



# BULLETIN ON EU SOCIAL AFFAIRS

BIANNUAL BULLETIN ON EU-RELATED SOCIAL  
AFFAIRS AND LEGISLATIVE MONITORING



## IN THIS ISSUE

## PAGE

• Editorial	2
<b>CECOP policy work</b>	
• How industrial and service coops face COVID-19	3
• Policy paper on non-standard and platform workers impacted by the COVID-19 crisis	4
• Reaction to EU Industrial and SME strategies	4
• Cooperatives fit to contribute to the new European skills agenda	5
• New report 'All for One – Response of worker-owned cooperatives to non-standard employment'	5

## Update from EU Institutions and partners

• A Recovery Plan for Europe (Next Generation EU)	6
• Updates on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework	6
• Latest statements of our partners	7

## Worth reading for social economy enterprises

• Making Socially Responsible Public Procurement Work: A new European Commission Report	8
• Social Finance Recipe Book	8
• Study on working conditions of platform workers	9
• Social enterprises ecosystem mapping	9

## EDITORIAL

With this fourth edition of the CECOP Bulletin on EU Social Affairs, CECOP informs its members and interested actors and stakeholders on our work, on emerging topics for worker and social cooperatives and the social economy, as well as on the latest developments in European social affairs.

The impact and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic has been dominating all our lives over the last weeks and will continue to do so for the months to come.

The worker and social cooperatives and the Social Economy have not been spared and are facing new challenges, but also showed some innovative approaches to react to this new and unique crisis.

The focus of this issue of the CECOP Bulletin in EU Social Affairs is therefore on the pandemic and response plans.

Despite the virus, the world of politics kept moving, and the workplan of the new European Commission and the negotiation of the new multiannual financial framework are important topics to cover.

Furthermore, we published our own study 'All for one' on worker-owned cooperatives' response to non-standard employment, a topic that is gaining importance for us.

Finally, several new studies on social economy have been published over the last months that are worth a read. How can public procurement be used to support social causes? How to cook social finance and what ecosystems exist in the social economy?

The European Commission has analysed these questions and came up with a range of publications in which we are recognised and to which we contributed. We hope you will enjoy reading this issue of CECOP's Bulletin on Social Affairs and that you stay safe and healthy!



“

**THE WORKER AND SOCIAL COOPERATIVES AND THE SOCIAL ECONOMY HAVE NOT BEEN SPARED BY COVID-19 AND ARE FACING CHALLENGES, BUT ALSO SHOWED SOME INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO REACT TO THIS NEW AND UNIQUE CRISIS.**

# CECOP POLICY WORK

## HOW INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE COOPS FACE COVID-19

While the world is facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis, cooperatives in industry and services are reorganizing themselves, finding strength in the people and communities they serve.

At the end of 2019, a new virus, known as Coronavirus or COVID-19, quickly spread around the world and the sheer number of people who have fallen ill represents a considerable stress test for the health systems in many countries. In the absence of a vaccine against the virus, many states have found themselves forced to take social distancing measures to flatten the curve of the spread of the virus. These measures have led to the closure of most businesses and services whose activities are not considered essential and have forced people to quarantine in their homes.

The [International Labor Organization](#) (ILO) estimates a 6.7% loss of hours worked, which is equivalent to 230 million full-time workers, in the second quarter of the year due to the epidemic and also expect global unemployment to increase considerably during 2020.

The latter will depend mainly on future developments and policy measures, according to the ILO.

### Worker and social cooperatives showed strength and solidarity

Despite the difficulties, cooperatives are demonstrating their ability to reorganize themselves, to reinvent themselves and to cooperate. ([Read our solidarity message](#)).

The need for a community-based economic model is vital in these moments. A model that serves its people and its communities and finds its strength in the support of those very same people and communities. In this context, worker and social cooperatives are carrying on doing what they have always done: protecting their workers, responding to the needs of society and acting at the local level.

CECOP summarized examples of cooperative response to the COVID-19 pandemic across Europe [here](#).





## REACTION TO EU INDUSTRIAL AND SME STRATEGIES

The European Commission's Industrial and SME Strategies put forward some satisfactory proposals especially on SMEs digital and green transition, but it's still a long way to go for actual entrepreneurial diversity to be recognised in Europe.

With two Communications issued on the 10th of March, the European Commission published the Industrial Strategy (A New Industrial Strategy for Europe) and the SME Strategy (An SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe). Both strategies are key steps in policy making in these areas.

CECOP's President Giuseppe Guerini: "We need European policies to be close to the needs of enterprises on the ground. Cooperatives in industry and services produce value for society rather than extracting it. In times when the EU is confronted with important challenges such as economic inequalities, cooperatives in industry and services provide **quality jobs and redistribute wealth equally**. They address many societal needs as well as needs of the communities where they operate".

Read more on CECOP's work on the EU's [Industrial and SME Strategy](#).

