



**3P4SSE**

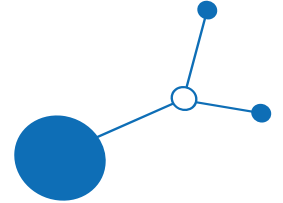
---

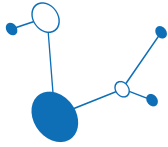
# **RESEARCH REPORT**

**Reducing social disparities in  
a joint effort**

3P4SSE

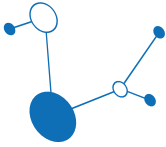
# RESEARCH REPORT





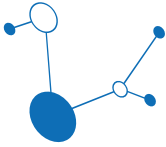
## Table of Contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS .....	3
SUMMARY .....	4
1. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT .....	5
2. THE POLICY BACKGROUND .....	5
3. TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING: THE SOCIAL ECONOMY AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION .....	7
4. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS.....	7
4.1 THE PROJECT SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS.....	8
5. RESULTS.....	10
6. DEFINING THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY IN 3P4SSE .....	21
6.1 THE 3P4SSE CASE STUDIES.....	23
6.2 THE MAIN BARRIERS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEMS .....	27
7. THE 3P4SSE GLOSSARY .....	29
7.1 DEFINITION 1 - Social and Solidarity Economy: defining the scope of SSE.....	29
7.2 DEFINITION 2 - Social and Solidarity Organisations: defining the actors of SSE .....	30
7.3 DEFINITION 3 - Social and Solidarity Economy Clusters: defining the territorial cooperation .....	31
8. ADDRESSING POLICY PRIORITIES IN PROMOTING SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY CLUSTERS....	32
NOTES .....	35
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	36
ANNEXES .....	38
TRACK OF THE SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS.....	38
TRACK OF THE FOCUS GROUP.....	40



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CE:	Central Europe
CME:	Continental Market Economy
EME:	Eastern Market Economy
ESSE:	Early-stage Social and Solidarity Economy
EU:	European Union
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
LAG:	Local Action Group
MSE:	Mature Social Economy
MSoE:	Mature Solidarity Economy
MSSE:	Mature Social and Solidarity Economy
MME:	Mediterranean Market Economy
PPP:	Public-Private Partnership
SC:	Social Cluster
SSO:	Social and Solidarity Organisation
SSE:	Social and Solidarity Economy
WISE:	Work Integration Social Enterprise
WP:	Work Package



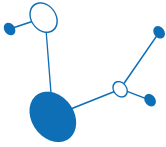
## SUMMARY

The research report aims to sum up the main results deriving from the implementation of the action-research, with reference to Activity 1.1. The objective of the A1.1 is to outline the policy landscapes on social economies in the scope of the CE territorial area and integrate the diverse policy visions, aimed to foster regional and local cooperation in social economy.

The document is organised as follow:

- **Section 1** mentions the research questions, which have led the inquiry;
- **Section 2** and **Section 3** outline the policy background, referring to the academic literature, which has structured the theoretical framework;
- **Section 4** illustrates the methodological part of the action-research;
- **Section 5** and **Section 6** show the results and information, collected throughout the realisation of questionnaires, interviews and one focus-group;
- **Section 7** and **Section 8** argue the main conclusions and policy priorities on the development of both Social and Solidarity Economy in CE countries and their regional ecosystems.

The main output, reached by this collaborative and joint effort, consists of the definition of a common glossary on which to ground the definition of the International Strategy (O1.1). Specifically, the glossary defines: the scope of the SSE, the main actors and what territorial cooperation or clusters are, according to the valorised experience of the project partnership.



## 1. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The Deliverable 1.1 aims to illustrate the results deriving from the core phase of the action-research, carried-out within the Activity 1.1. The first phase of 3P4SSE project was structured on two research questions, which have driven the collaborative inquiry:

- i. How do Central European (CE) countries interpret Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and its main concepts?
- ii. What do CE countries prioritise in their policy agenda to foster the governance instruments in SSE?

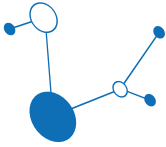
Starting from the definition of the core glossary and then the integration of the country-based perspectives on social economy, the action-research outlines the prioritisation of policies to incentivise regional SSE ecosystems.

## 2. THE POLICY BACKGROUND

According to the Action Plan published by the European Commission in December 2021<sup>1</sup>, the social economy includes those organisations, which pursue and share the principles of the primacy of people over profit, the collective interest and a participatory governance. The EU Action Plan is nested on the EU member states' specific policy pathways on social economy. As mentioned in recent reports, social economy is unevenly developed<sup>2</sup> and its understanding varies significantly across EU Member States, inasmuch as depending on place-based institutional.

With regard to the CE countries, the diverse path-dependent trajectories about social economy have been deeply influenced by the diverse institutional approaches, regarding both welfare systems to which Social and Solidarity Organisations (SSO) are integrated and the social innovation sphere.

In Eastern Market Economies (EMEs) welfare systems were deeply reformed during the post-socialist period, showing a scarce presence of the cooperation sector, often formalised close to the EU enlargements (Tab. 1). Considering Mediterranean Market Economies (MMEs), the decrease of welfare services was only partially filled by no-profit actors' growth. For instance, Northern Italy regions included in CE cooperation area differ a lot on: (i) modes by which third sector contribute to the provision of services of general interest; (ii) subsidiarity approach and territorial governance.



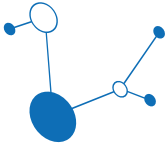
Tab. 1 - CE countries and cooperation

Country	Year of adoption of Cooperation Act		Year EU enlargement
Slovenia	92	19	2004
Italy	91	19	EU core member state
Croatia	14	20	2013
Austria	73	18	1995
Poland	06	20	2004
Hungary	06	20	2004

*Source: LINKS elaboration on OECD 2022*

In EMEs it must be noticed that social innovation is relatively new and emerges a lack of capacity on mobilisation of the third sector, hindering the development of the entire sector. Although other regions perform better on SSE integration in their welfare systems, within MMEs and Coordinated Market Economies (CME) still exist gaps regarding the adoption of clear frameworks on social innovation, aimed to formalise the SSE characterisation. For instance, in Austria and Germany a legal definition of social economy is still absent (Tab. 3).

On the contrary, fiscal policy and taxation contribute to creating country-based legal frameworks, in as much as public authorities were required to manage fiscally the SSOs, considering the diversity of the legal forms present in the social economy. Indeed, within the EU Action Plan, the term social economy is anchored to the main types of entities recognised - at national scale - as providers and producers of social commodities and services, including cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations, and foundations. Moreover, the definition of social enterprise includes as well as more profit-oriented enterprises, which declare to pursue a social or environmental mission<sup>34</sup>. Third sector organisations and Work Integration Social Enterprises<sup>5</sup> (WISEs) are included as well.



### 3. TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING: THE SOCIAL ECONOMY AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

The diverse institutional trajectories in EU countries about welfare systems, social economy and political economies (see Section 2) are addressed by a branch of heterodox economics, the Institutional Economics. One of the most important fundamentals of institutional economics regards the characterisation of the concept of economy. In this context, the economy is considered as a social institution<sup>6</sup> able to ensure the maintenance of society through the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.

Social institutions are the systems within a society that govern human interactions and shape norms, values and behaviours. At the same time, the social economy contributes to societal wealth throughout the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services, having positive impacts (social and/or environmental), and influencing human behaviours and organisations.

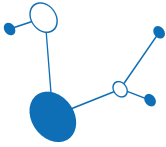
By this perspective, the social economy can be considered as a social institution, composed by:

- **Social commodities:** goods and services produced, distributed and consumed within social economy;
- **Social economy organisations:** organisations which supply and produce social goods, works or services within the context of social market operations and which produce social commodities or services of general interest.
- **Social economy clusters:** forms of collaborations (both formal and informal) among social economy operators, having two specific goals:
  - Improving the economic efficiency;
  - Maximising the social impact.

### 4. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

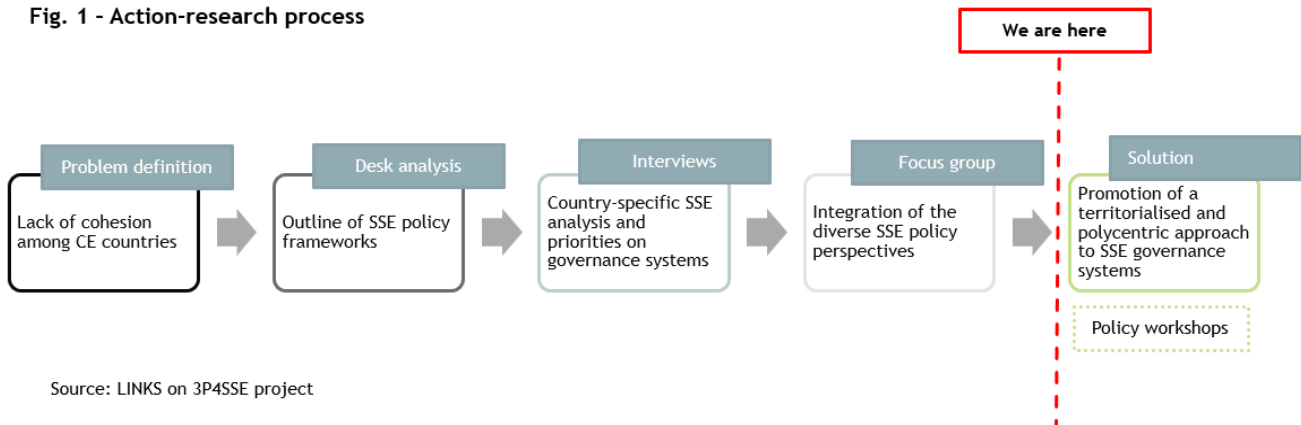
To accomplish the ambitious aim of the first part of the project, an action-research has been developed. The action-research is a collaborative inquiry process, aimed to solve concrete collective problems by investigating at the same time the environmental conditions and barriers. The action-research approach consents to embed the EU added value in the methodological process of the project, valorising the diverse contexts regarding social economy among CE countries and realising community-oriented policy solutions. Partners and stakeholders were integrated in the research process through interviews, questionnaires, one focus group and in reviewing all documents.





The collaborative process identifies several phases, which need to be coupled with the evolution of the research questions. As illustrated in Fig. 1, the action-research has been structured on several steps, from the identification of the problem, namely the widening of gaps among CE regions in terms of GDP and territorial cohesion, to the collaborative design of the policy solution, that is the International

Fig. 1 - Action-research process



Source: LINKS on 3P4SSE project

Strategy on SSE (Output 1.1).

