



Social Economy for the full inclusion of people with disabilities

BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

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Jessica Fiorelli, Policy and projects Officer at SEE

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Foreword by Juan Antonio Pedreño, President of Social Economy Europe



I warmly welcome this publication which comes at a crucial time in European and world's history, where we are faced with a pandemic which is taking lives and destroying livelihoods, especially of those most marginalised in our societies. As we strive to rebuild our Union into a green, sustainable, and inclusive society, the relevance of the social economy is undisputed. A natural social innovator, with people at the centre of its business model, the social economy proposes solutions that provide opportunities for all and that empower communities and individuals from all walks of life – with special attention to one of the most marginalised group, people with disabilities. As you will discover in this guide with examples from all four corners of Europe, the different forms of the social economy create work and training opportunities, advocate for the respect and fulfilment of human rights and act as enablers of independence, autonomy, and dignity.

In 2018, SEE set up the Working Group on Social Economy and Disability in order to raise visibility of the role and potential that social economy enterprises and organisations have to generate quality employment for people with disabilities and to promote their social and labour inclusion. This action followed previous work carried out by SEE in the field of social economy and disability, such as the 2007 publication on *Creating an Inclusive Society: Mainstreaming Disability Based on the Social Economy Example*.

We are facing a very difficult time: challenges like Covid-19, climate change, exacerbated inequalities, a lack of quality jobs, as well as democratic disengagement require collective action and common solutions. The Social Economy Community is equipped and prepared to contribute to building back better and fairer: to support the European Union in achieving the 2030 Agenda, upskilling and reskilling workers, engaging citizens in active citizenship and offering another way of doing business which places the planet and people in the very core of these enterprises and organisations. To truly unlock the potential of the social economy, opportunities need to be created and seized, investments that can reap social and environmental results for the benefit of all.

In this sense, 'all means all, and the **Next Generation EU** is an unmissable opportunity to invest in the social economy and allow for it to access support mechanisms foreseen in the recovery plan. Further down the line, the **European Action Plan for the Social Economy**, that will be published in the last quarter of 2021, will play a decisive role in the future of the social economy in Europe, to foster social economy collective

entrepreneurship and support it as an instrument to generate quality jobs and include everyone in the labour market through education, training and work opportunities; accelerate the Green Transition, strengthen the quality of our welfare systems, and ensure no one is left behind. The post-2020 **Disability Strategy** will be a chance to take a comprehensive approach and generate awareness of the current contribution and the future potential of the social economy for a barrier-free Europe where people with disabilities can fully participate in society and enjoy their fundamental rights.

I hope this guide will serve to inspire people and that it will contribute to understanding how the social economy can facilitate work and training for disadvantaged people. Lastly, I would like to extend my congratulations to all the organisations that through their experience and expertise have made this publication possible. A special acknowledgement goes to Fundación ONCE as a founder of Social Economy Europe's Working Group on Social Economy and Disability. It is when building alliances that we are stronger as social actors and can achieve our shared vision of more inclusive, democratic, sustainable societies. Let's work together to build a more accessible and inclusive Europe offering equal opportunities to everyone!

Foreword by Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum



For the past few years, Social Economy Europe (SEE), through its group on disability issues, has promoted the inclusion of the disability perspective in Social Economy enterprises and organisations at all levels of their work.

The European Disability Forum works towards the implementation of Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This Article speaks about the right to work on an equal basis with others in a labour market that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. Social economy enterprises have traditionally played a major role in the employment of people with disabilities, with a part to play in providing work opportunities and training workers with disabilities who want to access the open labour market.

This Guide explores how SE enterprises can work towards implementing the CRPD and further contribute to the labour integration of people with disabilities. It is in a certain way a reminder for both EU and national government leaders that they have the responsibility to create the right political and legislative environment that allows this integration to happen. First and foremost, an ambitious and fully-fledged European Disability Rights Agenda or Strategy should be adopted for the coming decade. Employment should be a priority in this Agenda. It should contain clear and ambitious proposals for improving the rate and quality of employment for persons with disabilities without delay. However, this will not suffice. Any action plan will also have to be backed up by adequate and proportionate funding. In this sense, the new Multiannual Financial Framework, with the review of the EU Structural Funds and the broader cohesion policy, as well as the current approval of the National Recovery Plans to face the pandemic, offer the right opportunity to put public money to good use. We must not let this opportunity pass us by!

We should keep in mind that this Guide is not an end in itself, but just one more step forward on the long road to full integration of persons with disabilities into society. Through our collaboration with SEE, we are committed to continuing to explore the active contribution of Social Economy enterprises to this integration.

Introduction

This guide is one of several initiatives undertaken by the [Social Economy and Disability Working Group \(SE&D\)](#) of Social Economy Europe (SEE), the voice of the 2.8 million social economy enterprises and organisations. The working Group was created in 2018, in order to raise visibility of the role and potential of social economy enterprises to generate quality employment for people with disabilities and to promote their social and labour inclusion, and internally to strengthen the focus on disability throughout SEE's areas of work.

The Social Economy and Disability Working Group of SEE is formed by **Arfie** (Association for Research and Training on Integration in Europe), **CASES** (Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social) represented by **Confecoop** in the Working Group, **CECOP** (European confederation of industrial and service cooperatives), **ConcertES** (Concertation des organisations représentatives de l'économie sociale), the **EFC** (European Foundation Centre) and **ENSIE** (European Network of Social Integration Enterprises). The creation of the SE&D working group was a proposal of the European Foundation Centre in cooperation with its member **Fundación ONCE**.

The aim of this publication is to raise awareness and promote **the potential of European social economy enterprises and organisations in the inclusion of people with disabilities** by sharing good practices which look at: employment, training and education, services and accessibility. The content of this guide is based on information and expertise provided and gathered by members of the SE&D through consultation with the SEE member organisations and partners, as well as other relevant stakeholders in the field.

We are aware that there is still room for further development of this publication, of its contents and examples, in order to make it a comprehensive tool. This is why we consider this publication to be a first step to raise awareness on the issue, encourage reflection and set up the basis for further action in this new European legislature 2019-2024.

The social economy, in its various forms, has a historical track-record of supporting the full integration of people with disabilities across all aspects of life. This can span from entering the labour market through education, training and job opportunities to the development of accessible products and services and to access to information, leisure, sport and cultural activities.

Thanks to the social economy's defining values and characteristics - for instance, favouring the social objective over profit, the centrality of the person, acting in the interest of its members and users and/or the general interest, having democratic

governance, reinvesting its profit into the enterprise - it is best placed to offer equal opportunities for socially excluded individuals, including people with disabilities, focusing on skills, support and full participation. Many actors of the social economy, such as cooperatives, social enterprises, and particularly work integration social enterprises (WISEs), and associations, include people with disabilities in their governance structures, allowing for their participation in the decision-making of the enterprise or organisation.

This idea embodies the approach of the social economy in relation to the inclusion of marginalised and often vulnerable individuals: giving agency through empowerment. Empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. **The social economy cultivates this by acting not only for people with disabilities but also, and most importantly, with them.**

Offering opportunities such as the ones described in this Guide, enables people with disabilities to achieve qualifications, to find work, to enjoy other areas of life that would not normally be accessible to them and to no longer feel like constrained bystanders, but like fully-fledged active citizens with the opportunity to contribute to society.

A significant factor for inclusion into society is the participation in the labour market, which acts as a promoter of social inclusion. Employment represents not only a contribution to society but also a doorway to independence as well as to a means of benefiting from social protection. Data from the European Disability Forum (EDF) shows that only 50.8% of people with disabilities in the European Union are in employment, a stark contrast with the 74.8% of people without disabilities who are in employment¹. Furthermore, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities aged between 20 and 64 is 7% higher than that of people in the same age group without disabilities².