## CECOP'S POLICY PAPER ON NON STANDARD AND PLATFORM WORKERS IMPACTED BY THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Through its working group on platforms and non-standard work, CECOP has written a policy paper on the situation of non-standard and platform workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. With input from member organizations from all across Europe, this brief report sheds a light on the opportunities and challenges of worker cooperatives affiliating non-standard workers.

The COVID-19 pandemic that unravelled over the world led to tremendous losses of lives across the world. With huge efforts and strict measures taken, it was possible to slow the spread of the coronavirus in Europe, but the constant threat of a new outbreak, as well as the economic implications of the fight against COVID-19, remain challenges for European societies and economies. As for many aspects, the confinement measures and their impact exacerbated underlying challenges societies were already facing before COVID-19 spread. This is particularly the case of non-standard and platform workers who struggled during this crisis, as many national rescue packages failed to address their needs. Whereas cooperatives showed their resilience in times of turmoil in the past, this crisis is new and the uncertainties for the future of cooperatives are high.

The COVID-19 crisis showed that the recognition of non-standard workers, including platform workers, remains a challenge in national and European labour regulations, leaving workers vulnerable and making fitting policies complicated to obtain. The failure to adapt national and European labour legislation to cover non-standard workers worsened the impact of the current crisis, putting workers incomes and livelihoods at risk.

To learn more about worker cooperatives affiliating non-standard workers during the pandemic, [click here](#).



## COOPERATIVES FIT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEW EUROPEAN SKILLS AGENDA

On 1 July 2020, the European Commission published the [European Skills Agenda](#), a roadmap to analyse and tackle the skills needed in the European labour market. As the European Confederation of industrial and service cooperatives, our workers and their skills are at the heart of our members' business models and CECOP takes great interest in this new agenda.

Worker cooperatives have a tradition to invest in their workers' skills, with education being one of the main principles of the cooperative identity.

CECOP appreciates that the European Commission recognized the role of the social economy in skill development. Worker cooperatives can serve as a useful example of providers of quality and meaningful jobs, for people that put emphasis on value-led workplaces, whilst at the same time empowering workers' entrepreneurship.

Social cooperatives provide employment training, and inclusion for vulnerable members of our society, offering apprenticeships and work integration for disadvantaged groups.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis showed the importance of the maintenance of industrial capacity within the EU when global supply chains have been disrupted. Worker cooperatives have a crucial role to play in the preservation of European industrial capacities without shifting production abroad, as they are rooted in their local communities.

[Read more](#) on the role of worker cooperatives role in the new European Skills Agenda.

## NEW CECOP REPORT 'ALL FOR ONE – RESPONSE OF WORKER-OWNED COOPERATIVES TO NON-STANDARD EMPLOYMENT'

'[All for One - Response of worker-owned cooperatives to non-standard employment](#)', a new report produced by CECOP sets out to show the contributions made by cooperatives to the issues related to non-standard employment, such as precariousness, low income, insufficient social security coverage and workers' isolation.

The report adopts an approach based on the concept of decent work deficits in order to identify specific problematic situations to which worker-owned cooperatives have been responding over the time. However, this report focusses particularly on independent workers (also called freelancers) whose situations are not covered sufficiently by political and institutional debates on non-standard employment.

As examples from Belgium, Finland, France and Spain illustrate, cooperatives have been a laboratory for experimentation on **innovative and sustainable forms of work and employment**, providing a response to the needs of workers in non-standard employment situations, as well as their aspirations for creating a working community of the 21st century. The cooperative laboratory for new forms of work and employment suggests several possible scenarios which might allow us to embrace present and the future of Work. CECOP invites you to discover them, as well as policy recommendations CECOP addresses to EU and national authorities.



# UPDATE FROM EU INSTITUTIONS AND PARTNERS

## A RECOVERY PLAN FOR EUROPE (NEXT GENERATION EU)

In the light of the Coronavirus-pandemic and the unfolding economic crisis, the European Commission published its Next Generation EU Recovery Strategy, and its adjusted work programme to ensure an economic recovery that supports transition efforts of the Commission.

Therefore, the recovery plan does not only function as a stimulus package, but actively seeks to transform existing economic models to support the EU's Green Deal and digitalization strategies. The Recovery plan consist of two main strands: The 'Next Generation Europe' package, which is a € 750 billion grants-and-loans recovery plan, alongside with a revamped Multiannual Financial Framework that accounts for the arising long-term financial needs due to the Corona-virus pandemic.

With CECOP's members being deeply impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, CECOP follows the European recovery programmes closely. CECOP welcomes the support the European Commission provides to Member States that allows for national response policies. Furthermore, the EU's own efforts to provide support for businesses are welcome. However, the implementation of this support needs to reflect the needs of worker cooperatives and social enterprises as frontline service providers during the crisis.

Read CECOP's summary of this proposal [here](#).

## UPDATES ON THE EU MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 is the European Union's long-term budget. Its design will have implications on all levels of EU policy making, ranging from the Member States contributions to the creation of various funds for research, the promotion of social rights and others. With Brexit, COVID-19 and the complex negotiations between Member States in the spotlight of the news, CECOP is following the implications of the MFF on worker cooperatives and the social economy.