The three main research steps have been developed according to an evolutionary research approach, consistent with the action-research methodology:

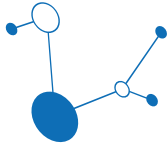
**Desk analysis:** the research question that drove the review was a comparative research question, designed to identify clear differences among CE countries about the presence (or not) of a national legal framework on SSE, pointing out differences on definitions.

**Interviews** (see ANNEXES): this part was led by an exploratory research question, formulated in what are CE country-specific institutional trajectories about social economy and their ecosystems?

**Focus group** (see ANNEXES): this phase was led by an interpretative research question, formulated in how do CE countries handle the transition of social economy and their ecosystems towards a more territorial integrated approach?

#### 4.1 THE PROJECT SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

According to the consortium composition, the project case studies cover a good percentage of EU countries belonging to the CE territorial area (67%), showing a fair balance in countries representation (around 23% Italy, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia) with some asymmetries, especially considering Austria, where it must be noticed the absence of stakeholders' engagement in the process. However, the Austrian country is not engaged in the piloting actions (WP2) (Tab. 2).

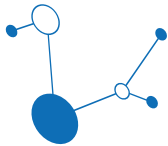


**Tab.2 - The project sample of countries represented by case studies.**

<b>Desk analysis</b>	<b>Coverage</b>	<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Focus group</b>	<b>Coverage</b>
(n° countries)	(n° countries)	(n° countries)	(n° countries)	(% countries)
9	100%	6	6	67%
<b>Stakeholders</b>				
		25	<b>IT</b>	10 29%
<b>Partners</b>				
		9	<b>PL</b>	7 21%
	<b>Total</b>	34	<b>SI</b>	7 21%
			<b>HR</b>	5 15%
			<b>HU</b>	4 12%
			<b>AT</b>	1 3%
			<b>Total</b>	34 100%
<i>Source: Links elaboration on 3P4SSE project (2023)</i>				

In total 34 organisations were included in the action-research, in which stakeholders were invited through the snowball sampling. In particular, partners were required to provide multiple referrals (from mid of June 2023 to the mid of July) according to their capacity. This technique was preferred since researchers have assumed that the capacity of engagement may reflect the SSE density on social economy, which may differ a lot among CE countries, due to the diverse state of maturity of SSE.

Overall, the methodological approach showed several advantages, especially in designing the research process with the required flexibility and adaptability to the needs of the project partners, delivering concrete results. Although the process has some limitations especially due to the limited capacity of generalizability and replication, the convenience sampling technique aims to generate solutions centred on a consortium and stakeholders' needs. This fact is consistent with the aim of the project. Finally, it must be noticed that selection biases may be present due to the pressure felt by participants to participate actively or language barriers.



## 5. RESULTS

According to the comparative institutional approach, legal frameworks, regulatory policies and institutions are crucial to shape the social economy context in the CE countries and are able to highlight both similarities and differences. Although all EU countries recognise actors included in the EU Social Economy Action Plan, country-based specificities are present and legal definitions of social economy differ among countries as well.

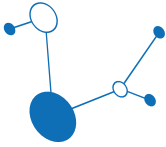
The results deriving from the desk analysis and illustrated in Tab. 3 and Tab. 4 confirm the existence of wide asymmetries among CE countries due to the presence of diverse conceptualisations of social economy and the different degree of formalisation.

Half of the countries (Italy, Poland and Slovenia) included in 3P4SSE sample have a legal definition of social economy (see Tab. 4). All these three countries show a legal formalisation of social economy at national scale: Italy adopted the Third Sector Law, Poland the Social Economy Act, whereas Slovenia the Social Entrepreneurship Act.

Interviews and questionnaires, collected from June 2023 to July 2023, validate this complex state of art, showing that CE countries have a diverse degree of maturity about the institutionalisation of social economy. In fact, there is no formalisation of a definition on social economy in Austria, Croatia, and Hungary.

**Tab. 3 - Legal recognition of core components of social economy among Central European countries represented in 3P4SSE.**

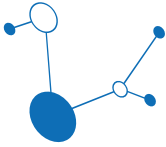
Country	Social economy	Social entrepreneurship or enterprises	Social cluster
Austria	No legal definition	No official definition of SE. There are, however, three distinct accreditation schemes for WISEs in the framework of the labour market policy.	Absence of formal social economy clusters
Croatia	No legal definition	Definition of social entrepreneurship, aligned with the EU operational definition except that it emphasises the balance between social, environmental and economic goals and requires the monitoring and evaluation of their impact and identification of SSOs	Presence of autonomous formal and informal clusters



Hungary	No legal definition	No legal definition, but identification of SSOs and definition of cooperatives aligned with the EU operational definition of social enterprise, but limited the work integration field	Absence of formal social economy clusters
Italy	Legal definition	Legal definition and identification of SSOs. The Third Sector Law explicitly refers to the SE qualification.	Presence of autonomous formal and informal clusters
Poland	Legal definition	Legal definition of social enterprises, and identification of SSOs. The concept was introduced by National Programmes and Acts and the social cooperative definition closely aligned with the EU operational definition of SE with a strong emphasis on general interest services. Social cooperatives work for the social and professional reintegration of their members, and these activities are not undertaken as part of the business activities of this cooperative	Presence of informal and project-related or resources management-oriented clusters
Slovenia	Legal definition	The definition of social entrepreneurship closely matches the EU operational definition and adds compulsory measurement of social impact. Identification of SSOs.	Presence of autonomous formal and informal clusters
<p><i>Source: Links elaboration on 3P4SSE project (2023) and European Commission (2020)</i></p>			

The second phase of the action-research has made apparent that CE countries approach the social economy throughout several conceptualisations. The results deriving from questionnaires and interviews illustrate how profit leverage on social impact seems to play different roles in the countries belonging to the project sample. Although cooperative and mutual aspects of social economy are commonly recognised as values embedded in social economy, they do not always have a specific characterisation. For instance, in the Croatian country and Slovenia there is no distinction between solidarity economy and social economy.

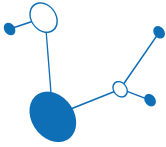
Conversely, all CE countries have a legal recognition of SSOs, especially due to the presence of fiscal measures. In fact, according to the information collected through the questionnaires addressed to partners and stakeholders, most countries show a legal framework or a list of entities working within the social economy. This fact does not automatically mean having a formal definition of social entrepreneurship or social enterprise (e.g. Hungary and Austria). Overall, the concept of social



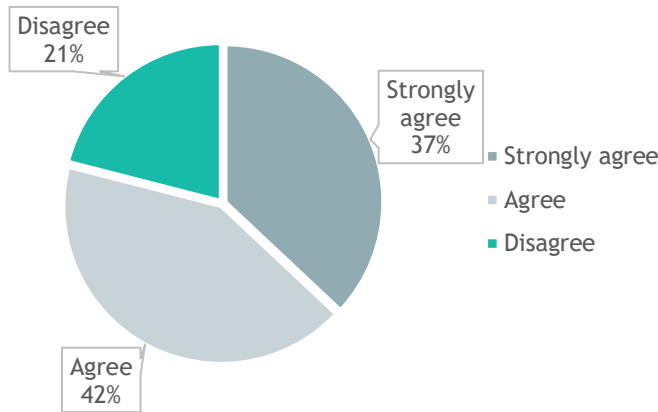
entrepreneurship or social enterprise has been conceived as more focused on the social needs and, consequently, on the impact of organisations' activities. In fact, among the respondents, the work reintegration of people at risk of social exclusion emerges as the first asset. Other social impacts on the environment, climate change and circular economy were highlighted in several surveys. Substantially, in some cases the conceptual boundaries of social entrepreneurship seem to be vague or confusing. This fact may result in the creation of non-supportive policy contexts, which hamper the development of local and regional social economy systems.

Finally, formal clusters and collaborative networks in SE are scarce in most countries. Overall, PPPs are rare and conceived especially in the externalisation of public social services, such as in Austria. In the Hungarian context, PPPs are as well as promoted by public authorities, but are extremely rare and there is no evidence on social economy. Differently, Italy, Slovenia and Croatia show several spontaneous practices, like Social Economy Districts (DES), clusters, and network contracts. According to the questionnaires and interviews addressed to the partners and stakeholders, all three case studies show the presence of formal and informal territorial collaborations, aimed to foster local and supra-local SE ecosystems.

A separate discussion deserves the Polish case study. In Poland, PPPs in the social economy are strictly connected with project-related or resources' management-oriented initiatives. Although the Polish case study does not seem to illustrate examples comparable<sup>7</sup> with those of Italy and Slovenia or Croatia, it must be noticed that the Polish case study is relevant from a methodological point of view, inasmuch as shows how social economy can be integrated in the management of Cohesion Policy and how SSOs may contribute to the social and economic development of remote and rural areas. For instance, the "Partnership for the Barycz Valley" Association describes an interesting use case on how SSOs may be integrated in the community-building process, through validated engaging instruments (Community-Led Local Development methodology). The integration of SSOs in formalisation of LAGs is in line with the policy vision of Italian case studies illustrated in questionnaires and interviews, where SE networks and partnerships are encouraged for the development of mountain areas, making apparent the importance of SE for the development of marginal territories.



**Chart 1 - The solidarity economy incorporates non-profit and solidarity principles in modes of production and provision of social commodities.**



Source: LINKS elaboration on 3P4SSE 2023

The third phase of the research consisted in the realisation of (1) focus group, aimed to favour the convergence of project partners and stakeholders on a common understanding of social economy, the related organisations and territorial cooperation and clusters.

The focus group shows a moderate convergence on the concepts belonging to the proposed definition of Social and Solidarity Economy but illustrates some asymmetrical considerations. All participants have substantially agreed on principles of mutuality and solidarity, as fundamentals of modes of production and

provision of commodities in SSE. However, it must be noticed that coupling the social economy with solidarity economy has been considered as a reductionism, with the risk of narrowing the potential of societal impacts of SSE, inasmuch as excluding profit businesses and public authorities. Moreover, divergences about the proposed statement occurred to differentiate the social impact from the solely integration of vulnerable groups and disabled people.

The second question was proposed as a control-question to validate the results deriving from Q1. The information gathered by Q2 confirms what mentioned before, confirming the common vision on solidarity principles, considered as embedded into the definition of social economy, regardless of the legal form taken by organisations, which belong to. The profit sector and businesses are supposed to have the capacity of contributing to the solidarity economy as well, without hampering the principles. However, most respondents consider the legal form as crucial both to apply for external fundings and implement general interest services and for the benefit of the local community. For example, programmes granting to SSE activities define specific requirements including legal form, which must be met.