It is clear from these figures that people with disabilities face barriers in accessing the labour market, which according to the EDF are predominantly due to misconceptions and judgments on a person's abilities. Social economy enterprises and organisations foster the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market in addition to promoting inclusive and sustainable businesses. What's more, their historical close

¹ Employment figures obtained from the European Disability Forum. Available at: <http://www.edf-feph.org/employment>

² European comparative data on Europe 2020 & People with disabilities. Final report prepared by Stefanos Grammenos from Centre for European Social and Economic Policy (CESEP ASBL) on behalf of the Academic Network of European Disability Experts (ANED). Available at: <https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1569&context=gladnetcollect>

ties to communities and specialised support for socially excluded groups, give them a unique advantage in this field. In fact, **social economy enterprises employ up to three times more people with disabilities than traditional enterprises.**

However, employment is not the only factor which contributes to social inclusion. Being able to access goods and services as well as enjoying the benefits of citizenship, participating in public life and leisure activities are also important aspects to be considered. In this regard, the social economy provides, either through projects or through more permanent structures, accessibility solutions often made for and by people with disabilities; community spaces for recreational activities and socialising; access to sport and culture as a means for inclusion; information on rights and citizenship, and much more.

The unexpected outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in dramatic public health, economic and social consequences in Europe and worldwide, which requires an unprecedented response to restore economic and social progress. In this regard, the actions carried out by social economy enterprises and organisations have shown how its nature makes them be highly permeable to the needs, visibility and inclusion of people with disabilities, who have been disproportionately affected by the crisis and the social distancing measures. Europe's 100 million persons with disabilities face the same risk as the rest of the population, compounded by many other issues such as the disruption of services and support structures, difficulty in accessing (exclusion from) health information and provisions or (inaccessible) barriers in accessing goods and services.

We are witnessing important and **numerous initiatives of solidarity and enterprises willing to reinvent themselves in order to alleviate the negative effects of the crisis** in many sectors such as health, banking, industry, tourism, social services and distribution, among others. Those social economy companies that integrate people with disabilities in their structure, such as the ones referred to in this Guide, have developed partnership agreements and projects with other actors, have mobilised resources and have transformed their activities, proving to be key allies once again.

Therefore, on the one hand, it is crucial to ensure that social economy enterprises and organisations are well equipped and supported and have access to economic relief measures established both by the EU and by Member States to respond to the current crisis. On the other hand, **people with disabilities, rather than being considered an added problem, can and must be part of the solution, participating in the recovery plans** and putting their efforts in the fight against the pandemic.

The good practices illustrated in this Guide show a variety of commercial and non-commercial activities undertaken by the social economy across many sectors such as IT, industry, services, construction, catering, hospitality, agriculture, tourism and so

on. Whilst providing training and job opportunities, these social economy enterprises and organisations also ensure the availability of quality support measures to help beneficiaries with other aspects of daily life such as housing, personal finances, access to information, rights and citizenship, family support, care services and more. This holistic approach ensures that needs are being met and that adequate tools are being provided for individuals, to be autonomous where possible and to pave the way for full inclusion into society.

Mindful of the complexity of the disability field and given that people with disabilities are not a homogeneous group, we call on the European Union and its Member States to foster the full inclusion of people with disabilities by promoting social economy business models.

Good practices of social economy supporting the full inclusion of people with disabilities



1. APEMH (Association des Parents d'Enfants Mentalement Handicapés), Luxembourg



APEMH is a Foundation under Luxembourgish law, set up in 1967 to improve the quality of life of people with intellectual disability by providing high-quality services and managing the various structures that enable adapted support to individuals.

APEMH provides numerous services in various areas, such as **residences and educational support structures** (so as to enable people to live in the community), as well as **sheltered workshops** and a “UFEP” **training centre** for professionals in the field. Their services also include easy-to-read and accessible information for people with intellectual disability through its KLARO centre. APEMH carries out numerous activities related to training and

employment, the branches ‘Formation et Travail’ and ‘Société Coopérative’ are particularly relevant.

APEMH “Formation et Travail” was created in 1996 to ensure the management of training and employment structures through a professional training centre. The mission of the centre is to **train and prepare young people with disabilities for their professional life**. This service is available to people over the age of 16 who have completed the years of mandatory schooling. During their training, students acquire the basic qualifications needed to find a job position that suits their abilities in the open labour market or in a sheltered workshop. This training has a practical approach and also offers internships for a first experience in the professional world, allowing a better transition to adulthood. The training centre is organised in five structures and offers trainings in 18 different professional fields. In 2018, the training centre trained 93 young persons with disability.



APEMH “Société Coopérative” was created in 1987 to ensure the promotion of APEMH products. The cooperative has a double vocation - on the one hand it is social as it **provides paid employment opportunities to people with disabilities** and offers support measures and follow-up through the ORFO service (Orientation and Training); while on the other hand, it also has commercial activity as it sells products and offers services on the market. The Cooperative is organised in four structures that are recognised sheltered workshops (“Ateliers Protégés”), created to promote the access of workers with disabilities to remunerated working activities: (1) Ateliers Bettange; (2) Ateliers Bettembourg; (3) Ateliers Parc Hosingen; and (4) Ateliers Limpach. Within these structures, APEMH organises adapted working activities in 18 different fields including agriculture, farming, breeding, gardening, cooking, butchering, carpentry, tailoring, facility management, and cleaning. In 2018, these structures employed 409 persons with disabilities (183 women and 226 men). The structures of the Cooperative provide people with intellectual disabilities with meaningful working opportunities, the minimum wage and benefits from the social security system as they are given employee status.

Contact details:

Fondation APEMH

10, rue du Château L-4976 Bettange-sur-Mess, Luxembourg

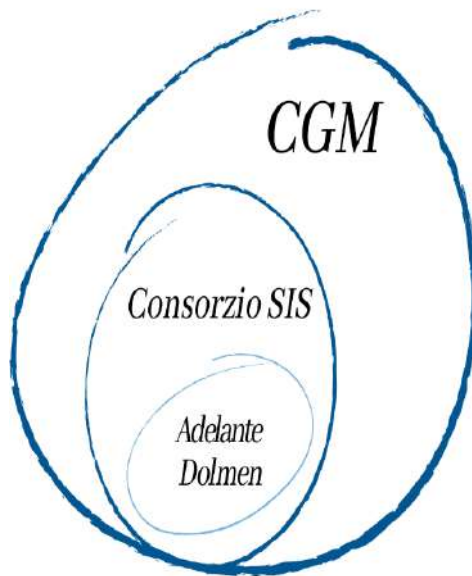
Tel: (+352) 37 91 91 – 1

Website: www.apemh.lu

Facebook: @apemh1967

2. Adelante Dolmen, Italy

In the 1970s, a new type of cooperative emerged in Italy: **the social cooperative**. Nowadays, social cooperatives have evolved into a large economic and social reality throughout the whole country, with over **14,000 enterprises**. One of the reasons behind this large success is the 1991 Law 381, which regulates social cooperatives and social cooperatives' consortia. Forming a consortium enables them to generate development through spin-offs; provide integrated services; and compete effectively in public procurement.



Adelante Dolmen is one of the 20 cooperatives belonging to **Consorzio SIS**, which was created in the early 1990s and is active in the Milan area. Although Consorzio SIS started as an incubator for enterprises helping cooperatives to develop and creating spin-offs, it has now adopted a more strategic focus, guiding cooperatives according to the needs of the market and becoming a more and more competent and viable partner for public authorities. In addition, Consorzio SIS is part of **CGM**, the largest network of social cooperatives in Italy, representing 42,000 workers of 700 cooperatives that group themselves into 58 local consortia and generate a value of 1.2 billion EUR of aggregated turnover, employment continuity,

solidity, and the ability to maintain and revitalise employment in spite of the crisis.

