

European Social Economy Congress

SSE Workshop “How to ensure not-for-profit social service providers can fulfil their key role in the social economy?”

14 November 2023, 14:30-17:30/18:00
The Centro Kursaal, Room XXX
Zurriola Hiribidea 1, 20002 Donostia - San Sebastián

Draft Concept Note

Setting the scene

The **Social Economy Action Plan** of 9 December 2021 and the various initiatives included there have put the social economy and the question of how to design and improve supportive regulatory, policy and funding frameworks for organisations in the social economy back on the EU agenda¹. Social Services Europe (SSE) has assessed this initiative as generally helpful and positive². SSE has presented proposals to work in cooperation and partnership with national, regional and local governments or public authorities and with the European Commission (EC) to support the implementation of key initiatives of the Social Economy Action Plan³.

On 13 June 2023, the European Commission published the proposal for a **Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions**, to be adopted in autumn. It again addresses many topics relevant for SSE, such as staff shortages and effective recruitment and retention of the workforce, ensuring a high service quality, state aid, public procurement, social impact assessment and taxation. SSE welcomed the document, proposed some changes in view of the final version and expressed the interest and availability of SSE members to support the implementation in particular of those recommendations which are thematically linked to the challenges they face⁴.

Not-for-profit social services and their providers have been recognised as being part of the social economy; they, however, still aim at strengthening their visibility and role in the social economy ecosystem. They also wish to identify ways and concrete steps with the competent public authorities at different levels within the EU Member States and with the European Commission how they could

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

² [SSE Statement on the Social Economy Action Plan](#) (15 December 2021)

³ [SSE Proposals for the Implementation of the Social Economy Action Plan - From Ambition to Implementation](#) (28 April 2022)

⁴ SSE Statement on the EC proposal for a Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions (10 July 2023)

be more effectively supported to make full advantage of their strengths and potential for an improved social inclusion and social cohesion and for high-quality, rights-based and person-centred care, support, guidance, education, and training services the offer to all the people needing them.

This implies **addressing the specific challenges not-for-profit social services and their providers face** in the EU-level legislative context and/or in their national regulatory frameworks when it comes to

- the access to funding to address increasing investment needs and needs for care, support, guidance, education, and training of economically and socially vulnerable groups and disadvantaged individuals, including their own service users,
- models of trustful cooperation and partnership with governments and public authorities (alongside an autonomy as to the internal governance of not-for-profit social services) and
- the aspects linked to (EU-level and national) frameworks for the regulation, organisation, delivery, financing and assessment of social services of general interest, as listed above.

Objectives

- First, to **present evidence** by national members of SSE members **to illustrate selected challenges** not-for-profit social services and their providers are persistently facing in view of the key framework conditions and the social economy ecosystem they are operating in in line with their values, mission, objectives and vision as well as to **showcase solutions and promising practice examples**.
- Second, to **present SSE's recommendations** in view of selected priority issues, such as staff shortages and effective recruitment and retention of the workforce, ensuring a high service quality, state aid, public procurement, social impact assessment and taxation.
- Third, to engage in an **exchange with national and EU-level policy makers**, by discussing the learnings from the evidence as well as from existing solutions and promising practices, also in view of changes needed in the EU-level regulatory frameworks or reforms to improve national framework conditions.

Target group

In attending this workshop, you will hear from European networks of not-for-profit social service providers, their members from different EU MS and thematic experts. You will discuss with them possible solutions and promising practices. You will explore pathways for regulatory and policy reforms better enable not-for-profit social services and their providers to use their full potential.

DRAFT Programme Structure

14:30-14:40 Welcome & Setting the scene for the workshop

- Heather Roy, Secretary General Eurodiaconia & SSE President

14:40-16:10 Presentation of the evidence gathered for selected challenges and showcasing solutions used/promising practices

- Staff shortages, effective recruitment and retention and social dialogue in the context of the new Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Social Services [national SSE member(s), with a contribution focusing on a challenge and/or on a solution/promising practice , N.N. – proposal: UNIPSO, Belgium – and Social Employers]
- Ensuring a high service quality [national SSE member(s), with a contribution focusing on a challenge AND/OR on a solution/promising practice , N.N.]
- Social impact assessment and methodology [national SSE member(s), with a contribution focusing on a challenge AND/OR on a solution/promising practice , N.N.]
- State aid / Public procurement / Taxation [N.N., SSE Board member/SSE staff]

Q&A from participants after each topic

Moderation: N.N. [SSE Board member OR Policy Coordinator/Officer of an SSE member]

16:25-17:25 Exchange with policy makers on steps to be taken to improve the framework conditions

Moderation: N.N. [SSE Board member OR Policy Coordinator/Officer of an SSE member]

17:25-17:30 Conclusions and outlook

- Heather Roy, Secretary General Eurodiaconia & SSE President