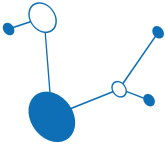
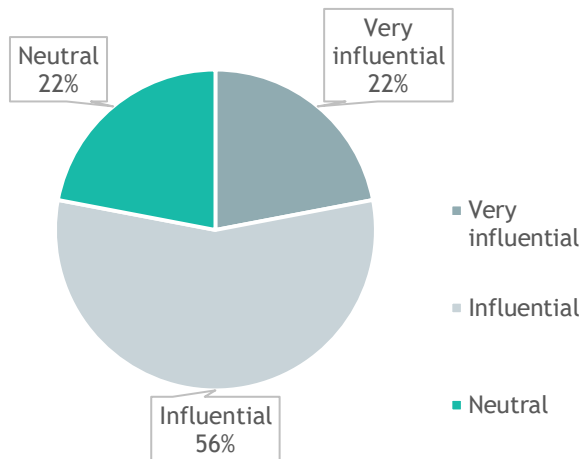


Chart 2 - The important of the legal form



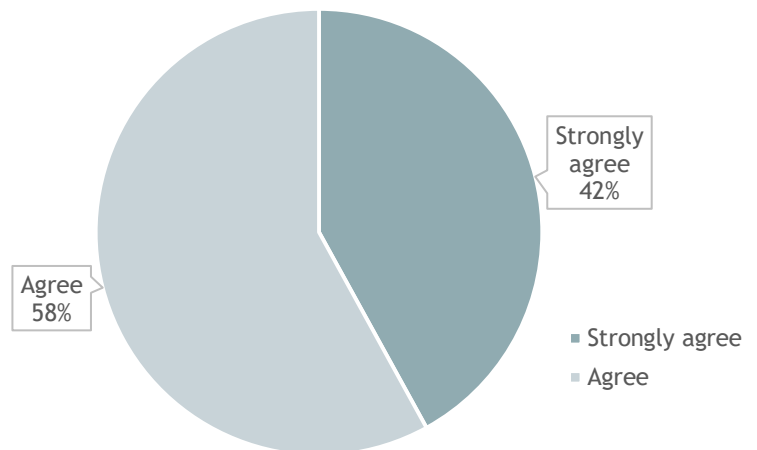
Source: LINKS elaboration on 3P4SSE 2023

The promotion of economic efficiency by costs' reduction or joint purchases follows the main priorities, whereas the last ones are considered to be those referring to advocacy, visibility and risk sharing. Finally, all participants agree on the possible definition around clusters, including both formal and informal forms of cooperation, including all structures and networks both formal - that are recognised under a legal point - and informal - that comes by spontaneous collaboration between social actors.

The third question has allowed us to put in order the different policy priorities, which emerged from the previous research steps, according to the different state of maturity. Overall, from the results coming from the focus-group, among the first three policy priorities to be addressed to encourage SCs, it is possible to observe:

- Joint initiatives: projects, promotion and marketing, investments, greening the social economy;
- Maximising the social impact (e.g. in peripheral territories, provision of social interventions addressed to disadvantaged groups of people);
- Capacity building, knowledge, and resource sharing.

Chart 3 - The definition of social cluster includes both formal and informal networks



Source: LINKS elaboration on 3P4SSE 2023

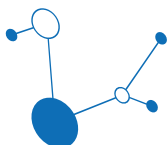
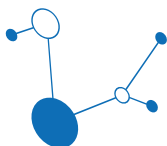


Table 4 - Summary table on social economy definitions and actors in Central Europe Cooperation Area

3P4SSE	PILOT	COUNTRY	TERRITORY	DEFINITION FROM THE NATIONAL POLICY BACKGROUND	Source
(√)	(√)	IT (MME)	Autonomous Province of Trento	<p>YES. Statutory and legal definition.</p> <p>SE entities</p> <p>By Third Sector is meant the group of private entities established for the non-profit pursuit of civic, solidarity and socially useful purposes and which, in implementation of the principle of subsidiarity and in accordance with their respective statutes or deeds of incorporation, promote and carry out activities of general interest through forms of voluntary and gratuitous action or mutuality or the production and exchange of goods and services. The Third Sector includes all organisations, associations and entities that carry out projects and initiatives with the aim of helping those in need; these organisations operate exclusively in pursuit of social solidarity and non-profit purposes and are registered in the single national register of the Third Sector.</p> <p><b>Foundations</b> <b>Social enterprises</b> <b>Voluntary organisations - ODV</b> <b>Associations for social promotion - APS</b> <b>Philanthropic bodies - EF</b> <b>Associative networks</b> <b>Social Cooperatives</b> <b>Mutual Aid Societies - SMS</b></p>	<p><b>Normative framework (more recent doc.)</b></p> <p>Law 106/2016 for the Reform of the ‘Third Sector’, social enterprise and universal civil service Legislative Decree 117/2017, Code of third sector entities</p> <p><b>Literature</b></p> <p>OECD (2022), “Legal frameworks for the social and solidarity economy: OECD Global Action “Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems””, OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Papers, No. 2022/04, OECD Publishing, Paris, <a href="https://doi.org/10.1787/480a47fd-en">https://doi.org/10.1787/480a47fd-en</a>.</p>
(√)	(√)	SI (CME)	Maribor	<p>YES. Legal definition coming from Social Entrepreneurship Act (2018). Strategy for the Development of Social Economy will potentially reform the state of art.</p> <p>Social economy is defined as an economy consisting of social enterprises, cooperatives, companies for people with disabilities, employment centres, non-governmental organisations (associations, institutes, institutions or foundations), which are not established solely for the purpose of making a profit, operate for the benefit of their members, users or wider communities and produce commercial or non-commercial products and services (OECD 2022).</p> <p>The social economy refers to the set of associations, cooperatives, mutual organisations, foundations and, more recently, social enterprises, whose activity is driven by values of solidarity, the primacy of people over capital, and democratic</p>	<p><b>Normative framework (more recent doc.)</b></p> <p>Social Entrepreneurship Act 2011, amended in 2018 Strategy for the Development of Social Economy from 2021-2031<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>Literature</b></p> <p>OECD (2022)a, “Legal frameworks for the social and solidarity economy: OECD Global Action “Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems””, OECD Local Economic and Employment Development</p>

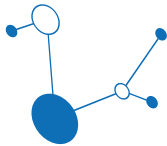
<sup>1</sup> Strategy is under development and will be prepared for the period 2023-2033. "redefinition" of the SE is already agreed in the working group preparing the Strategy and will be potentially accepted by the Slovenian Council for SE by the end of Summer. Then the "definition" & the Strategy will be discussed and hopefully accepted by the SI Government.





				SE entities	<p>and participative governance (OECD, 2018). Social economy organisations organise their activity in an alternative way, building on local roots, using participatory and democratic governance and working in close cooperation with other actors.</p> <p><b>Institutes</b> working on rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities  <b>Cooperatives</b>  <b>Foundations</b>  <b>Liability Companies</b> with status of <b>companies for people with disabilities</b>  <b>Associations</b>  <b>Social Entrepreneurship</b>  <b>Non-Governmental Organisations</b></p>	<p>(LEED) Papers, No. 2022/04, OECD Publishing, Paris, <a href="https://doi.org/10.1787/480a47fd-en">https://doi.org/10.1787/480a47fd-en</a>.          Boecd (2022)b, “Boosting social entrepreneurship and social enterprise development in Slovenia: In-depth policy review”, OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Papers, No. 2022/02, OECD Publishing, Paris, <a href="https://doi.org/10.1787/8ea2b761-en">https://doi.org/10.1787/8ea2b761-en</a></p>
(✓)	(✓)	PL (EME)	Lower Silesia	YES. Statutory and legal definition	<p>According to The Social Economy Act from 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022 is a activity of social economy entities for the benefit of the local community in the field of social and professional reintegration, creating jobs for people at risk of social exclusion and providing social services, carried out in the form of economic activity, public benefit activity and other paid activity.          An important element of the social economy is social entrepreneurship, under which social economy entities conduct business or paid public benefit activities, are tasked with professional and social activation of people at risk of social exclusion or the provision of social services, and they do not privatise profit or balance sheet surplus and are managed in a participatory way. Pursuant to the provisions of the Social Economy Act, social economy entities may obtain the status of a social enterprise. The status provides a number of benefits for the social enterprise that holds it.</p> <p><b>Social enterprises</b>  <b>Social cooperatives</b>  <b>non-governmental organizations</b>  <b>a cooperative of work, including a cooperative for the disabled and a cooperative for the blind, and an agricultural production cooperative</b>  <b>Occupational Therapy Workshops</b> constitute a separate legal and financial entity formed by either a local government or non-government organisation which helps individuals that have difficulty joining the workforce because of a handicap  <b>Vocational Rehabilitation Facility (ZAZ)</b> is a facility which offers employment opportunities for disabled people  <b>Social Integration Centres (CIS)</b> are established by the local self-government units together with an NGO.  <b>Social Integration Clubs (KIS)</b> provide individuals and their families the chance to rebuild and improve their social and vocational skills in order to help them better function as part of society.</p> <p>SE entities</p>	<p><b>Normative framework (more recent doc.)</b></p> <p>The Social Economy Act from 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022<sup>2</sup>          National Program for Social Economy Development until 2030. Economy of Social Solidarity.</p> <p><b>Literature</b></p> <p>Karolina MAJDZINSKA, 2014. “Aid and Support for the Social Economy in Poland - The Case of Social Cooperatives,” CIRIEC Working Papers 1411, CIRIEC - Université de Liège.          Social Economy Satellite Account for Poland 2018. Statistics Poland, Warsaw 2021</p>

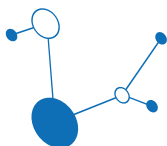
<sup>2</sup> On October 30, 2022, the Act of August 5, 2022 on social economy (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 1812) entered into force. The Act on Social Economy - is the first comprehensive regulation concerning the sphere of social economy in Poland.



