



European Commission

Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL)  
Directorate General Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (FISMA)  
Directorate General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROWTH)



## Groupe d'experts de la Commission sur l'entrepreneuriat social (GECES)



8<sup>th</sup> meeting – Tuesday 24 November 2015  
Charlemagne building, rue de la Loi 170, Brussels / Meeting Room Mansholt

### MINUTES of the MEETING

Adoption of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting (16/09/2015) [minutes](#)<sup>1</sup> and the [agenda of the day](#)<sup>2</sup>.

#### Plenary I:

Michel Catinat welcomed the participants to the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of GECES, in particular in the context of specific security measures taken by the Commission (EC).

Organisation in 4 WGs has been so far very effective and a lot has already been achieved: 4 working documents, skeleton of report. The role of the GECES is essential and the EC always highlights the importance of it within all meetings in EP, EESC, and meetings/conference where officials attend.

But the EC alone can't fix all problems. A partnership between all stakeholders and the EC is of paramount importance. Proposals for actions are the only way out with identification of issues and concrete actions. To that end, the GECES report is of key importance.

Ann Branch then introduced herself as new Head of Unit E1 "Job creation" in DG EMPL, where "social enterprise, inclusive entrepreneurship" is being dealt.

Michel Catinat thanked the rapporteur of WG4 (Laura Catana) for having created and set up the electronic tool for the GECES members to work together (a [Dropbox](#)). Each GECES expert should register to this system that enables exchange/sharing of information and documents.

A member regretted that neither the Single Market Strategy (SMS) adopted on 28 October nor the EC working programme for 2016 contained references to social economy. This member also expressed some regrets that, although the EC services were very active, the College level was showing no sign whatsoever of priority for social economy enterprises. Another expert questioned about the impact of not having any reference of social economy in these documents. Since political leaders have "forgotten about us", it may be in fact an opportunity for the GECES to have more freedom in proposing recommendations in November 2016. Michel Catinat explained that the hook proposed in the SMS by the services has not been kept because of a lack of clear actions. It means that the recommendations should come up with actions, the sooner the better. The willingness of the EC is to maintain the political momentum, but we have all collectively to come up with a concrete action plan. The College is fully aware of the work carried out by

<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/13342/attachments/6/translations/en/renditions/native>

<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/14086/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/native>

the GECES, but it is expecting concrete actions to intervene. So far the Commissioners could not attend conference / events related to social economy due to agenda constraints, not because they don't think the sector is not important. Implementing the SBI roadmap is already a huge task for the EC services and the colleagues working at EMPL, GROWTH and FISMA level (i.a.) are very busy on that matter. If something concrete deserves a political statement, the Commissioners would be ready to act (for example DG EMPL on synergies with the ESF instrument or new financial instruments with Member States).

The same expert explained that, with former Commission, a huge roadmap had been initiated and that it was a pity that the work of this GECES was to draft a roadmap from scratch again. Another expert invited to a closer relationship between the GECES and the EP Intergroup on social economy and the EESC. The EC replied that the EP was observer to the GECES and that the Commission was always attending meetings of the Intergroup, each time it was invited, with the participation often of GECES members (Social Economy Europe is carrying the secretariat of the Intergroup, and is part of the GECES). The collaboration was strong with the EESC.

FR explained that the GECES work was very important and that when the SMS would come at the Council (for reaction), there would be opportunities for political reactions in order to include social economy in the global picture of the Single Market, as it deserved it.

### **Skeleton of the future report**

Michel Catinat recalled that it was important to have the skeleton/canvas of the report from this early moment, to avoid a situation where the report would be presented in one year time with complete surprise, *“out from the cloud”*.

The Rapporteur général stated that having not mentioned social economy in the SMS was a very bad political sign. Therefore, the report should reconcile between the EC or stakeholders actions and overall political objectives. He explained that the draft Council conclusions (adopted on 7 December) were an excellent document. The issues of territorial cohesion, economic growth, creation of “good” jobs, gender equality should be addressed by the report, even if they were transversal to the WGs.

A clarification of concepts (CSR, social economy, solidary economy, social intrapreneurship, collaborative economy, circular economy, social innovation) will be important in the report. The rising of refugees in the EU will be addressed by the report (the positive attitude of the DE Government and President Juncker must be highlighted). Social economy is playing and should play a strategic role to help refugees to settle down in the EU.