There are two types of social cooperatives: those which specialise in offering social services and those that provide work integration for disadvantaged people. According to Italian law, at least 30% of the employees within the cooperative must belong to disadvantaged categories. The social cooperative business model is highly replicable both locally and globally. However, its development is higher where there are favourable conditions, both in terms of public policies and support from the local and national cooperative movement.

Adelante Dolmen is a concrete example of a social cooperative that creates work opportunities for everyone, including those who encounter more difficulties entering the labour market. It is a social cooperative established in 1997 in Milan that provides people with disabilities with long-term jobs, particularly in the IT sectors. Adelante currently employs around 90 people in several functions, such as IT help-desk, IT planning and provision, software development, and front and back office duties. Adelante Dolmen maintains close links with public institutions and offices in charge of service provision to people with both physical and mental impairments, with the aim of

selecting and training new staffers. At Adelante, people enter the cooperative through different channels, which allows them to keep contact with bigger centres for people with disabilities. Once a beneficiary has passed the selection process, a training and internship path is offered. Adelante will then either keep the employee to work in its cooperative or support them in finding an alternative job in another company.

Contact details:

Adelante Dolmen

Valerio Pellirossi, Policy Officer at Confcooperative Federsolidarietà

pellirossi.v@confcooperative.it

3. Juncker Plan investment in ILUNION, Spain

ILUNION is the corporate group of Grupo Social ONCE, which is also comprised by ONCE (the Spanish National Organization for the Blind) and its Foundation, committed to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families, mainly in the areas of training, employment and universal accessibility. The Group is the **largest employer of people with disabilities in Spain and the fourth largest employer in general terms**, employing more than 70.000 people, 56% of which are people with disabilities and 44% of which are women.

ILUNION is a unique business model that maintains the balance between its business and social values. It was conceived by and for people with disabilities and its main goal is to create quality jobs for them. With a turnover of 747 million EUR and through its 50 lines of business (industrial laundry, facility services, hotels, contact centres, social and health services, industrial services, consultancy, IT and accessibility and others) both at national and international level, ILUNION is a leading group showing that economic and social returns can go hand in hand. Equal opportunities are at the core of ILUNION's identity; in fact, **it employs 35,000 people, 13,000 of whom are people with disabilities (40% of the workforce)**, and 55% of whom are women.

On 25 September 2018, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and ILUNION signed an agreement for a 35-million-euro loan during a ceremony attended by Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, and President of Grupo Social ONCE, Miguel Carballada.



The European Investment Bank (EIB) is the European Union's long-term funding institution for sustainable investment projects that contribute to the EU's policy objectives, and its stakeholders are the EU Member States. In this context, it is crucial to mention the 'Investment Plan for Europe' - known as 'Juncker Plan' as being one of the former European Commission Presidency's top priorities. The Plan aimed at mobilising investment for jobs and growth creation by making smarter use of financial resources, removing obstacles to investment and providing visibility and technical assistance to investment projects.

It is the **first loan made by the EIB to a social economy enterprise** and it marked a turning point in the much called-for “socialisation” of the Juncker Plan, which has proven an innovative instrument to enable European investors to engage in ambitious investments, which banks would traditionally be reluctant to take up. The loan is intended to fund half of a EUR 70 million investment plan aimed at renovating the group's chain of industrial laundrettes to incorporate more energy-efficient technologies, the construction of a new hotel in Spain and the renovation of existing

ones, as well as the development of a range of devices to improve the lives of persons with any type of disability. **All of these measures share a single objective: to promote the employment of people with disabilities.**

Thanks to the agreement signed with the EIB, ILUNION will be able to make its premises in Andalusia, Extremadura, Castile-La Mancha and Murcia more accessible to people with disabilities and to construct a new hotel in a convergence region in Spain. The funding will also be used to promote research, development and innovation (RDI) to the benefit of people with any type of disability, enabling the development of applications and software to facilitate their involvement in the working environment. In addition, by contributing to the renewal of the equipment in ILUNION's laundries, the company will be able to save up to 60 Gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity each year and to increase its energy efficiency by reusing the heat generated in the washing processes. Besides the construction of a new hotel and the renewal of its premises and laundries in four regions in Spain, the loan will also make it possible to create 200 new permanent jobs plus a further 725 during the implementation phase.

Contact details:

Torre Ilunion

C/ Albacete, 3 28027 Madrid, Spain

Tel: +34 913 27 85 00

www.ilunion.com

twitter.com/ilunion

4. The League of Historical and Accessible Cities, Europe

After it entered into force on 3 May 2008, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) set a new perspective for the foundations active in the field of disability or human rights, providing them with a unique opportunity to put their expertise to good use in the emerging field of disability. As a result, in 2009 a group of foundations led by the **European Foundation Centre (EFC)** decided to work together in the form of a Consortium to make a distinctive contribution towards the mobilisation of the foundation sector. In February 2010, the European Consortium of Foundations on Human Rights and Disability launched its first pilot project called **“the League of Historical and Accessible Cities (LHAC)”**, aimed at improving the accessibility of historical towns while, at the same time, promoting the development of sustainable tourism and the protection of cultural heritage.



The LHAC is a partnership between foundations and local communities across eight different European countries. Its main goal is not only to allow people with disabilities and their families to fully enjoy leisure and cultural activities, but also to stimulate tourism among the 80 million people with disabilities living in Europe. From this point of view, the project contributed to the cities' long-term cultural and social development. Improved access to a city's cultural heritage makes it more dynamic and attractive to its residents and tourists and thereby increases territorial economic profit and growth. The League of Historical and Accessible Cities can be also seen as

a good example of social innovation practice.



In the historical centre of each member town, a tourist route including interesting buildings, museums, parks, restaurants, shops, and tourist information centres is being developed. In this context, it is important to note that 'disability' is seen in its broadest sense, including both sensory and physical impairments and disabilities, and that (following the Universal Design criteria) improvements to accessibility are conceived for the

long-term benefit of all visitors, residents and tourists. Thanks to the development of these types of routes, everyone will be able not only to walk around and explore the townscape independently, but also to orient themselves and to interact with their surroundings, due to the presence of information signs (such as tactile billboards, sign language guides and audio guides) and other accessible digital tools.

The project involves a holistic conception of accessibility, which entails improvements in four main areas: environment and public spaces; transport and related infrastructures; information and communication, including information and communication technologies (ICT); and public facilities and services.

The project is being simultaneously implemented by 11 foundations in 5 different countries across Europe, each of them in partnership with the local authorities of the 6 historical towns involved:

- ✚ Avila (Spain) - Fundación ONCE
- ✚ Lucca (Italy) - Fondazione Banca Monte di Lucca
- ✚ Mulhouse (France) - Fondation Réunica, Fondation de France, Centre Français des Fonds et Fondations
- ✚ Torino (Italy) - Fondazione CRT
- ✚ Viborg (Denmark) - Realdania Foundation, Bevica Foundation, The Danish Disability Foundation and The Labour Market Holiday Fund
- ✚ Sozopol (Bulgaria) - Sozopol Foundation

The LHAC was selected as a good practice and was one of the five winners of the 2014 International Design for All Award, a prize that recognises examples which stand out in terms of their impact and which indicate the way ahead for better implementation of design for all/universal design. In Avila and Lucca, the number of tourists with disabilities visiting the cities increased and the first accessible itinerary in the historical centre was created. In Mulhouse, there was an improved tourist global offer thanks to cultural mediation development. Furthermore, the development and implementation of accessibility projects in Sozopol and Turin improved its positioning as an accessible destination with regards to the qualified Tour Operator.