**3P4SSE**

**3P4SSE**

	<p>DE (CME)</p>	<p>NO. Substantial definition (principles)</p> <p>No national definition but national framework with identification of entities</p>	<p>Despite the long tradition of social economy entities in Germany (in particular, co-operatives), there is no specific legal framework on social entrepreneurship in Germany. Cooperatives have recently moved into the areas of business administration consulting, IT business, accounting, laboratory business, quality assurance, training and human resource development, as well as activities in the fields of waste disposal, recycling and environmental protection. Their core concepts can be flexibly applied to the most diverse industry structures. Social enterprises active in the field of education, work integration, societal inclusion and social services may take a third sector legal form. Many social enterprises are active in the environmental field (such as sustainable energy or sustainable consumption) and these tend towards a market-based legal form. The social economy also provides volunteer services and agencies; social firms for disadvantaged people; alternative enterprises within the women's movement and the environmental movement; self-help organisations; socio-cultural centres; work integration companies; local exchange and trading systems; neighbourhood and community enterprises. These organisations play an important role in assisting the disadvantaged in society.</p> <p><b>Cooperatives</b> <b>Associations, Foundations</b> <b>Limited Liability Companies</b> <b>Mutual organisations</b>, compulsory insurance schemes <b>Social enterprises</b> (based on previous legal forms)</p>	<p><b>Literature</b></p> <p>European Commission, Social economy and social entrepreneurship, Social Europe guide, Volume 4, 2013.</p>
<p>(✓)</p>	<p>AT (CME)</p>	<p>NO. Substantial definition (principles)</p> <p>No national definition but national framework with identification of entities</p>	<p>Solidarity Economy is not a definitively defined object, but part of a discourse linking different practices of everyday life, work, housing and of how people relate to each other, thereby guiding these practices, interpreting and inspiring them. This report is part of this discourse as well. Above all, it represents views on Solidarity Economy in Austria. Solidarity Economy is a rather broad and vague notion in order to be able to capture the diversity of initiatives, approaches and topics, which were defined in the scope of the two Solidarity Economy conferences, held in Vienna 2009/2013. Ideal or core type on the following three levels: (1) democratic internal organisation of a realm of life or work, (2) a relation between individual Solidarity Economy enterprises, initiatives or living arrangements and the region or the society, which is based on solidarity and institutionalised democratic procedures, (3) located within the frame of democratic macroeconomic planning.</p> <p><b>Cooperatives</b> <b>Public benefit limited companies</b> <b>Associations</b></p>	<p><b>Normative framework (more recent doc.)</b></p> <p>Cooperative Law (1873) Limited Liability Company Act (1906) - Public-benefit limited companies Federal Act on Associations (2002)</p> <p><b>Literature</b></p> <p>Exner, Andreas. (2015). Solidarity Economy in Austria. Views, Experiences and Perspectives - short report. 10.13140/RG.2.1.3883.6243.</p> <p>European Commission, Social economy and social entrepreneurship, Social Europe guide, Volume 4, 2013.</p>



	<b>Social enterprises</b> (based on previous legal forms)
<p style="text-align: right;">SK (EME)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">YES. Legal definition coming from Act on Social Economy and Social Enterprises (2018)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">SE entities</p>	<p>The social economy is the sum of productive, distributional or consumer activities carried out through economic activity or non-economic activity independently of state bodies, whose main goal is to achieve a positive social impact.</p> <p>The subject of the social economy is a civic association, foundation, non-investment fund, public benefit organisations, religious organisations, trade companies, cooperatives or sole proprietors which: (a) are not majority controlled by a state body, the state body does not finance them for the most part, does not appoint or elect a statutory body or more than half of its members and does not appoint or elect more than half of the members of the management body or supervisory body, (b) are engaged in an economic or non-economic activity within the framework of social economy activities, and (c) if they undertake or perform other gainful activity in accordance with special regulations, they do not perform them exclusively for the purpose of making a profit or use the profit from them in the manner provided for in this Act. (2) For the purposes of paragraph 1 letter a) financing is not the provision of support under this Act or special regulations.</p> <p><b>Social Economy and Social Enterprises</b>  <b>Public Association</b>  <b>Small Business</b>  <b>Non-Profit Organisations</b>  <b>Foundations</b></p>
<p>(✓) (✓) HR (EME) Split</p> <p style="text-align: right;">NO. Substantial definition (principles)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Proto-definition. No national definition but national framework with identification of entities</p>	<p>The Anglo-Saxon school of social entrepreneurship was promoted, which can be explained by the donor driven practice of foreign organisations (Vidović, 2012; Vidović and Baturina, 2016). The unfavourable environment for third sector initiatives is characterised by patron attitudes of the state, and due to the lack of modernization capacities in social policy (Bežovan et al., 2016.b) social entrepreneurship entered policy and practical agenda rather late. Social economy was more typically associated with forms of social enterprises, community associations and ‘the third sector’ organisations, but solidarity economy emphasised the importance of alternative to conventional profit maximising firms, production and consumption patterns, market-led strategies and power relations”. Solidarity economy organisations have significant potential in solving numerous social and environmental issues; in “creating synergy between local authorities, private companies, the state, citizens” and the non-governmental sector (Moualart and Ailenei, 2005:2042) and how the scene as a whole has pronounced potentials for coalitions with a wide range of “different” economies (e.g. good economy) and ideologically</p>

**Normative framework (more recent doc.)**

Act on Social Economy and Social Enterprises (2018)

**Literature**

OECD (2022), “Legal frameworks for the social and solidarity economy: OECD Global Action “Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems””, OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Papers, No. 2022/04, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/480a47fd-en>.

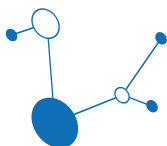
**Normative framework (more recent doc.)**

Strategy for Social Entrepreneurship Development (April 2015)

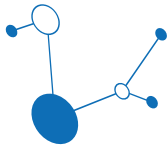
**Literature**

Vidović, D. (2019) Social Cooperatives in Croatia: The Emergence and Development of a New Type of Cooperative. In: Šimleša, D. (ed.) Social Entrepreneurship in South East Europe. Three Countries Analysis. Zagreb, Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar, pp. 45-62. <https://www.bib.irb.hr/1062805>

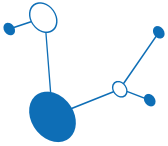
Šimleša, D., Puđak, J., Majetić, F. & Bušljeta Tonković, A. (2015) Solidarity Economy in Croatia - The Case Study of City Split. In: 5<sup>th</sup> EMES International Research Conference on Social Enterprise - Building a scientific field to foster social enterprise ecosystem <https://www.bib.irb.hr/793845>



<p>SE entities</p>	<p>similar social movements, such as environmental or movements for the empowerment of marginalised groups (Kawano, 2013). Actors of the solidarity economy in the city of Split are collectively organised around common social goals, which are given priority over profit maximisation. With their activities and organisational forms, they fit into the third sector, in addition to the private and public sectors, striving in an innovative way to avoid the negative aspects of the first two sectors and to solve existing social problems. Some organisations publicly advocate the improvement of the legal framework related to their users, as the lack of a definition of the solidarity economy in Split reduces the potential for real change in the (economic) system, which is one of the main determinants of the concept.</p> <p><b>Trusts and Foundations</b> <b>Institutions</b> <b>Cooperatives</b> <b>Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of people with disabilities</b> <b>Associations</b> <b>Credit Unions</b></p>	<p>Babić, Z., &amp; Baturina, D. (2020). Current challenges and future potentials of social economy in Croatia. <i>Calitatea Vietii</i>, 31(1), 5-23.</p>
<p>CZ</p> <p>NO. Substantial definition (principles)</p> <p>SE entities</p>	<p>Social Economy as a sum of activities undertaken by social economy entities, the purpose of which is to increase local employment or to fulfil other requirements and objectives of the community in the field of economic, social, cultural and environmental development. Social economy entities as social enterprises plus financial, consulting and training institutions that support social entrepreneurship as well as non-governmental non-profit organisations that carry out economic activities in order to secure work for their clients or gain additional financing for their mission. Social economy entities share common values, which are the fulfilment of a publicly beneficial objective, democratic decision-making, supporting citizens' initiatives, independence from public or private institutions, a different way of using profits, taking into account environmental considerations, and prioritising local needs and local resources. Social entrepreneurship as entrepreneurial activities benefiting society and the environment. Social entrepreneurship plays an important role in local development and often creates jobs for the disabled or the socially or culturally disadvantaged. The majority of profits are used for the further development of the social enterprise. Achieving profit is equally important for social enterprises as increasing public benefit.</p> <p><b>Associations</b> <b>Foundations</b> <b>Religious groups</b></p>	<p><b>Normative framework (more recent doc.)</b></p> <p>Strategy for the Support of Small and Medium Entrepreneurs 2014-2020, which includes social enterprises.</p> <p><b>Literature</b></p> <p>FRAŇKOVÁ, Eva, Petra FRANCOVÁ a Naděžda JOHANISOVÁ. Social enterprises in the Czech Republic: context, practice ad approaches. In Fekete Eva G., Nagy Zoltán, Lipták Katalin, Kiss Julianna. <i>Szociális és szolidáris gazdaság a poszt-szocialista perifériákon</i>. Miskolc: Miskolci Egyetem, Gazdaságtudományi Kar, 2018. S. 369-387. ISBN 978-963-358-161-2.</p> <p>Fraňková, E. (2019). Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe. Country report CZECH REPUBLIC. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.</p>



	<p><b>Public benefit companies (Institutes)</b> <b>Social enterprises</b> <b>Cooperatives</b></p>
<p>(✓)                      (✓)                      HU (EME)</p> <p>NO.                      Substantial definition (principles)</p> <p>Proto-definition. No national definition but national framework with identification of entities</p> <p>SE entities</p>	<p>Social economy [...] highlights features like autonomous management, placing service to members or the community ahead of profit [...] democratic governance [...] principles of the primacy of the individual and the social objective over capital [...] voluntary and open membership [...] the combination of members/users and/or general interest [...] redistribution of profits to pursue the social mission of sustainable development, provision of services to members or of general interest' (Eschweiler and Hulgård,2017). The concept of social economy was developed in the context of the introduction of legal forms of cooperatives (2006) in strict synergy with the accession process to the EU. As a domain of production and distribution, the social economy is embedded into the third sector (some even use the two terms as synonyms), and for the most part, its units work on a non-profit basis. The 2008 crisis gave a new impetus to the social economy now embracing a wide range of production and services that are not performed for profit. The legal situation is more varying, where Hungary stands out as complicated due to the high number of legal forms that organisations working directly for the social economy (social enterprises) can take.</p> <p><b>Cooperatives</b> Social cooperatives and sub-types such as school cooperatives or employment cooperatives <b>Association, Non-profit with economic activities</b> <b>Business Associations</b></p> <p><b>Normative framework</b> Act 141 on Cooperatives (2006) - Social cooperatives and sub-types such as school cooperatives or employment cooperatives Act CLXXV on the Freedom of Association, Non-profit Status and the Operation and Support of Civil Organizations (2011) - NGOs with economic activities Act V of the Civil Code (2013) Business Associations Act (4/2006) (non-profit companies)</p> <p><b>Literature</b> Júlia Szalai, Sara Svensson. 2018. "On Civil Society and the Social Economy in Hungary". Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics 4:107-124.</p>
<p>Source: 3P4SSE project (2023)</p>	