The report will be a mix of political statements and concrete recommendations based on the work of the 4 working groups. In the coming months, some inputs/recommendations will be agreed for concrete results. Those could even begin to be put in practice (by the EC services for example) – this is a proposal to the EC secretariat of GECES.

The report should address networks coordination issues in social economy (*Are there too many networks? What are the common values or possible strategies for the entire social economy community?*), the measurement of social impact, statistics (*why so few Member States collect the right statistics?*).

One expert highlighted the fact that “social economy” and “social enterprise” didn't refer to the same concept. Social economy enterprises are active in more domains. A reference to the work carried out by the EESC and the Strasbourg event in January 2014/ Rome in November 2014 should be included in the report. This expert asked for a full roadmap (a “SBI II”).

An expert asked to focus on purpose of the “social” dimension of the social economy, for social outcomes. The report should address what is needed, more than what is “new”.

An expert proposed the report to refer to “asylum seekers” instead of “refugees”, but the report should not put too much importance on this issue since the society itself has already a lot of challenges to focus on.

An expert recalled the resilience of social economy and its unique nature to address the social and economic crisis. The broad support of the practitioners should be reached by the report. WG2 should meet Eurostat to identify the barriers for obtaining appropriate data on Social Economy.

The rapporteur général agreed that social enterprises had much more to cover than the important domain of “health and poverty” and the resilience of the sector should be written explicitly in the report.

The Committee of the Regions emphasized the importance of social economy to get out in much better shape of the crisis.

Having heard all the interventions, Michel Catinat concluded that now the global support of the GECES to the skeleton was clear.

### **European Fund for Strategic Investments<sup>3</sup> ("Juncker plan")**

After the [presentation](#) a member highlighted that care should be taken on how to use social enterprises to deal with refugees and migrants due to the complexity and the social, legal and cultural difficulties related to the issue. Another member underlined that the "payment-by-result" should not be the only option as it will exclude many organisations which don't have access in first place to run the programs. A private member confirmed the Social Impact Funds is a very important instrument, as it gives the opportunity to explore more complex and outcome-focused investment structures and gives the opportunity to scale-up some of the existing initiatives already in place. Also, this instrument could have a potentially interesting role in the integration to the labour market in the long run, as opposed to the emergency type of initiative in the current crisis.

A member asked clarification on how to link the work in the GECES WG2 with the last report of the previous GECES which concluded with some actions which is not clear if will be continued or discontinued.

Some members commented on the eligibility criteria for the social enterprises which should make sure that the organisations the Commission is targeting to work with the end users are able to do so. Also, members highlighted the importance of making sure the financial intermediaries direct funds to social enterprises and not to general SMEs, or to combine these instruments with other financial instruments and possibly with grants.

### **The EaSI guarantee<sup>4</sup> for social entrepreneurship**

Andrea Maier presented the [EaSI Guarantee for Social entrepreneurship](#), which implementation was launched in June 2015 by the European Investment Fund (EIF) on behalf of the European Commission.

The scheme is open for intermediaries providing loans to social enterprises in the 28 EU Member States and in countries which have signed an agreement on their participation in the programme, currently Turkey, Iceland, FYROM and Montenegro. The EaSI guarantee mitigates the perceived additional risk when intermediary bodies provide loans to social enterprises. Thereby the scheme brings social enterprises to a level playing field with ordinary companies.

By November 2015, the EIF had received applications form eight intermediaries, which is a relatively quick start and indicates strong demand and that the terms of the scheme are attractive for the

---

<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/jobs-growth-investment/plan/efsi/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/jobs-growth-investment/plan/efsi/index_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-15-5248\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5248_en.htm)

intermediaries. Consequently, the Commission is currently examining the possibilities for frontloading the budget from coming years with support from EFSI in order to achieve a quicker and stronger impact on the social enterprise finance markets.