Contact details:

European Foundation Center, AISBL
Rue Royale 94, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32.2.512.8938
e-mail: efc@efc.be
Website: www.efc.be

5. Ateliers Jean Del’Cour (JD’C), Belgium

Ateliers Jean Del’Cour (JD’C) is an inclusive enterprise located in Grâce-Hollogne (Belgium). It is a non-profit association. JD’C **employs 540 people, 85% of whom are disabled people** (physically, mentally, hard hearing, psychic disability) and 90% of them have signed a contract of unlimited duration. The company is ISO 9001 certified and in 2018 the turnover was 13.6 million EUR.



JD’C runs several activities such as co-packing and logistics services, machining, welding, social building renovation, maintenance of green spaces or industrial halls cleaning. JD’C’s customers include companies like l’Oréal, Mondelez, Safran, Heineken, Spadel, Thales, John Cockerill, CooperVision and more.



Although being part of the company’s commercial strategy, the export market currently represents only 4% of the company turnover. The company receives subsidies from the Walloon Government amounting to 40% of the salary costs. JD’C employs four social assistants who are available on a daily basis to support the employees with issues such as health, personal finances, administration, housing and so on. They also have a field manager (currently a pilot project) who supervises and supports the work of a group of 10 people with disabilities (control, quality and other support).

JD’C also puts in place a yearly training plan with two pillars:

1. To **allow people with disabilities to gain autonomy** (lessons aimed at improving writing and reading skills, handling money, and learning how to take care of oneself independently)
2. To **increase the skills and the polyvalence of the workers** in their job (handling equipment, welding certification, use of grass cutting equipment, etc.)

On a permanent basis, JD’C also welcomes 20 students with disabilities who have completed their secondary level of education, in order to facilitate their integration in the working life.

Contact details:

Rue de l’Expansion 29, 4460 Grâce-Hollogne, Belgium

Email: info@jean-delcour.be

Website: www.jean-delcour.be

6. FENACERCI, Portugal

FENACERCI is the National Federation of Cooperatives and Social Solidarity. It is made up of 52 associated members located throughout Portugal, **providing support and services to about 25,000 people with intellectual disabilities and their families**, with close to 6,000 professionals.

The mission and vision of FENACERCI is to promote quality and sustainability of the services provided by its members, thus promoting the rights of service users. This is done by advocating for equal opportunities for all citizens, with the support of organisations that are ethically responsible and sustainable, accredited by the relevant certification. FENACERCI, as an **institutional interlocutor for Cooperatives of Social Solidarity**, promotes activities with various structures, such as: the National Institute for Rehabilitation (INR); Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP); the Institute of Social Security (ISS); and the Directorate-General for Innovation and Curriculum Development (DGICD) integrating various working groups.

Since 1996, FENACERCI has been actively **promoting transnational cooperation**, especially with European countries, reflected in the membership of umbrella organizations (ARFIE, Inclusion Europe, EASPD, CECOP, OCPLP and MHID) and the development and implementation of European projects. In recent years FENACERCI has implemented both as a promoter or as a partner **39 European projects with 26 countries** in areas such as violence and abuse of persons with disabilities, accessibility of written information, rights and citizenship, the use of ICT to promote social inclusion and assistive devices, alternative curricula, sport as tool for inclusion, Web2.0 and inclusion, poverty and social inclusion, and others. These projects were carried out with 26 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Denmark, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, UK, Romania, Sweden, the Czech Republic).

Through its Departments and Units, FENACERCI develops and implements various activities and projects with direct and indirect impact on its members, on people with intellectual disabilities and their families and society more broadly. This impact is embodied in an improvement of the lives of these people, the quality of the services provided, and the recognition of the rights of citizens with intellectual disabilities by society and policy-makers in particular.

Contact details:

CONFECOOP- Avenida Santos Dumont, nº 57 – 2º Dto, Lisboa 1050-202, Portugal

Email: Confecoop@mail.telepac.pt

Website: www.confecoop.coop

7. AMADIP ESMENT, Spain



as services to help families.

AMADIP ESMENT is a Foundation under Spanish law. It was set up in 1962 and declared of Public Interest by the Council of Ministers in 1966. It works to help people with intellectual disabilities and their families to improve their life quality by allowing them to have the same opportunities as everyone else. It **provides support and guidance through educational centres, housing programmes, day care support, leisure and sport activities**, as well

ESMENT acts as the umbrella for all the organisation's commercial activities, which aims at creating and maintaining stable jobs for people with intellectual disabilities:

- ❖ **ESMENT Impremta i Manipulats:** printing services
- ❖ **ESMENT Jardineria:** gardening services
- ❖ **ESMENT Neteja:** cleaning services.
- ❖ **ESMENT Alimentació:** 3 café-restaurants, management of the building
- ❖ Mirall cafeteria, organic farming, Gallinas & Focas wines, oil, products from Forn Pes de sa Palla: bread, cakes, ice creams and chocolates.
- ❖ **ESMENT Escola Professional:** this is a project carried out by AMADIP ESMENT Foundation whose aim is to improve the qualifications of young people, those who require special support and those who do not, and thereby help them find stable employment.

Through its experience, AMADIP ESMENT was able to develop a **Dual Training programme** as a tool to lower the school dropout rate, minimise youth unemployment and provide qualifications to hospitality staff. The approach of AMADIP is to adapt training plans to improve learning and personal skills. They guide and support people in their training and in their search for work, as well as monitoring their progress individually, providing support at all times and in all areas of their lives.

In this sense, AMADIP ESMENT developed an adapted training programme called **Adapted Dual Training** addressed to over 16's with intellectual disabilities, aimed at expanding the options of people with needs in accessing the labour market. The programme lasts 3 years and adopts a methodology based on learning by doing. Support throughout the learning process is foreseen in the form of support measures and tutoring as well as a complementary training for personal and social development. The dual training is linked to a work contract from the beginning, and the programme consists of 879 hours a year of training and 879 hours a year of supported working activity, making up a total of 1,758 hours a year. In the end, participants will have had

2,637 hours of training thereby giving them access to professional certification and 2,637 hours of effective working experience.

Contact details:

C/ Bosc, 1. 07002. Palma

T. 971 717 773 / 971 711 627

E-mail: amadip@amadipesment.org

Website: www.amadipesment.org

Facebook: [@amadip.esment](https://www.facebook.com/amadip.esment)

Twitter: [@amadipesment](https://twitter.com/amadipesment)

8. Tricentenaire group, Luxembourg

Since the creation of its first sheltered workshop in Bissen (Luxembourg) in 2009, the **Tricentennial group** has been growing and developing its activities. The Group now has five organisations that **offer diverse and innovative job opportunities to people with disabilities**. These workshops have been set up in the form of non-profit cooperatives and their activities are guided by the principles of sustainable development and respect for the environment.

Current activities:

✦ Chocolaterie Brand “*Les chocolats du cœur*”

- Production of high-quality artisanal chocolate products made from Fairtrade cacao
- 17 employees with disabilities
- Set up in 2009



✦ Printing:

- Graphic design and Digital printing: flyers, brochures, business cards, calendars, invitations, menus, etc. for private and business customers. All material printed is with environmentally friendly paper.
- 12 employees with disabilities
- Set up in 2009

✦ Services:

- Subcontracting and packaging services, mailing, folding, creations and decorations of boxes with environmentally friendly paper and cardboard
- 9 employees with disabilities
- Set up in 2012

✿ **Tea brand *Au cœur du thé***

- Assembly and conditioning of certified Organic and Fairtrade teas
- 4 employees with disabilities
- Set up in 2018

✿ **Sales:**

- Two people are involved in the sales of all Tricentenaire products, while one person takes care of gardening and other facility services.
- 3 employees with disabilities
- Set up in 2019

✿ **New projects are under development:**

- A micro-brewery, coupled with a bike repair shop and the takeover of a local café. This micro-brewery will produce the "Circulaire" beer, made from recycled bread and in partnership with the SIMON brewery, thus meeting the principles of circular economy;
- A project of recovering of a vegetable farm in the North of the country.