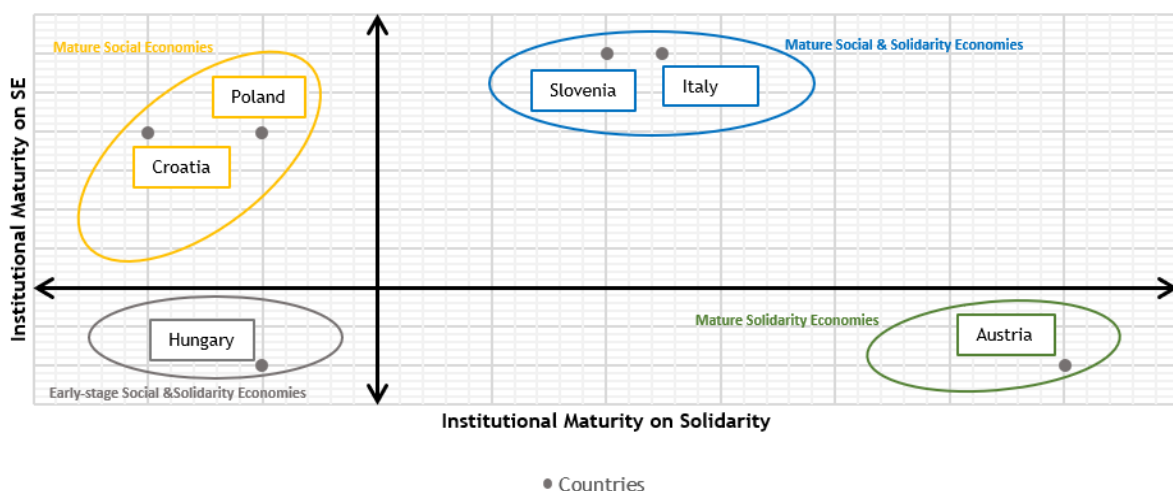


## 6. DEFINING THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY IN 3P4SSE

According to the International Labour Organisation, The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) is a viable solution to re-balance the economic, social and environmental objectives, designating - in particular - the cooperative sector, which has the specific feature of producing goods, services and knowledge, pursuing both economic and social aims and fostering solidarity. In this frame, 3P4SSE envisages SSE as a macro-category, defined simultaneously by the social economy and the solidarity economy. This conceptualisation considers the social economy and the solidarity economy as complementary, as both share common values. The starting point was to define the state of art of SSE within the countries surveyed in 3P4SSE, considering the two dimensions.

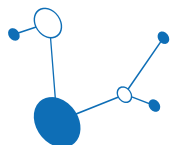
In Figure 2, Y axis represents the state of Institutional Maturity of Social Economy, whereas the X axis represents Institutional Maturity of Solidarity Economy. The two dimensions were operationalised according to the “intensity” of institutionalisation. Objective data such as the existence of formal and legal frameworks were considered, with the aim to define the state of maturity/readiness on social economy and solidarity economy. Although this approach shows some limitations, not considering the cultural milieu and specific tradition/history on SSE, differently the presence of an institutional act may be considered as a proxy of a societal and political process towards policy objectives. In order to add depth to Figure 2, countries’ profiles have been added and integrated by project partners.

Fig. 2 - The state of art of SSE



Source: LINKS elaborations on 3P4SSE project (2023)

The Institutional Maturity on Social Economy is represented by the Y axis, which measures the formalisation throughout Acts of social economy elements (composed in social economy, social entities, social clusters). The Institutional Maturity on Solidarity Economy is represented by the X axis, which considers the Year when social cooperation has been formally recognised at national level (Tab. 1, Tab. 3). Although the solidarity economy encompasses all three “economic systems” (public, private and third sector), including the informal ones, traditionally the third sector (or social economy) plays a



crucial role. According to the academic literature, the “labour” may be considered as the pragmatic connection between solidarity economy and social economy, where cooperativism is considered the main means to express the solidarity economy, able to generate several remunerative factors to be reinvested for the achievement of social purposes. In other words, it is not important here the generation of profit, but how it is shared within the society. For this reason, the institutionalisation of cooperativism consolidates the role of cooperatives as those actors able to transform the informal social economy, into a recognised form of economy, pursuing solidarity and mutual purposes. From this perspective, the consolidation of cooperativism was considered as a proxy of institutionalisation of the solidarity economy<sup>8</sup>. Although this operationalisation describes a simplified conceptualisation of the solidarity economy (as it includes all three economic systems), it consents to give a (rough) representation of solidarity economy status among CE countries.

According to Fig. 2, CE countries can be distinguished in four main categories depending on the state of maturity related to both social economy and solidarity economy. In other words, the state of art on SSE shows countries with different institutional trajectories: in some cases, the evolution of legal definition on the social economy is coupled with that of the solidarity economy, but in most cases the co-development was asymmetric.

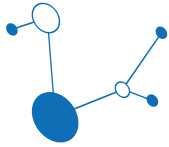
Specifically, from the figure it is possible to identify:

**Mature Social and Solidarity Economies (MSSEs):** MSSEs are represented in 3P4SSE project by the Slovenian and Italian case studies, where the social economy is legally framed and defined at national and/or sub-national scales, including social entrepreneurship as well. Moreover, both case studies illustrate the presence of formalised and informal territorial cooperation able to foster local social economy ecosystems. Both countries show a long tradition of cooperativism.

**Mature Social Economies (MSEs):** MSE are represented in the 3P4SSE project by the Croatian and Polish case studies. The first one promotes social economy including liberal aspects, for instance the recognition about the role of profit enterprises in making social impact. Both in Poland and Croatia, local social economy ecosystems are encouraged by public policies. Conversely, the adoption of the Cooperation Act seems to be strictly connected with the gradual implementation of EU enlargement policy (Tab. 1).

**Mature Solidarity Economies (MSoEs):** MSoEs are represented in the project by Austria. On the one hand, the country illustrates a strong tradition with regards to the existence of cooperative social fabric. On the contrary, the country does not show a specific attention about the formal adoption of social economy acts and a clear national social economy framework seems to be still largely missing.

**Early-stage Social and Solidarity Economies (ESSEs):** in the scope of the project ESSEs are represented by Hungary. Compared to the other country, Hungary shows a social economy legal framework less mature than the others, as the legal definition of social economy is still missing and presence of PPPs and territorial cooperation in the social economy is rare. Moreover, like in Poland and Croatia, the



formal Cooperation Act is quite new and was adopted in conjunction with the formal integration in the EU.

## 6.1 THE 3P4SSE CASE STUDIES

This section illustrates a brief description of the six case studies in order to complement the analysis, showing the specific institutional trajectories about the evolution of the diverse SSEs.

### 6.1.1. THE AUSTRIAN CASE STUDY

The social and solidarity economy in Austria has its roots in a rich sociological and historical context that has shaped the emergence of the country-specific cooperation law. This law was introduced to promote the social and economic development of the country and reflects the heritage of the social and solidarity economy at national and regional level.

Sociological background lies in a long tradition of solidarity and sense of community going back to ideas of social capitalism. Citizens engage in social organisations to achieve common goals. Austria has also a strong civil society with trade unions and welfare organizations, significantly contributing to promoting social justice and solidarity.

Looking at the historical background roots can be seen in the cooperative movement going back to the 19th century which were platforms for joint activities to improve the living conditions of the population. After the Second World War the social and solidarity economy played an important role in reconstructing the country. In this period in Austria also the Social Partnership (Sozialpartnerschaft) developed, which involves close cooperation and collaboration between the government, employers' associations, and trade unions. Social partnership has played a crucial role in shaping the country's economic and social policies.

Austria has a strong welfare state and social safety net covering the needs of the population to a large extent which is also contributing to a sense of solidarity and cohesion among the citizens.

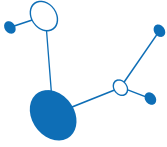
The Austrian government actively promotes cooperation between different actors in the social and solidarity economy in order to further strengthen social inclusion and economic solidarity. At regional level there are differences in the design of the social and solidarity economy that take into account the specific needs and circumstances of individual regions. In summary, it can be said that the social and solidarity economy in Austria is based on a deeply rooted sociological and historical heritage. It contains principles of participation, sustainability and local development.

### 6.1.2 THE CROATIAN CASE STUDY

In Croatia, the sociological and historical context of the social and solidarity economy (SSE) has played a pivotal role in shaping the landscape, even in the absence of a legal framework. The legacy of SSE is deeply rooted in historical cooperatives and civil society initiatives.

Historically, cooperatives in Croatia have served as vital economic communities, connecting individuals with shared interests and promoting business activities through a cooperative structure. These





cooperatives played a crucial role in preserving local values and natural resources while fostering socio-economic development. They contributed to employment, poverty reduction, rural development, fair distribution, and the embodiment of social entrepreneurship values.

Despite the absence of dedicated legislation, Croatia's SSE landscape has been shaped by historical cooperatives and the proactive role of civil society organizations. The need for a legal framework, like the Cooperation Act, becomes evident to further support and regulate this sector, fostering cooperation and innovation on both national and regional scales. Such legal measures can provide the necessary structure and recognition to facilitate the growth and impact of SSE in Croatia.

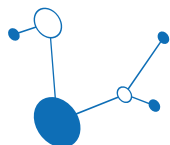
In 2013, the Croatian Ministry of Labor and Pension System, in collaboration with other stakeholders including Government Bodies, local and regional authorities, the National Foundation for Civil Society Development as well as civil society organizations, began developing the Strategy for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship in Croatia, which was adopted in 2015. The goal of the Strategy is to provide a stable institutional framework for the development of social enterprises.

### 6.1.3 THE HUNGARIAN CASE STUDY

In Hungary, the instruments and possibilities of supporting the social and solidarity-based economy are regulated by law, as is the case internationally. The social and solidarity-based economy in Hungary has the potential to play a much greater role in the development of peripheral areas than is currently the case, and the ways in which this can be achieved are outlined in international examples and analyses. The state socialist legacy has played a significant role in the development of the SSG sector in post-socialist countries, including Hungary, especially in its rural peripheries. The SSG sector is still underdeveloped. The social benefits of social enterprises, which are the pillars of the social and solidarity economy sector, can be measured beyond financial performance and the role of social innovation.

In the years after the 1989 regime change, a new legal framework was created to regulate the different legal forms. The legal form of foundations was restored by Decree-Law No 11 of 1987 before the change of regime, and associations were regulated by Act II of 1989 on the right of association. In 1993, three new non-profit legal forms - public benefit companies, public corporations and public foundations - appeared, which were mainly state-founded and therefore had little autonomy.

