidance](#) (long version & short versions for Managing Authorities and the European Commission on the one hand and for Social Service Providers on the other) and the preparation of the [Final Conference](#) held on 16 April 2024.
- SSE contributed to the drafting of the project proposal for the Care4Skills Project (Erasmus+), submitted on 3 May and approved by the EC Services in October 2023.

12. Communication and dissemination

- All SSE publications have been uploaded to the [SSE webpage](#), under the heading “Publications”.