Contact details:

Groupe Tricentenaire

1, rue de la Gare, L-7228 Helmsange / Walferdange, Luxembourg

Tél.: + 352 33 22 33 - 1

Mail : direction@tricentenaire.lu

Website : www.tricentenaire.lu

Facebook: @tricentenaire

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/tricen300

9. Les Genêts d'Or, France

Les Genêts d'Or is a French non-profit association (law 1901) that since 1963 has been working in the Finistère Region, providing care and support services for people with disabilities throughout their lives: poly-handicap, autism and pervasive developmental disorders (TED), intellectual disabilities, psychic disabilities and so on. Thanks to the funding from the Regional Health Agency (ARS) and the General Council of Finistère (CG 29), all its institutions and services participate fully in local development, with a common objective: **to provide adapted care to people with disabilities and residents, promote their autonomy and self- development and help them find their place in the society.**

The ESATs (*établissements et services d'aide par le travail*) are managed by Les Genêts d'Or. They offer workers with disability professional activities, as well as healthcare and educational support, in order to promote their personal development and social integration. These structures can also provide them with accommodation services, accompanying users in their daily lives. ESAT accommodates adults with disabilities who are not able, temporarily or permanently, to work neither in mainstream working environments nor in adapted enterprises. The ten ESATs managed by Les Genêts d'Or host 650 workers throughout the Finistère department. Over the years, these structures have developed more than twenty quality products and services in various fields of industry, environment, crafting and culture to the benefit of the communities involved, enterprises, and individuals.

Contact details:

Claire Chemin

Les Genêts d'Or

14 Rue Louis Armand, 29600 Saint-Martin-des-Champs, France

10. Humana Nova, Croatia

The **Social Cooperative Humana Nova Čakovec** is a non-profit social cooperative, which has been present on the national market in Croatia for last 8 years. Humana Nova has **29 cooperative members** of whom 25 are employees, so it also has the status of a workers cooperative.

The Social Cooperative Humana Nova Čakovec **encourages the employment of people with disabilities and other socially excluded persons through the production and selling of quality and innovative textile products** made from ecological and recycled fabrics for the needs of domestic and foreign markets. Humana Nova's products are a response to the actual needs of users. Each fibre of each product produced embodies the satisfaction and benefit of workers, cooperatives, nature and the community. In this way the Cooperative actively contributes to the sustainable development of the local community, diminishing of poverty and nature conservation.



Social Cooperative Humana Nova Čakovec is a leader of the Croatian social economy landscape and has been recognised in the wider regional scope. The work of the cooperative has actively and directly contributed to the establishing of a tolerant society and has in turn helped the socially excluded persons and their families to enhance their self-reliability and their quality of life.

Impact on social problems in the community

One of the most important goals of Social Cooperative Humana Nova is encouraging the employment of people with disabilities and other socially excluded people. Today, 30 employees, out of whom 19 are persons with disabilities, 2 are of Roma origins, 6 are long-term unemployed women, one is a woman with low level of education, one is a single mother, and a manager who is an economist, are all fulfilling their ambitions by working in social cooperative.



Humana Nova's activities are strongly based on key values of togetherness, cooperation and mutuality, as well as quality, professionalism, leadership, courage and sustainability (economic, social, ecological). Humana Nova strives to ensure it is a pleasant and motivating working place where big focus is placed on the acquisition of new skills. The specific nature of Humana Nova reflects the fact that its members are associations and individuals that have recognised the value of the incentives and potentials of the process of engaging people with disabilities and other socially excluded persons into the production of the quality and widely demanded products. The members are ready – by means of their contribution, work and financial investments – to help the cooperative to be started, to start working and to develop; they thus help the local community as well.

Impact on the ecological problems in the community

In 2019 alone, Humana Nova collected 340,000.00 kg of clothing and footwear and 2,000 tonnes in last 5 years, showing that recycling can have a big impact. By sorting, reusing and recycling clothing and footwear, donors of textiles have a direct impact on the reduction of CO2 emissions and of the use of drinking water – used in the production of new textile products. Most people are willing to donate their used clothing. Humana Nova collects used clothing, primarily in the north western Croatia, then sorts them in the cooperative's production facility, according to various categories:

- clean and whole clothing will be resold at an affordable price in the store Čakovec;
- clean and partially whole clothing will be sent to the sewers for refinement, then the greenware store;
- incomplete clean clothes shall be used in the manufacture of new products - bags, purses, clothing, etc.;
- worn and stained clothing (only cotton) will be recycled as industrial rags.
- unusable textiles and waste will be passed on to recycling companies for making isolation materials which is sent back to Humana Nova to use for its packaging service.



Social Cooperative Humana Nova Čakovec also offers sewing and tailoring services. In the sewing centre, new products from new ecological, certificated materials such as cotton bags, t-shirts, hoodies and flags are made.

Humana Nova implements ISO 14001 and ISO 26000 in all work carried out. 75% of Humana Nova's total revenue is made from the market, mostly business to business (B2B).

Contact Details:

Ivan Božić, Social cooperative Humana Nova Čakovec

Tel: +385 40 500 765

info@humananova.org

www.humananova.org

11.TPK “Mara Dencheva” worker cooperative, Bulgaria

TPK “Mara Dencheva” is a worker cooperative of people with disabilities founded in 1963 in Pleven, Bulgaria. Over the years, TPK “Mara Dencheva” has developed diverse activities. From manufacturing of paper and cardboard products over plastic products and bookbinding services, nowadays the cooperative is **specialized in ready-made women’s clothing**. The cooperative mainly operates as a contract manufacturer for various European and North American companies, but unlike most of the clothing cooperatives in Bulgaria, it has also developed its own label for the local market.

It is the only enterprise in the region of Pleven to provide employment to people with disabilities. By providing access to work, “Mara Dencheva” worker cooperative helps people with disabilities to integrate into society and raise their self-esteem and social commitment. As many as 28 out of 46 employees are with 50 up to 92% reduced work capacity due to musculoskeletal or cardiovascular diseases and light mental disabilities.

The cooperative is a **member of the National Union of the Worker Producers’ Cooperatives of Bulgaria**. It is registered in the List of the specialised enterprises and cooperatives of people with disabilities with the national Agency of People with Disabilities, which provides funding for projects aiming at rehabilitation, employment, social inclusion and accessible environment for people with disabilities. The cooperative has successfully developed and implemented both business-oriented and socially oriented projects.

For the past ten years, the cooperative’s top priority was **achieving its social goals through implementation of technological innovations with positive impact on the environment**. Thanks to the introduction of highly efficient machines, the cooperative has managed to increase productivity, lower the production costs and improve the quality of its products. As a result, the cooperative was able to facilitate the work of its employees, offer them pay raises and expand the benefits and perks package.

Furthermore, “Mara Dencheva” is the **first Bulgarian cooperative manufacturer to power its business by renewable energy**. The cooperative installed three photovoltaic systems, which ensure its electricity needs, thus allowing the money saved on electric bills to be invested in creating a more favourable work and rest environment, to provide higher salaries, preventive medical examinations, excursions, rehabilitation and *balneotherapy treatments*. Another essential benefit from the use of the PV stations is the annual reduction of CO2 emissions by 50 metric tons.