Formal organisations of the social and solidarity economy have been encouraged by the Hungarian state, the EU and international development organisations to reform the current economic system. International (and domestic) development organisations are trying to strengthen the market sustainability of social and solidarity economy initiatives, but they mostly do little to reflect the specificities of the Hungarian context. Programmes typically funded by the European Union's social (ESF) and cohesion (ERDF) funds and public employment funded by the central budget are also available to a certain range of social and solidarity economy organisations.



In the state's funding strategy, a specific group of social and solidarity economy organisations are supported by social cooperatives with municipal or other institutional membership, which are also involved in public employment, thus excluding from funding grassroots initiatives that offer greater opportunities for participatory democracy. And the problem with the EU funding strategy is that funding ceases at the end of the project period, leaving socially and territorially marginalised groups to tackle structural inequalities. The knowledge production linked to the social and solidarity economy has a key role to play in research in line with their own definition of social enterprise. In addition to development agencies, increasing resources, there is a growing interest in social entrepreneurship.

#### 6.1.4. THE ITALIAN CASE STUDY

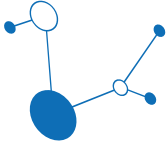
The Italian national regulatory framework is aligned with the OECD definition and has a comprehensive and articulated legislation both of the social economy and of its components (i.e. entities, purposes, social and economic role, functioning, governance). Italy has a long tradition of measures targeted at the social economy, also at Constitutional level, and social economy's entities are regulated by the following legislation: Law on Social Cooperatives (381/1991), Legislative Decree on Social Enterprise (155/2006), Reform of the Third Sector and SE (106/2006) and the Third Sector code (D.Lgs. 117/2017). The Trentino Provincial Law 13/2010 is the first regional law in Italy on the Promotion and Development of Solidarity Economy and Corporate Social Responsibility.

The solidarity economy is conceived as an alternative economic development model, which have their roots in the 19th century. The organisations included in the solidarity economy base their collective actions on the principles of mutual aid and participation., pursuing economic and cultural activity that enables the achievement of objectives of collective interest; this modality is based on the valorisation of relations between subjects, on a fair distribution of resources, on respect for and protection of the environment, and on the pursuit of social objectives. The conceptual framework of the solidarity economy is complementary to that of the social economy, since it considers associations and cooperatives not only as organizations, but as institutions of civil society, which are also distinguished by their own economic and political dimensions.

The Trentino-South Tyrol region passed Regional Law No. 24 of October 22, 1988, on social cooperation, introducing the first piece of legislation recognising and regulating the activities of cooperatives operating in the social sector. Three years later, the state enacted in the same matter the national law (Law No. 381 of November 8, 1991) following which, it was regional No. 15 of November 1, 1993. The great importance and particularity assumed by these cooperatives has meant that specific regulations have been adopted for these cooperatives aimed to put in practice the solidarity economy.

#### 6.1.5 THE POLISH CASE STUDY

The traditions and values, to which social economy refers, were formed in Poland even before independence (i.e. before 1918.) Particularly noteworthy here is the cooperative movement, which was often the only alternative to meet at least the basic needs of entire social groups economically excluded. The cooperative movement also highlighted the value of individual labour and the subjective



treatment of cooperators - regardless of the financial resources at their disposal. The dynamic socio-economic changes of recent decades, as well as the consequent recognition of social economy as an increasingly important element of active social policy, led to the formation of the Polish model of social economy and the creation of the Social Economy Act.

The Act of 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022 on social economy regulates for the first time, so far unregulated in Polish legislation, the area of social economy. The foundation of social economy is sensitivity to the needs of individuals and families in difficult life situations. The social economy, thanks to its grassroots character, fits well with these assumptions, and its impact is particularly visible where other instruments may have proved insufficient.

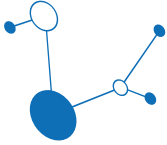
A comprehensive document defining the directions of state policy in this regard is the National Program for the Development of the Social Economy until 2030. Economy of Social Solidarity (in force since 2014). It presents all the plans and actions implemented by the government administration at the national level, as well as the comprehensive structure of the social economy support system at the regional level, as well as local government units and the social economy sector.

The potential of the social economy derives from its strong roots in the local community, and from the initiative and creativity of those active in this field. Thanks to the instruments provided for in the Act on Social Economy, this potential can be effectively developed and used to permanently improve the situation of people so far outside the mainstream of professional and social life.

#### 6.1.6 THE SLOVENIAN CASE STUDY

The term 'solidarity economy' is not explicitly used in the definition in Slovenia, the concept of 'solidarity' is inherently incorporated into the operational principles of social economy organisations. In case of Slovenia, solidarity economy mostly refers to the work integration of social service. At national scale, on that there is a different legislation regarding this specific scope, and organisations are called as Work Integration Enterprises, referring to a particular organisation of social enterprises.

These are important vehicles for work integration as well as for rural and regional development, that have gained increasing and active support from policymakers. Following the 2008 crisis and the promotion of social enterprises by the EU, they gained political support in the country, which already had a longstanding tradition of civic engagement. Momentum around social enterprises culminated with the adoption of the 2011 Social Entrepreneurship Act, which was then amended in 2018 to bring diverse legal entities under the social economy umbrella term. Slovenia has a longstanding and rich tradition of a plurality of entities operating as social enterprises, but confusion and limited awareness remain around the concepts of social enterprise and the social economy. Such misunderstandings contribute to fragmentation among different types of social enterprises, notably between companies for persons with disabilities, which focus on work integration, and other types of social enterprises.



The 2018 revised Social Entrepreneurship Act (OJ of the Republic Slovenia no. 20/11, 90/14 - ZDU-1I and 13/18) defines the social economy as an economy consisting of social enterprises, cooperatives, companies for persons with disabilities, employment centres, non-governmental organisations (associations, institutes, foundations), which are not established solely for the purpose of gaining profit, operate for the benefit of their members, users or broader society and produce commercial or non-commercial products and services (article 2). In addition, the social enterprise is defined in the same legal text as a 'non-profit legal entity, which acquires the status of social enterprise and can be an association, institute, foundation, company, cooperative, European cooperative or other legal entity governed by private law. Such entities are not established solely for the purpose of generating a profit and are prohibited from distributing assets, profits, or surplus revenue over expenses.

It is worth mentioning that vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities in Slovenia are regulated by the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Act (OJ RS, no. 16/07, 87/11, 96/12 - ZPIZ-2, 98/14, and 18/21). This special act provides the legal framework for employment centres specifically focused on the employment of individuals with disabilities. Legal aspects between WISEs and other social enterprises in Slovenia are different. The legal statuses of employment centres and companies for persons with disabilities are specifically designed for work integration social enterprises, while other legal forms and statuses available for social enterprises are not specifically designed for this purpose.

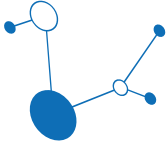
Moreover, the pre-existing support system for WISEs integrating persons with disabilities (in the form of companies for persons with disabilities and employment centres) has continued to be more favourable than the one for social enterprises integrating other types of disadvantaged workers. Companies for persons with disabilities and employment centres benefit from advantageous fiscal breaks and wage subsidies for the persons with disability they employ. When the Social Entrepreneurship Act was adopted in 2011, these two types of WISEs were not considered as social enterprises, which could explain the co-existence of two parallel support systems. Therefore, while WISEs are a type of social enterprise, they have specific legal forms and statuses that distinguish them from other social enterprises in Slovenia. The act falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour.

## 6.2 THE MAIN BARRIERS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEMS

According to both the institutional/policy contexts and the state of maturity in SSE, different barriers emerge with respect to the development of regional social economy ecosystems, jeopardising the setting of local/regional partnerships and territorial collaborations.

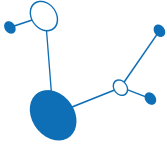
In the scope of the action-research, barriers can be classified in cultural, institutional, financial and policy ones.

- **Cultural barriers.** Cultural barriers persist in all categories of case studies (ESSEs, MSoEs, MSEs and MSSEs), where SSOs, above all social cooperatives, are not considered as complementary in reaching economic goals, inasmuch as they internalise especially social and environmental costs.



This situation entails a lack of trust by investors, as the social economy is considered a public resources-dependent sector.

- **Financial barriers.** Within more mature social economies such as in MSEs and MSSEs financial sustainability connected with the economic maintenance of a SSOs partnership may determine a renounce by stakeholders to set a territorial collaboration. Although these case studies show mature and consolidated SSOs, the internalisation of further costs due to the formalisation of a territorial collaboration must be justified properly, considering that SSOs already internalise social and environmental costs.
- **Institutional barriers.** In ESSEs, the absence of a formalisation of SSE may hamper the creation of supporting infrastructures, able to trigger innovation processes among SSOs, like Innovation Hubs and collaborative platforms. In this context, higher economic risks due to the lack of proper background infrastructures may induce SSOs to maintain an atomised state.
- **Policy barriers.** In ESSEs, the lack of a coherent policy framework on SSE hampers the opportunity to increase grant programmes to support SSOs. However, in all case studies the long-term vision and programming is deeply affected by the willingness, stability and long-term vision of public authorities in designing the supportive policy environment.



## 7. THE 3P4SSE GLOSSARY

This section illustrates the glossary proposed in the scope of 3P4SSE project, with the aim to agree on the main concepts that drive the territorialisation of PPPs in social economy. These concepts have to be conceived as cultural categories, ancillary to the diverse normative definitions existing at national and regional level.

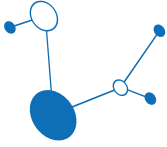
The 3P4SSE project intends to encourage the interregional convergence on the common definitions, throughout the action-research activities, and dealing with different degrees of maturity among sample countries and regions. According to Fig. 2 the state of art of SSEs in the CE territorial cooperation area shows deep asymmetries.

The MSSEs show to be endowed with a well-structured normative framework on SSE, able to activate territories by implementing governance policies on social economy. Specifically, MSSEs (Italy, Slovenia) illustrate a strong and intrinsic heritage on cooperation and solidarity culture, which relates to the main aspects of social economy.