Especially the proposed European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) will have impacts on CECOP and its member organizations. With its total budget of €97 billion over seven years, the ESF+ is the main instrument of the EU to ensure social inclusion, to support employment and to foster social innovation.

Read about the main features of the MFF, the state of the negotiations and CECOPs involvement [here](#).





# LATEST STATEMENTS OF OUR PARTNERS

**Cooperatives Europe** has published a [position paper](#) on the situation of cooperative enterprises during the coronavirus pandemic and comments on the proposed recovery plan of the European Commission [here](#).

The COVID-19 crisis has far-reaching impact on the whole social economy family. **Social Economy Europe** has collected statements of more than 250 social economy actors on the impact of the pandemic on social economy actors and published a [report on their findings](#).

**Social Platform**, the largest network of social NGOs in Europe, comments on the European Parliament's adoption of the report of the European Social Fund Plus in January 2020.

Highlighting the importance of the ESF+ for social organizations, Social Platform provides a detailed analysis of the ESF+ [on their blog](#).

The **European Network of Social Integration Enterprises (ENSIE)** issued a report on the impact of the COVID-19 on work integration social enterprises (WISEs). You can access to their report in [English](#) and [French](#).



# WORTH READING FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTERPRISES

## MAKING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT WORK: A NEW COMMISSION REPORT

On 4 June 2020, the European Commission published its report 'Making Socially Responsible Public Procurement Work: Good Practice Cases' on the role of social economy enterprises in public procurement.

CECOP welcomes the recognition of the important role played by social cooperatives and social economy enterprises and congratulates its member organization from Italy on being featured as good practice cases.

The report highlights the cases of from virtuous procurement initiatives involving social cooperatives in Italy affiliated to CECOP member Confcooperative Federsolidarietà (Tuscany region and Brescia municipality); by providing valuable services to their communities whilst employing people from disadvantaged groups, these cooperatives show how public procurement and social goals can go hand in hand.

Moreover, examples from Poland, Bulgaria and Greece document how authorities ensured how tenders can be designed to support the social economy, showing the importance of reliable legal and institutional frameworks for cooperation with the social economy.

Read the Commission's report [here](#).



## SOCIAL FINANCE RECIPE BOOK

In December 2019, the European Commission published its second report "A recipe book for social finance. In eight chapters, the report provides a step by step guide on how to design and implement social finance instruments and reflects the thoughts and decision-making process of the actors involved, such as investors, support organizations and social enterprises.

Gaining access to financial instruments without jeopardizing their social business models can be challenging for social economy actors. This guide considers the different needs of different organizations, provides strategies to develop solutions and allows for mutual understanding for the needs of all the actors involved.

Read the whole study [here](#).

CECOP is following the topics of social finance closely and organized a workshop on the topic in December 2019 in Milan, Italy. Under the title 'The Multiplier Effect: EU financial instruments for social cooperatives and social enterprises', CECOP-members discussed the impact of the EU's financial instruments on the social economy.

A summary of the workshop can be found on CECOP's [webpage](#).



# STUDY ON WORKING CONDITIONS OF PLATFORM WORKERS

Platform work is growing and brings new challenges and opportunities to the world of work. The European Commission has conducted a study to gather evidence on the working conditions of platform workers. Addressing both top-down responses, such as legislation and case law, and bottom-up initiatives such as platform cooperatives, this in-depth study shines light on platform work in Europe.

In their report, the Commission acknowledges the potential of platform cooperatives to ensure decent working conditions for workers, highlighting several case studies from CECOP members, such as Smart Belgium.

The study finds that the lack of coherent legal systems across and within member states creates challenges in the field of platform work. The lack of clear definitions of employment, legitimate self-employment, or bogus self-employment in the field of platform work creates legal uncertainties for workers. CECOP calls on policy makers to address these uncertainties and to provide the best possible access to social security for all workers, regardless of the type and duration of their employment relationship.

The final report can be accessed [here](#).

# SOCIAL ENTERPRISES ECOSYSTEM MAPPING

As a follow-up to previous studies, the European Commission issued a new report “Social Enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe” in January 2020. In an effort to measure the size of the social economy in Europe, to evaluate the development over the sector over the last years and to identify development dynamics and barriers for social enterprises, the Commission analysed case studies from all Member States and neighbouring countries. CECOP congratulates all its member organisations that are considered in the report for being acknowledged as key actors in the development of social economy enterprises and their environment.

The report highlights that a developed cooperative environment fosters the growth of the social economy across Europe by supporting enabling policies and legislations, as well as legitimizing new forms of social enterprises. Overall, social economy enterprises are on the rise in Europe, being supported by an improving enabling environment.

By analysing the legal frameworks among Member States, the report calls for a standardised conceptualisation of the social economy and social enterprises to ensure conceptual clarity across the Union.

The whole report can be found [here](#).

**For more information, please contact Mila Shamku, Advocacy Coordinator at [mila.shamku@cecop.coop](mailto:mila.shamku@cecop.coop)**

**This bulletin has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation EaSI (2014-2020).**

**For further information please consult their [website](#).**