In addition to the same project, the cooperative installed an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point. It is supplied by the photovoltaic stations and is situated in the industrial part of the city, where it provides a job for a person with disability. A memorandum of cooperation was signed between the cooperative and the Municipality of Pleven according to which the latter would provide land for two more charging points. The cooperative is planning for them to secure a job placement to its employees who, due to advancing illnesses, are no longer capable of fulfilling their duties in the sewing department.

It is also worth mentioning that “Mara Dencheva” was among the first worker cooperatives that in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic managed to rapidly reorganise towards production of Personal Protective Equipment for both local and foreign customers. The new products were developed with the help of the Cooperative Cluster, whose members, alongside “Mara Dencheva”, include other clothing cooperatives of people with disabilities and two leading Bulgarian universities. The Cluster provides its members with assistance in designing the models, supplying fabric and accessories, product certification and sales.

Contact details:

Pleven, Bulgaria

3, Grendareska Str., fl.2

email: danail.nachev@gmail.com

tel. + 359 888 400 557

12. CECAP's Group *Social Business Factory*, Spain

The **Grupo de Entidades Sociales (CECAP)** is an organisation that consists of multiple non-profits established in 2006. CECAP has the aim to grant special attention to people who face difficulties enjoying their fundamental rights in today's society. The CECAP Group consists of thirty professionals and assists over 200 people with disabilities. The participants are supported in defending their fundamental rights such as: living independently, equal access to quality education, the right to work and the right of equal access to community resources.

The **Social Business Factory (SBF)** by CECAP aims to enhance access to the labour market for the most vulnerable groups of society. CECAP ensures that the activities of the users are fully supported by their social networks (families, institutions, entities, etc.).



The Social Business Factory supports, advises, incubates and promotes Socially Inclusive Companies. They do this by designing training tools and methodologies to encourage the entrepreneurial processes that are used to empower participants before starting entrepreneurial activities. Moreover, SBF holds connections in the sector in high regard by creating alliances with other socially responsible actors (institutional, private and public) and other social entrepreneurship initiatives to promote social projects. The Social Business Factory supports these initiatives by sharing their knowledge together with the attraction of start-up capital that stimulates entrepreneurial initiatives.

CECAP's Training Service is one of the group's main tool and the first of its kind in Spain. The training service **enjoys the support of the Government of the Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha in Spain through its Ministry of Social Welfare, together with the European Social Fund**, and its management is characterised by quality, effectiveness and efficiency. CECAP has the aim to eliminate the prejudices that exist in society with respect to terms such as "disability" by providing an innovative and alternative model of care and support for people in vulnerable situations.

This model is implemented in a specific personal manner, by looking at the **capabilities, strengths and weaknesses of the participants, a personalised**

response to the needs, interests and the particularities of each person. The model allows people to support people.



Apart from the CECAP Training Service, the CECAP group also has a Special Employment Centre (Futurvalía), a Youth Services Provider (CECAP Joven), and the CIEES foundation. Good practices, research and methodologies are shared amongst all of the beforementioned branches of CECAP.

The personalised approach CECAP offers ensures the contribution to a number of Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (SDGs). Especially SDG 3 on Health and Well-being, SDG 4 on Quality Education, SDG 5 on Gender Equality, SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9 on Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 10 on Reduction of Inequalities, SDG 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities, and SDG 17 on Alliances to achieve the objectives.

Contact details:

Grupo de Entidades Sociales CECAP

Ronda de Buenavista, 29 Local 20-B, 45005 – Toledo

Tel: 925 620 296 / + 34 615 950 525

presidente@cecaptoledo.es

www.socialbiz.es

Policy recommendations

Setting the context

People with disabilities represent 15% of the world's population. In other words, more than 1.1 billion citizens have some type of disability³. In Europe, people with disabilities amount to more than 100 million people⁴ and according to current demographic trends, the number will increase to more than 120 million in the coming years⁵.

In 2007, the United Nations adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), which is the first treaty of the 21st century aimed at protecting and ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities. In November 2010, building on this Convention and based on the endorsing obligations, the European Commission adopted the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, to complement national efforts with a European-wide framework. Its main aim was to fully realise the rights of persons with disabilities to have the right to participate fully and equally in society and the economy through different areas of action such as accessibility, participation, equality and employment.

Back in 2010, people with disabilities represented 15% of the EU population and a sixth of the labour force. **It is foreseen that by the 2020 decade, one fifth of the population will have some sort of disability**, which is one of the reason why the new EU's Disability Strategy 2020-2030 must ensure a harmonised implementation of the UN CRPD both by the EU and by the Member States and commit to new disability policies and legislations, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

The Covid-19 outbreak has caused delays in the legislative agenda, changes in agenda and alterations in the calendar of the agreed deliverables. **The pandemic has reminded us that we are confronted with global challenges for which collective solutions are required.** We will only overcome this crisis in an effective way with more cooperation and solidarity, values that are at the basis of the success of the social economy, and that are more needed than ever to ensure a future of economic and

³'Ten facts on disability'. World Health Organisation (2017). Available at: <https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/disability/en>

⁴ 'How many persons with disabilities live in the EU?'. European Disability Forum (2019). Available at: <http://www.edf-feph.org/newsroom/news/how-many-persons-disabilities-live-eu#:~:text=The%20most%20current%20and%20accurate,not%20represented%20in%20the%20survey>

⁵ Report: One third of people with a disability at risk of social exclusion in EU. The Parliament Magazine (2017). Available at: <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/news/article/report-one-third-of-people-with-a-disability-at-risk-of-social-exclusion-in-eu>

social progress for all Europeans. Solidarity must be the centre of the response to the crisis in order to protect all people, defend democracy and strive towards an economy that integrates diversity.

Recommendations for the new Disability Strategy

The previous Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which is currently being evaluated by the European Commission, led to a number of initiatives aimed at improving the living conditions of people with disabilities on various fronts. Examples include the European Accessibility Act⁶, the Directive on Web Accessibility⁷ and, among others, a **pilot project for an EU disability card** in eight Member States. The new 2020-2030 Strategy will have the challenge of consolidating the progress made thanks to the current 2010 Strategy, optimising its successes and addressing its shortcomings. We hope that the new Strategy will promote, not only ad-hoc proposals, but also the mainstreaming of disability across the EU Institutions and in all EU policies and legislations, as required by the UN CRPD.

The new Strategy should propose a **European Action Plan to ensure that all provisions of the UN CRPD are implemented in a coherent and effective manner**. In addition, the Strategy should include a monitoring mechanism and it should integrate the principle of association involving all EU institutions, bodies and agencies as well as the participation of disability representatives including stakeholders, social economy representatives, and civil society.

We believe that the review of the Strategy should address mechanisms for **European governance** in order to ensure the implementation of the proposed measures. As in other policy areas (e.g. Monetary Union or Energy and Climate Union, etc.), this system of governance should include the development, coordination and monitoring of national disability plans. These plans will help in the implementation of the strategy in a way that is adapted to the different national realities, taking into account appropriate statistics and social indicators. Once reviewed by the Commission, the plans would ensure that the objectives of the new Strategy are achieved by all Member States individually, as well as collectively by the EU, as a whole. In addition, this European governance system should also include monitoring systems, recommendations or sanctions in the event of non-compliance with the provisions of the Strategy.

⁶ DIRECTIVE (EU) 2019/882 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on the accessibility requirements for products and services.

⁷ Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies.

Moreover, mainstreaming disability is of particular relevance when it comes to European funding frameworks. While the 2010-2020 Strategy stressed the role of Structural and Investment Funds as catalysts for social inclusion, the new Strategy will need to ensure that regressions do not occur in the future, by ensuring that funding (through Structural Funds, Horizon Europe, etc.) provides direct support to people with disabilities and recognises non-exclusion and universal accessibility as requirements for access to funding.