With reference to the double dimension of SSE, two further groups of case studies show an asymmetric state of SSE, displaying different degrees of maturity related to the two components of SSE. MSEs (Croatia, Poland) seem to have a consolidated normative framework on social economy but solidarity and cooperative economy have been recently adopted. In both case studies, the progressive development of consolidation of cooperativism in the normative framework seems to be partially other-directed or influenced by the process of accession among EU member states. The Croatian case study introduces profit-oriented organisations among SSOs recognised at national level differently that of MSSEs. Both countries prove to be experienced in favouring forms of collaboration among SSOs, by promoting formal partnerships and clusters. Conversely, although MSoEs (represented by Austria) show a strong heritage on solidarity economy, miss of a defined normative framework on social economy. Social economy is only identified in substantial form at academic level, and it is present in policy agenda. As a consequence, their maturity in creating territorial governance models in social economy seems to be a potential still to be disclosed. Last, ESSEs (Hungary) seem to have several developing areas on both dimensions, notwithstanding showing a substantial organisation of social economy concepts. For instance, Hungary displays a state of art of social economy conceptualisation closer to the Croatian one, with profit-oriented components, but does not prove any examples of SCs.

### 7.1 DEFINITION 1 - Social and Solidarity Economy: defining the scope of SSE

The project definition of Social and Solidarity Economy considers the Solidarity Economy as a complementary concept to the Social Economy. The SSE aims to maximise the public value, intended as collective and general interest. This aim results in the achievement of positive social and/or environmental externalities, throughout the production, distribution and consumption of commodities, whose value chains are driven by the principles of mutuality, solidarity and participation.



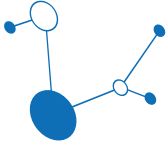
SSE focuses on several impact areas, such as:

- **Employment and inclusion**: creation of employment opportunities, particularly for marginalised and vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, the long-term unemployed, and individuals facing social exclusion;
  - **Welfare and social inclusion**: promotion of social integration of individuals at-risk of social exclusion, by participating to the provision of general interest services (e.g. social housing) and implementation of informal initiatives of social inclusion, like within in culture and creative sector, practice of voluntary work and sports activities, etc.;
  - **Environmental sustainability**: promotion of environmental sustainability and eco-friendly practices, contributing to the preservation of natural resources, the protection of the environment, and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles;
- 
- **Local development**: attention to the development of peripheral and marginalised territories, with the empowerment of communities living in.

## 7.2 DEFINITION 2 - Social and Solidarity Organisations: defining the actors of SSE

Social and Solidarity Organisations may be defined as all those organisations legally recognised at national or subnational scale (e.g. Foundations, Cooperatives, Associations, Charities etc.), which are considered as producers or suppliers in SSE of social commodities. Notably, the set of SSOs includes both profit entities and non-profit organisations, operating according to the principles of SSE. In addition to the services of general interest, SSOs contribute to the production, distribution and consumption of commodities in diverse SSE-related supply chains:

- **Inclusive business models**: social integration of disadvantaged groups of people, labour reintegration and vocational training;
- **Fair trade**: promotion of commercial relations aimed to foster local economies in developing countries, in order to achieve equitable and sustainable trade relationship, respecting environmental and social standards;
- **Circular economy and environmental services**: promotion of positive impact on environment, relating to the reuse, reprocess and the promotion of resources efficiency, including greening measures and eco-friendly initiatives;
- **Social business services**: delivery of services addressed to third sector organisations, with the aim to improve their capacity or assets, including digital services;
- **Social agriculture**: promotion of inclusive, participatory and generative model of agricultural practices that deliver recreational, educational and assistance services.

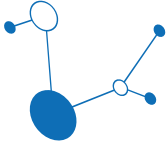


### 7.3 DEFINITION 3 - Social and Solidarity Economy Clusters: defining the territorial cooperation

Social and Solidarity Economy Clusters are intended both as formalised and non-formalised forms of territorial cooperation, set-up by SSOs and public authorities, aimed to maximise the social impact and minimise the costs due to the production, distribution and consumption of commodities.

SCs may be constituted formally by more than two organisations throughout network contracts, PPP agreements, or other forms of contractualization referring - for example - to the management of specific economic resources. At the same time, territorial collaborations may also arise spontaneously without a specific formalisation process, depending on business opportunities or to achieve specific social goals.





## 8. ADDRESSING POLICY PRIORITIES IN PROMOTING SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY CLUSTERS

This section illustrates how territories prioritise policy goals according to their baseline on social economy and institutional pathway. As mentioned in Tab. 4, the project proposes five pilots, including five case studies, addressing the lack of territorial collaboration in the scope of SSE, and then fostering PPPs and networking:

- ESSE: Hungary
- MSE: Croatia and Poland
- MSSE: Italy and Slovenia.

In addition, in the scope of the focus group a further case study has been addressed, although will not be piloted in the WP2:

- MSoE: Austria

Although the place-based approach considers specific needs expressed by partners and stakeholders, it consents to characterise the common theoretical background, resulting from the action-research approach (Fig.3).

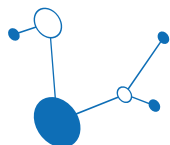
**Figure 3 - Convergence and integration of SSE**



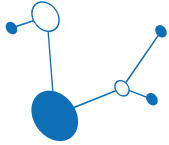
Source: LINKS on 3P4SSE project (2023)

As shown in the focus-group, respondents have pointed out different rankings of policy priorities to encourage SSE ecosystems, according to their background. As shown in Tab. 5, Austria promotes economic efficiency rather than capacity building. Hungary focuses on the strengthening of the communication and visibility of SSE. Poland puts first among its priorities the reinforcement of advocacy influence. Italy, Slovenia and Croatia indicate the same first three policy priorities, but with a different ranking. Finally, considering the Croatian case, the capacity building prevails over the other ones.

Substantially, it must be noticed the presence of two main policy paradigms: the implementation and the consolidation paradigms. MSSEs and MSoE illustrate an implementation-oriented paradigm, aimed to

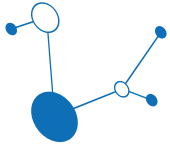


carry out joint investments and initiatives to increase the social impact, generated by regional and local SCs. MSEs and ESSEs show a consolidation-oriented paradigm, intended to empower SCs, considering their capacity, visibility and advocacy to influence policy decisions. In these cases, joint initiatives aim to crystallise regional and territorial social economies' progressions.



**Tab. 5 - Policy priorities by country**

ITALIA	POLAND	CROATIA	SLOVENIA	AUSTRIA	HUNGARY
Joint initiatives: projects, promotion and marketing, investments, greening the social economy	Increasing bargaining power and advocacy influence	Capacity building, knowledge, and resource sharing	Joint initiatives: projects, promotion and marketing, investments, greening the social economy	Maximising the social impact	Joint initiatives: projects, promotion and marketing, investments, greening the social economy
Capacity building, knowledge, and resource sharing	Joint initiatives: projects, promotion and marketing, investments, greening the social economy	Maximising the social impact	Maximising the social impact	Joint initiatives: projects, promotion and marketing, investments, greening the social economy	Increasing visibility and impact
Maximising the social impact	Promoting economic efficiency	Joint initiatives: projects, promotion and marketing, investments, greening the social economy	Capacity building, knowledge, and resource sharing	Promoting economic efficiency	Maximising the social impact
Increasing bargaining power and advocacy influence	Increasing visibility and impact	Increasing bargaining power and advocacy influence	Promoting economic efficiency by costs' reduction or joint purchases	Capacity building, knowledge, and resource sharing	Capacity building, knowledge, and resource sharing
Increasing visibility and impact	Capacity building, knowledge, and resource sharing	Promoting economic efficiency	Increasing bargaining power and advocacy influence	Increasing bargaining power and advocacy influence	Diversification and risk-sharing
Promoting economic efficiency	Maximising the social impact	Increasing visibility and impact	Increasing visibility and impact	Increasing visibility and impact	Promoting economic efficiency
Diversification and risk-sharing	Diversification and risk-sharing	Diversification and risk-sharing	Diversification and risk-sharing	Diversification and risk-sharing	Increasing bargaining power and advocacy influence
<i>Source: 3P4SSE (2023)</i>					



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> European Commission. 2021. Building an economy that works for people: an action plan for the social economy. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission - Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe - Comparative synthesis report, Comparative synthesis report, 2020: Publications catalogue - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission (europa.eu).

<sup>3</sup> SWD(2021) 982 final.

<sup>4</sup> REGULATION (EU) No 1296/2013, REGULATION (EU) 2021/1057. Social enterprise means an undertaking, regardless of its legal form, which:

(a) in accordance with its Articles of Association, Statutes or with any other legal document by which it is established, has as its primary objective the achievement of measurable, positive social impacts rather than generating profit for its owners, members and shareholders, and which:

(i) provides services or goods which generate a social return and/or

(ii) employs a method of production of goods or services that embodies its social objective;

(b) uses its profits first and foremost to achieve its primary objective and has predefined procedures and rules covering any distribution of profits to shareholders and owners that ensure that such distribution does not undermine the primary objective;

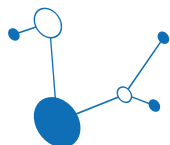
(c) is managed in an entrepreneurial, accountable and transparent way, in particular by involving workers, customers and stakeholders affected by its business activities.

<sup>5</sup> WISE is a type of social enterprise whose core mission is the integration through work of disadvantaged people.

<sup>6</sup> Typically, social institutions encompass family, school, economy, religion, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Local Action Groups (LAG) are present in all EU countries and constituted by PPPs to manage Cohesion Funds, namely European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund. LAGs are not traditionally managed under the policy scope of social economy and are strictly connected with rural and local development policy. Similar examples are present in Italy as well, where LAGs often include private actors, such as cooperatives, federation of cooperatives and foundations. The case study will be valorised in the scope of the A1.2 of the project on best practices.

<sup>8</sup>In fact, in most cases, countries do not make any differences among the two concepts (this situation assumes the absence of legal definitions), whereas Cooperation Acts provides information about the recognition of cooperativism as a proxy concept of solidarity economy and part of its contextualisation.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Asenova, D., Damianova, Z., (2018). Social Innovation - An emerging concept in Eastern Europe. In Atlas of Social Innovation: New Practices for a Better Future (pp. 116-119).

Babić, Z., & Baturina, D. (2020). Current challenges and future potentials of social economy in Croatia. *Calitatea Vieții*, 31(1), 5-23.

Bambra, C. (2007). Going beyond The three worlds of welfare capitalism: regime theory and public health research. *J Epidemiology Community Health* 2007;61:1098-1102. doi: 10.1136/jech.2007.064295.

Bell Angus, Barbara (2003) "Discovering Action Research: the Evolution of My Research Question," *Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research*: Vol. 6: Iss. 1. <https://doi.org/10.4148/2470-6353.1173>

Borzaga, C., Galera, G., Franchini, B., Chiomento, S., Nogales, R., & Carini, C. (2020). Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe. Comparative synthesis report.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. ISBN 9780069028573.

European Commission, Social economy and social entrepreneurship, Social Europe guide, Volume 4, 2013.