## Refugees crisis and social enterprise policy

For DG HOME, Andrea Teftdarija explained that it was important to identify the Member States' needs

- Following the Western Balkans Route Leaders' Summit of 25 October 2015, the Commission has taken the initiative to conduct a thorough needs assessment of the Member States which were the most affected by the crisis: AT, BG, DE, EL, HU, HR, RO and SI. Similar exercises were also under way for SRB and FYROM.
- These Member States were asked to identify their needs for the next six months in the following areas: 1) Accommodation and reception, 2) Food and basic services, 3) Registration, 4) Asylum applications processing, 5) Return, 6) Border management. These areas are part of the 17 point of the action plan adopted during the WB Summit.
- The Commission is currently undertaking missions to the mentioned Member States to refine the needs assessments and understand how much funding will be needed for the short term financial needs (next six months).
- During the mission, the Commission liaises closely with other relevant actors, such as the UNHCR, to ensure complementarity.
- Missions to SI, HR, EL have been completed and missions to DE, BG, AT, RO and HU will follow in the next weeks.
- Additional needs assessment exercises will need to be conducted to create an overview of the medium and longer term needs in all Member States, most notably in the fields of 1) integration and 2) return.

DG HOME: mapping out the relevant and available EU funding instruments:

- The relevant Commission services have worked on an [overview](#)<sup>5</sup> of eligible actions and target groups within the various funding instruments, as well as the funding possibilities from International Financial Institutions.
- All the ESI funds - AMIF, ESF, FEAD, ERDF, EAFRD, EMFF, as well as EIB loans - can be mobilised to address the current migration challenges in the short and longer perspective in relation to reception and integration of asylum seekers, in both transit and destination Member States.
- Next to refining the needs assessment, another objective of the missions to the Member States is to map out how the different EU funding instruments managed by that Member State can potentially support the authorities in managing the refugee flows. To that end, joint meetings are held between the Responsible Authorities of AMIF and ESF on the one hand and the ESIF Managing Authorities on the other. The involved Commission services are HOME, REGIO, EMPL and on an ad hoc basis AGRI and MARE. Other actors joining the meetings are the International Financial Institutions.

Michel Catinat then explained DG GROW work to integrate refugees through entrepreneurship. A study is currently being carried out on which policies are taken by MS and the Commission in order to identify best practices. A conference is scheduled end February 2016 with MS and other stakeholders to discuss the result of the study and agree on what could be the added value of the Commission. A budget for end 2016 is foreseen to undertake specific actions to facilitate integration of refugees through entrepreneurship.

Marie-Anne Paraskevas (EMPL) took the floor to highlight the fact that they have 2 funds:

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/14250/attachments/7/translations/en/renditions/native>

- ESF (86 billion euros for 2014/2020) with long term integration for migrants and asylum seekers if they cope with legal requirements (participation in the labor market/ status of refugees or requirement of international protection). Some MS have already put in their operational programmes some money to accommodate refugees mainly on thematic objective of “social inclusion” (21 billion euros). Some activity could be funded for asylum seekers who didn’t obtain the statut of asylum seekers: vocational training and education of minors which arrived with their family or alone.
- A new fund created in 2014 “Fund for European Aid for the most Deprived” (FEAD) which amounts € 3,8 billion for the 7 years. What is critical is if the MS have listed the “Asylum seekers” in the definition of the “most deperived” (work with DG ECHO and DG HOME) to understand how these funds could complemente each other.

SI presented its case on how to tackle huge problems at the borders but also within Slovenia. A [paper](#)<sup>6</sup> was proposed in order to identify which financial instruments (ESF, FEAF, ERDF, EFSI, Social impact bonds) could be used to tackle the probems of refugees in SI at short notice (transit or integration in communities or even when they will return to their country). Services provided by social enterprises, or role of social impact investors, financial instruments and sources were discussed. SI used also the information send by FI.

An expert gave a snapshot of what is done in DE. Strong civil society is key and should be supported. Aside of big welfare state organisations (Caritas, RedCross, etc.) which are the backbone organisation and which are managing the entire challenge on the ground, purely private engagement entities can exist. These latest ones are organised without any legal forms (question is then how to give access to funds or programmes for these private entities). Grassroots initiatives can be found as well, they are small but innovative social enterprises. The question is how to support and scale up these activities. A tentative of mapping of the entities, the impact they have, their scaling them up is taking place in DE. A private “donor advice fund” has been created and an impact lab is incubating 20 social entrepreneurs like Kiron university (university for refugees).

An expert mentioned that the Baltic MS are in the same situation where civil society entities was also left alone. Maybe a specific WG should be considered. WG 4 rapporteur supported this idea.

An expert mentionned the setting up of a support incubation programme for refugees willing to create their enterprise in the EU, with impact lab in DE. This could become a European network of support structures to help refugees to create their enterprises.