The new Strategy should be linked to the **European Pillar of Social Rights**. The Social Pillar was the centrepiece of the Juncker Commission and it meant the consolidation of twenty rights in terms of quality employment, equality and inclusion for all Europeans, especially for the most marginalised, such as people with disabilities. Therefore, the same way all climate policies underpinned by the **Green Deal** will be included horizontally in policies and regulations (all Commission proposals will be analysed in terms of their contribution to decarbonisation), the same should apply to the spearhead of European social policy.

In this regard, the new von der Leyen Commission has announced that the Social Pillar will play a crucial role in social developments. In the Communication on “*A Strong Social Europe for a Just Transition*”, published in January 2020, the Commission paves the way for the creation of an Action Plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights and includes a list of initiatives that will contribute to putting the Pillar into practice. In this list, we find the launch of a **Social Economy Action Plan** and the presentation of a new **Disability Strategy**, and also the reinforcement of the Youth Guarantee, the proposal for a Gender Equality Strategy, an updated Skills Agenda for Europe, and a Platform Work Summit. These initiatives address the problems of intersectionality, disability, gender and age, and can contribute to prioritising the lived experiences of people with disabilities.

The Social Pillar should be included as an integral part of the systems of economic governance. Macro-economic policies will play a major role in integrating social inclusion into all areas of EU action, and disability cannot be excluded from this opportunity. The new **European Semester** should therefore incorporate the disability dimension and analysis under the European Pillar of Social Rights, thus allowing for a more detailed understanding of the comparative situation of people with disabilities in the Member States.

Moreover, from an international angle, the European Disability Strategy should be aligned with the **Agenda 2030** for Sustainable Development and the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs). In fact, a strong Social Pillar will contribute to the development of the SDGs, which set an agenda for transformational change at the global level to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure the protection of human

rights. Disability is specifically referenced in parts related to education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, as well as data collection and monitoring of the SDGs.

The SDGs offer an opportunity to create a fully inclusive society, where the rights of people with disabilities are fully realised. The fundamental principle of human rights and a fundamental principle underlying the CRPD is the principle of non-discrimination. This is a clear element throughout the SDGs and therefore is applicable to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For instance, SDG Target 8.5, “**By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value**”.

A horizontal integration of disability in the Commission’s Work Programme

In the short-term, the European Commission’s Work Programme for 2020 includes a series of initiatives that reflect the Commission’s commitment to bring improvements in areas of social and economic policy in the coming years, which must take into account the lived experiences of people with disabilities.

For instance, **the initiative for a fair minimum wage** for all Europeans should ensure fair and competitive wage conditions for all workers with disabilities and should also apply to all employment models, including sheltered employment. In addition, any minimum wage framework should take into account other policies such as wage subsidies, to avoid one instrument working against the other (e.g. an inclusive minimum salary that would end up discouraging wage subsidies).

Moreover, although the recent **European Strategy on Gender Equality** (also included in the Commission’s Programme) does not go far enough in relation to some aspects such as access to justice or difficulties to access work and employment, the Strategy does include important commitments to ensure the rights of women with disabilities. This is largely due to the fact that for the first time, the process to develop the strategy actively involved women with disabilities through their representative organisations.

In this regard, other initiatives such as the new Strategy for the Implementation of the **Charter of Fundamental Rights** or new **Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion** to ensure our societies protect the most vulnerable need to be ambitious and evolve from the mere inclusion of a “non-discrimination clause” to becoming real references in the matter. The horizontal recognition of disability must be reflected as well in all the Commission projects, such as the European Space for Education, the Action Plan on

Human Rights and Democracy, the reinforcement of the Youth Guarantee or the new Skills Agenda for Europe.

The new Disability Strategy and the Social Economy

This new European legislature 2019-2024 brings many opportunities for the social economy - disability binomial. **We expect the new Disability Strategy to take a comprehensive approach to the social economy and generate awareness of the current contribution and the future potential of the sector for the achievement of the SDGs.** Likewise, we expect the **Action Plan for the Social Economy** to specifically promote the role that social economy can play to accelerate the integration of people with disabilities, through employment and provision of basic services, at all levels of society and of the economy.

More recently, we have seen initiatives at EU level that pay special attention to the potential that social economy enterprises and organisations have in promoting the social and labour inclusion of people with disabilities. For instance, the **European Social Fund**, Europe's main funding instrument for training and employment, has been financing a transnational "**Social Economy and Disability Initiative**" since 2017, aiming at making synergies in that space. In this regard, the European Social Fund Plus - crucial to maintaining and strengthening active support for the employment of people with disabilities and to job creation by the social economy - will play a key role in channelling funding to those regions and social groups with greater exposure to exclusion from the labour market. Member States also have public resources available for the implementation of this right for people with disabilities, such as the allocation of State aid. In this respect, Member States should make more use of the exemptions provided by the General Block Exemption Regulation, which establishes employment subsidies for people with disabilities as compatible with the Single Market

Moreover, more recently in October 2019, the European Economic and Social Committee adopted a Resolution on its contribution to the 2020 European Commission work programme and beyond, in which it calls for the creation of a favourable ecosystem for the social economy, recognising its increasingly important role in promoting inclusive and sustainable economic development. The Resolution also claims a solid budget, a supportive business environment and the necessary investment (both public and private) needed for the proper implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic has sent shockwaves throughout the negatively impacting people and enterprises. The mention to the social economy being a tool to help the most marginalised to return to the labour market in the proposed recovery plan Next Generation EU is positive. The EU's recovery efforts must be transversal and holistic, connecting all policy agendas for a fair, inclusive and sustainable

reconstruction of Europe. In this sense, the European Action Plan for the Social Economy should be recognised in the recovery plan as a significant pillar for the recovery. We expect Next Generation EU to fully include Europe's 100 million persons with disabilities in the recovery plan that social economy actors can facilitate in many fields and call for a greater commitment - budgetary and political - to support the generation of employment for people with disabilities.

Conclusions

The twelve good practices illustrated in this Guide **represent the potential of European social economy enterprises and organisations in the inclusion of people with disabilities across many sectors** such as industry, services, construction, catering, hospitality, tourism, and so on.

On the one hand, social economy enterprises and organisations can ensure the effective inclusion of people with disabilities into society is through their integration in the *labour market*, which implies a major challenge both in terms of personal development as well as autonomy and independence.

Adelante Dolmen (Italy) is a perfect example of how a system of social cooperatives is able to offer work opportunities for people with disabilities in the IT sector. **TPK Mara Dencheva** (Bulgaria) and **Humana Nova** (Croatia) are other examples of social and worker cooperatives that promote the labour integration of people with disabilities in the textile sector according to sustainable principles: the former is specialised in ready-made women's clothing and has also become the first Bulgarian cooperative manufacturer to power its business by renewable energy, and the latter produces textile products made from ecological and recycled fabrics. Moreover, the non-profit association **Ateliers Jean Del'Cour** (Belgium), whose staff is made up of 85% of people with disabilities, provides varied services such as logistics, building renovation or co-packing- for very well-known companies such as l'Oréal, Mondelez or Heineken; similarly, close to Belgium, in Luxembourg, the **Tricentenaire group** offers innovative job opportunities for people with disabilities through five organisations in the fields of sales, printing, cooking or logistics. The **CECAP Group's** Social Business Factory is an excellent example of social economy supporting, advising, incubating and promoting socially inclusive companies thus improving access to the labour market for people with disabilities. Last but not least, with the widest variety of services ranging from IT, hotels, industrial laundries to health services and consultancy (among others), there is the Spanish corporate group **ILUNION**, whose unique business model was awarded by the European Investment Bank's first loan to a social economy enterprise in Europe.