Exner, Andreas. (2015). *Solidarity Economy in Austria. Views, Experiences and Perspectives - short report..* 10.13140/RG.2.1.3883.6243.

Fraňková, E. (2019). *Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe. Country report CZECH REPUBLIC.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Júlia Szalai, Sara Svensson. 2018. "On Civil Society and the Social Economy in Hungary". *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics* 4:107-124.

Karolina MAJDZINSKA, 2014. "Aid and Support for the Social Economy in Poland - The Case of Social Cooperatives," *CIRIEC Working Papers* 1411, CIRIEC - Université de Liège.

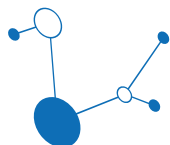
Kiss, J., & Mihály, M. (2020). A szociális és szolidáris gazdaság intézményi fejlődése és jelenlegi helyzete Magyarországon. *FORDULAT: TÁRSADALOMELMÉLETI FOLYÓIRAT*, (27), 299-324.

Lewis, M., & Swinney, D. (2007). *Social economy? Solidarity economy?: Exploring the implications of conceptual nuance for acting in a volatile world* (p. 13). Canadian Centre for Community Renewal (CCCR).

Manow, P. (2021), Béland, D.; Leibfried, S.; Morgan, K. J.; Obinger, H. (eds.), "Models of the Welfare State", *The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State*, Oxford University Press, pp. 786-802, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198828389.013.45, ISBN 978-0-19-882838-9.

OECD (2022), "Boosting social entrepreneurship and social enterprise development in Slovenia: In-depth policy review", *OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Papers*, No. 2022/02, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/8ea2b761-en>.

OECD (2022), "Legal frameworks for the social and solidarity economy: OECD Global Action "Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems"", *OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Papers*, No. 2022/04, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/480a47fd-en>.



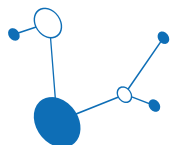
Polidori, S., & Lori, M. (2023). Le imprese sociali: organizzazioni dell'economia sociale nello sviluppo dei territori e delle comunità.

Rakopoulos, T. (2014). The crisis seen from below, within, and against: from solidarity economy to food distribution cooperatives in Greece. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 38, 189-207.

Schartinger, D., Wepner, B., Andersson, T., Abbas, Q., Asenova, D., Damianova, Z., ... & Zirngiebl, M. (2017). Social innovation in environment and climate change: Summary report. SI-Driver EU Project Deliverable, Technische Universität Dortmund: Germany.

Šimleša, D., Puđak, J., Majetić, F. & Bušljeta Tonković, A. (2015) Solidarity Economy in Croatia - The Case Study of City Split. In: 5th EMES International Research Conference on Social Enterprise - Building a scientific field to foster social enterprise eco-system. <https://www.bib.irb.hr/793845>

Vidović, D. (2019) Social Cooperatives in Croatia: The Emergence and Development of a New Type of Cooperative. In: Šimleša, D. (ed.) Social Entrepreneurship in Southeast Europe. Three Countries Analyses. Zagreb, Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar, pp. 45-62. <https://www.bib.irb.hr/1062805>



## ANNEXES

### TRACK OF THE SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured surveys are estimated to last around from 1:00. The track is composed by seven questions. The first three questions will concern glossary issues, whereas the fourth and fifth ones will address policy priorities. The last question aims to deepen more vertically 3P4SSE case studies on a country-based approach.

#### ANAGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

<b>COUNTRY</b>	AT/SI/H R/PL/H U	<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Public Administration/ Foundation/ etc.	Cooperative/ Association/
<b>SECTOR</b>	Add sector..			

#### 1st QUESTION

[Glossary: social economy, social enterprises]

According to your national legal framework, how Social & Solidarity Economy is defined in your region/country (to cover eventual missing in OECD report)? Are there any differences between Solidarity Economy and Social Economy in your country (if there are)? In absence of a national legal framework, how would you define Social & Solidarity Economy? Which is the typology of organisations that are implied in?

[2000 characters]

#### 2nd QUESTION

[Glossary: social economy, social enterprises]

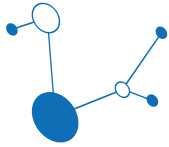
According to the EU social economy definition, the main impact areas refer to general interest services. However, OECD Report 2022 noticed as EU countries highlight diverse impact dimensions. Some case studies show a social economy definition very close to the European one, such as IT, SK. However, according to the literature, although all countries agree on the EU broad definition, some case studies seem to underline country-based specificities. For instance, CMEs (AT, DE) countries point out the importance of social economy to favour integration of people in the labour market. EMEs (PL, HR, HU, SI) seem to draw attention to disability. With regards to your country, to what extent do you agree with this statement, and which are the main impact areas of Social & Solidarity Economy according to your experience?

[2000 characters]

#### 3rd QUESTION

[Glossary: social clusters/partnerships]

Now we talk about territorial social clusters (Public-Private Partnerships - 3P), constituted in the scope of Social & Solidarity Economy (SSE). Are there any 3Ps in your country/region on SSE?



If yes, how would you define them (e.g. legal recognition/contract/informal) and how they relate to Public Authorities, in your context? Illustrate your experience.

If not, which are those factors that may potentially undermine their constitution?

#### 4th QUESTION

[Glossary: social clusters/partnerships]

According to your experience, how are territorial social clusters managed in your context? Give some examples on their governance settings. Which are the organisations that are more represented in social clusters/networks in your country/region?

[3000 characters]

#### 5th QUESTION

[Policy priorities and thematic scope]

Collaborations in Social & Solidarity Economy may be intended to create synergies multiplying social impact and to increase economic added value. Economic added value in Social & Solidarity Economy may be a crucial factor as social economy internalises several social and environmental costs (e.g. inclusion of disadvantaged people, more costs due to prevention of carbon development/eco-design, etc.). How do social clusters work in your context and which are (if there are) their economies of scale, according to your experience? Give some examples.

[3000 characters]

#### 6th QUESTION

[Policy priorities and thematic scope]

Through the perspective to valorise the economic sustainability of partnerships in SSE, we may assume a positive correlation between economic added value generated and sustainability. In your opinion, which are the advantages conveyed by the economy of scale generated in SSE territorial partnerships that you are aware about/represent?

[3000 characters]

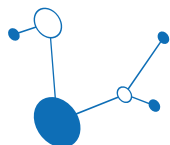
#### 7th QUESTION

[Social Capital]

Which are the cultural/social/economic legacies of social clusters that you mentioned?

[3000 characters]





## TRACK OF THE FOCUS GROUP

### AGENDA

1. Introduction or warm-up session: short presentation of Links researchers and of all participants (name, organisation, role).
2. Focus group: the first part of the morning will be held by Links researchers and will be fully dedicated to the progression of the action-research. This part is constituted by five questions.
3. The second part will be coordinated by NFCSD and FTC, concerning the design and realisation of virtual study visits to assess the transferability of approaches, by peer-to-peer discussions also linked to A.2.3 and A.3.1)
4. Final greetings

### FIRST SESSION: THE STRUCTURE OF THE FOCUS GROUP

#### Question 1

According to the **3P4SSE project approach** designed in the application form, the concept of **social economy** was coupled with that of **solidarity economy**. According to the EU Action Plan on Social Economy, the term **social economy** refers to four main types of entities providing goods and services to their members or society at large: cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations (including charities), and foundations. Coupling this definition with the **solidarity economy** means to **incorporate non-profit and solidarity principles in modes of production and provision of social commodities**, stressing the importance of the social integration of disadvantaged groups of people.

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

- Online poll: the respondent is invited to specify to what extent they agree with this sentence, according to a four points scale.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

- Round table on motivations
- 10 minutes for an eventual debate

#### Question 2

According to the EU Action Plan, the social economy includes a set of organisations such as **cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations** (including **charities**), and **foundations**. Moreover, third sector organisations, **social enterprises**<sup>3</sup>, and **work**

<sup>3</sup> REGULATION (EU) No 1296/2013, REGULATION (EU) 2021/1057.

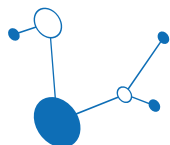
Social enterprise means an undertaking, regardless of its legal form, which:

(a) in accordance with its Articles of Association, Statutes or with any other legal document by which it is established, has as its primary objective the achievement of measurable, positive social impacts rather than generating profit for its owners, members and shareholders, and which:

(i) provides services or goods which generate a social return and/or

(ii) employs a method of production of goods or services that embodies its social objective;

(b) uses its profits first and foremost to achieve its primary objective and has predefined procedures and rules covering any distribution of profits to shareholders and owners that ensure that such distribution does not undermine the primary objective;



integration social enterprises (WISEs) are included. It must be noticed that from the questionnaires coming from the previous phase, WISEs seem to play an important role in all countries represented in the consortium.

In your opinion, to what extent does the legal form of organisations (and the profit or the non-profit aspects) relate to the solidarity principles of social economy?

- Online poll: the respondent is invited to specify the relevance of the legal form on solidarity principles of social economy, according to a five points scale.

1	2	3	4	5
Totally irrelevant	Irrelevant	Neutral	Influent	Very influent

- Round table on motivations
- 10 minutes for an eventual debate

### Question 3

According to the questionnaires, among the policy priorities, which may drive actions to foster local networks/clusters in social and solidarity economies, partners and stakeholders mention a wide range of policy goals:

- promoting economic efficiency by costs' reduction or joint purchases
- increasing bargaining power and advocacy influence
- diversification and risk-sharing
- joint initiatives: projects, promotion and marketing, investments, greening the social economy
- capacity building, knowledge, and resource sharing
- increasing visibility and impact
- maximising the social impact (e.g. in peripheral territories, provision of social interventions addressed to disadvantaged groups of people)

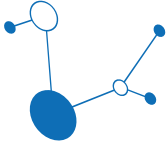
In your opinion, how do you prioritise the policy goals? Explain your decision.

- Online poll: order the several priorities by importance, according to your vision. The respondent is invited to specify the importance for each priority, according to a 7 points scale (scale: 1 the most important priority, 7 the less important priority).

1	
...	
7	

- Round table on motivations

(c) is managed in an entrepreneurial, accountable and transparent way, in particular by involving workers, customers and stakeholders affected by its business activities;



#### Question 4

According to the information gathered by questionnaires and interviews, we may include in the definition of social clusters both formal and informal networks.

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

- Online poll: the respondent is invited to specify to what extent they agree with this sentence, according to a four points scale.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

- Round table on motivations in case of a low degree of agreement.



**3P4SSE**

# RESEARCH REPORT

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union under the Interreg Central Europe programme. The contents of it are sole responsibility of the 3P4SSE project and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.