An expert pointed out that this problem could not be solved following a top-down approach. The EU should consider to set up an EU wide job seeking platform for refugees (in Arabic or Farsi languages as well) where companies which have some specific demands could find a skilled/experience refugee. Another idea is to propose ideas on how to reduce legal obstacles to bottom up solutions that could be provided by civil society organisations.

The rapporteur général wondered how all these initiative from the civil society could lead to the creation of permanent social enterprises. This issue was considered transversal to the GECES/report.

DG GROW mentioned that, during the SME envoys meeting in LU, it was decided to work on ideas to help refugees become SME entrepreneurs. DE will soon produce a report with best practices.

OECD mentioned that a small seminar would be organised on 27 November in Paris on local responses to the refugee's crisis. A manual will be released next year with best practises.

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/14182/attachments/5/translations/en/renditions/native>

## WEstart<sup>7</sup>: "Women Social Entrepreneurs Changing Europe"

Emily Usher Shrair - Project Manager WEstart<sup>8</sup>

Emily Usher Shrair took the floor to present the results of the study "*Mapping Women's Social Entrepreneurship in Europe*" (cf. [PPT](#)<sup>9</sup> presentation). She first introduced the [European Women's Lobby](#) association and the project WEstart run by the association. WEstart is a privately funded, year-long pilot project based out of the European Women's Lobby Secretariat in Brussels. The core aim of the EWL project was to gain a better understanding of the situation and state of play of women's social entrepreneurship in Europe. The objectives of the project were the following:

- Identify and map women's social entrepreneurship initiatives in ten Member States (France and Germany; Bulgaria and Hungary; Italy and Spain; Sweden and Lithuania; Ireland and the United Kingdom) as a pilot which could subsequently be carried out in the remaining EU Member States and accession countries;
- Establish an overall picture of the activities carried out and how these respond to women's empowerment in and sustainable growth of communities;
- Establish a data bank of female social entrepreneurs;
- Give visibility to women's social entrepreneurship within entrepreneurship development in Europe;
- Provide links and facilitate networking between and among women's entrepreneurship in Europe;
- Identify key recommendations for policy makers to support women's social entrepreneurship in Europe.

The final report contains an analysis of the trends, general findings and recommendations as well as an evaluation of the project.

Socio-Economic findings indicated women are leading sustainable enterprises and promoting job creation, with many having high revenue potential.

- Responding to an unmet need in their communities and developing innovative ideas to achieve transformative social impact were among the most common motivating factors to start a social enterprise;
- The findings of WEstart project revealed that the majority of women social entrepreneurs surveyed generate 1 to 3 full-time jobs, and one third of women produce high levels of annual revenue;
- For the majority of women social entrepreneurs, 50-100% of their annual revenue came from the market, and over 90% of their surplus was reinvested back into their organisation or into a social cause;
- Access to finance is the most commonly reported barrier to success that women social entrepreneurs face, with lack of time and national level politics also cited as key obstacles.

- Women were not measuring their company's social impact. However many women social entrepreneurs thought they had an impact.

Gender Equality Findings indicate the enormous potential of social enterprise as a vehicle of women's empowerment, and demonstrate that investment in women-led social enterprise has the potential to contribute greatly to national-level gender equality.

- Over 90% of women feel that they have been empowered as a woman by starting and running a social enterprise;

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://womenlobby.org/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?article7245&lang=en>

<sup>9</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/14250/attachments/9/translations/en/renditions/native>

- 85% feel that they are empowering other women with their social enterprise activity;
- Almost 90% of women feel they are contributing to gender equality in their country, through their work as a social entrepreneur;
- The majority of women have (unpaid) care responsibilities both when start, and growing their social enterprise: caring for a child, a family member, or another person.

Michel Catinat recalled that gender equality would be a crosscutting issue to be discussed in the different working groups. DG GROW informed the audience that an e-platform for women entrepreneurs was currently being set up by the Commission. The general objectives of the platform were to provide crucial information and support on access to finance and how to start and grow businesses to current and aspiring women entrepreneurs, as well as proposing mentoring programmes, good practice and case studies and success stories. It should act as a hub for online networking, exchange and cooperation among aspiring and current women entrepreneurs and stakeholders, with an emphasis on the cross-national, European dimension. As tools to support women entrepreneurship, DG GROW mentioned the study on ['Statistical data on Women entrepreneurs in Europe'](#) and the project European Network of Business Angels for Women Entrepreneurs.