On the other hand, we have discovered and explored other ways that social economy actors make use of to ensure that people with disabilities are included in all spheres of life and have equal access to opportunities (in addition to employment). In this regard, the Guide has collected other initiatives that, besides offering training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities, also focus in other support services.

For instance, the Luxembourgish foundation **Association des Parents d'Enfants Mentalement Handicapés (APEMH)** provides people with disabilities education

support structures, residence and sheltered workshops in order to help them in community life. Likewise, the Spanish foundation **AMADIP ESMENT** provides support through educational centres, housing programmes, day care support, leisure and sport activities. In Portugal, the **National Federation of Cooperatives and Social Solidarity (FENACERCI)** supports more than 25.000 people with disabilities and has been a partner of 39 European projects with 26 countries in areas such as violence and abuse of persons with disabilities, accessible information and technology, inclusive sports and others. The French non-profit association **Les Genêts d'Or** provides adapted care to people with disabilities and residents, promote their autonomy and self- development and help them find their place in the society. Furthermore, targeting the accessibility and travels of people with disabilities, a group of foundations of **the European Foundation Centre (EFC)** launched a pilot project called “The League of Historical and Accessible Cities (LHAC)” with the aim to improving the accessibility of historical towns in five European countries while, at the same time, promoting the development of sustainable tourism and the protection of cultural heritage. The project was awarded with the International Design for All Award.

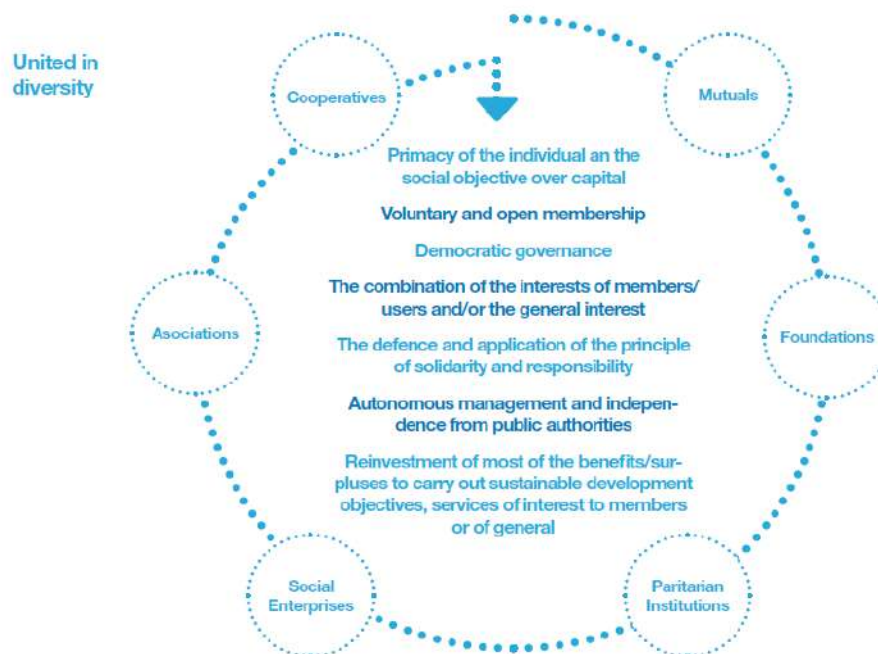
For many, 2020 was originally perceived as a year of optimism in Europe, with renewed European institutions, a strong leadership and an ambitious agenda. The European Commission integrated the drafting of a renewed Disability Strategy 2020-2030, the launch of an European Action Plan for the Social Economy and the reinforcement of the Social Pillar as some of its short-term commitments, which have also become an integral part of the systems of governance. However, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the original calendar and has shifted the priorities to the actions for recovery. Despite the coronavirus exposing fragilities in the economy and deepening existing inequalities, it has also urged the need for resilience, solidarity and cooperation.

We believe the “new normal” should be should fully inclusive and with the potential of the social economy-disability binomial, we call on the EU institutions to commit to the initial agenda as much as possible. The social economy is able to reach marginalised groups, including people with disabilities, this was evident during the pandemic and the recovery phase. The pandemic has shown the key role that the social economy plays in the EU’s socio-economic landscape. This guide illustrates the various ways in which social economy enterprises support people with disabilities to be fully involved in society.

Understanding the Social Economy

The social economy is an essential part of the European economic and social landscape. According to the European Economic and Social Committee there are **2.8 million** social economy enterprises and organisations in the European Union, that employ **13.6 million people** and account for **8% of the EU's GDP**.

Social economy refers to a diversity of enterprises and organisations, such as cooperatives, mutuals, associations, foundations, social enterprises or paritarian institutions of social protection, that are united by common values and characteristics:



Enterprises and organisations of all sizes, ranging from SMEs to large companies and corporations, that operate in all the economic sectors, such as industry, education, healthcare and social services of general interest, agri-food, ethical and cooperative banking, insurance, renewable energies, re-use and recycling, retail and consumption; housing, tourism, culture and leisure, building, professional services, digital economy, and so on.

Because of their strong connection with civil society and their social commitment, social economy enterprises and organisations are at the forefront when it comes to **offering innovative solutions to the main economic, social and environmental challenges of our time**, and contribute to the achievement of key EU objectives.

Social Economy and Disability Working Group' members



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CASES: COOPERATIVA ANTÓNIO SÉRGIO PARA A ECONOMÍA SOCIAL

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CECOP-CICOPA EUROPE: EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION OF INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE COOPERATIVES

www.cecop.coop



CONCERTES : CONCERTATION DES ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTATIVES DE L'ÉCONOMIE SOCIALE (BELGIUM)

www.concertes.be



EFC: EUROPEAN FOUNDATION CENTRE

www.efc.be



ENSIE: EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION ENTERPRISES

www.ensie.org

SEE members



AIM: INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUTUALS

www.aim-mutual.org



AMICE: ASSOCIATION OF MUTUAL INSURERS AND INSURANCE COOPERATIVES IN EUROPE

www.amice-eu.org



CASES: COOPERATIVA ANTÓNIO SÉRGIO PARA A ECONOMÍA SOCIAL

www.cases.pt



CECOP: EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION OF INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE COOPERATIVES

www.cecop.coop

CONFERÈNCIA EUROPEA DAS ASSOCIAÇÕES DE INTERESSE GERAL



CEDAG: EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF ASSOCIATIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST

www.cedag.eu



CEPES: CONFEDERACIÓN EMPRESARIAL ESPAÑOLA DE LA ECONOMÍA SOCIAL

www.cep.es



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www.concertes.be



EUROPEAN FOUNDATION CENTRE

www.efc.be



EMN: EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE NETWORK

www.european-microfinance.org



ENSIE: EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION ENTERPRISES

www.ensie.org

Eurodiaconia

EURODIACONIA

www.eurodiaconia.org



ESS-FRANCE : CHAMBRE FRANÇAISE DE L'ÉCONOMIE SOCIALE ET SOLIDAIRE

www.ess-france.org

febea

FEBEA: EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF ETHICAL AND ALTERNATIVE BANKS AND FINANCIERS.

www.febea.org



FTS: FORUM NAZIONALE TERZO SETTORE (ITALY)

www.forumterzosettore.it



Institut de la Protection
Sociale Européenne

IPSE: INSTITUT DE LA PROTECTION SOCIALE EUROPEENNE

<https://www.euroipse.org/>



REVES: EUROPEAN NETWORK OF CITIES AND REGION FOR THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

www.revesnetwork.eu



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