An expert highlighted the fact that measuring impact was difficult but important as a key tool for success. DE set up a new tool which was a guide on how to measure impact. This guide was already available in DE and ES. The expert will inform GECES members once translated in EN in order to disseminate it to different networks.

## **Plenary II:**

### **France Strategy on "*Innovate with the development stakeholder: a support strategy for the new social and inclusive economy models*"**

FR representative presented the [The support strategy for the new social and inclusive economy models – from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development \(MAEDI\)](#)<sup>10</sup>. He highlighted the very good cooperation between the Ministry of Finance and the MAEDI. This is the international part/declination of the strategy for social enterprises which was already deployed within France since the new Law on Social economy of July 2014. The measurement of social impact (project CERISE from the development agency AFD) is key.

The rapporteur of WG 4 asked what concrete actions would be taken. FR replied that AFD was developing new tools, which were based on existing tools, but should be now reformed to fit into this new strategy for Social and Solidarity Economy. Measurement of impact and parametrage of companies are key issues for reforming the actions.

### **The International Leading Group on Social and Solidarity Economy (ILGSSE<sup>11</sup>)**

Thierry Jeantet<sup>12</sup>, President of [The Mont-Blanc meetings](#)<sup>13</sup>, presented the Forum of Mont Blanc, which gives visibility to social economy enterprises and allow social entrepreneurs to work together across borders.

<sup>10</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/14250/attachments/10/translations/en/renditions/native>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.rencontres-montblanc.coop/en/page/international-leading-group-sse>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.rencontres-montblanc.coop/en/page/board-directors>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.rencontres-montblanc.coop/en/page/presentation-0>

The International leading group of the SSE (ILGSSE) was set up after contacts with UN organisation (UNDP and ILO) and in 2014. FR launched this leading group and chaired it until 2017. It encourages public policies (national or international) for Social enterprises, with a very open scope.

Three objectives of the ILGSSE:

- **promote the social and solidarity economy (SSE) in the world**, making this form of entrepreneurship accessible to all people and increasing the recognition of this economic model in public policies implementation;
- **submit concrete suggestions promoting SSE to national and international bodies** during major international summits or national consultations on SSE (law bills and financing in particular);
- **Involve the SSE to a new model of development** and the development of solutions for climate change, its necessary inclusion in the Agenda of cities and urbanization policies, financing for sustainable development...

Composition of the ILGSSE platform:

- **International institutions:** the UN Inter-agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy – UNSSE (including UNRISD, UN-NGLS, ILO, UNEP, UNCTAD, OECD, ECLAC, ESCWA, FAO, TDR, UNAIDS, UN-DESA, UNECE, UNESCO, UNIDO, UN Women, UN-Habitat, WFP and WHO), interregional development banks...
- **States** from all continents and representing the socio-economic diversity in which the social and solidarity economy has a role to play and a place to take (FR, ES, LU, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Morocco, Colombia, Quebec as observer)
- **Civil society organizations** such as The Mont-Blanc Meetings (MBM) – International Forum of the Social and Solidarity Economy Entrepreneurs-, the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), the International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM), the International Association of Francophone Mayors (IAFM), Global fund for cities development (FMDV), foundations networks, trade-union confederations

There is a co-secretariat (FR/Ministry of Foreign Affairs with State Secretary in charge of SE + MBM). There will be a meeting at the UN in September each year.

[First meeting](#)<sup>14</sup> was held last 28 September in New York in the UN premises. President Hollande delivered an engaged speech, noting that the underlying principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were inspired by SSE. Members of the Leading Group endorsed a Declaration prepared in collaboration with the UNSSE and calling for SSE to be considered an integral part of the implementation of the SDGs. This Declaration, that would be circulated, presents a roadmap that:

- Set up a legal and political framework for public policies which could benefit to the development of the SSE (an international guide of legislations of SSE will be elaborated in the future, Tax measures);
- Encourage partnership between Public authorities (national, local) and Social economy;
- Encourage platforms for specific impact investing;
- Strengthen data and knowledge (best practices) on Social economy;
- Develop educational programs for Social economy.

2 more objectives:

1. An international conference on financial tools for Social economy in 2017 or 2018, with the WB, EIB, etc.
2. New wealth indicators

---

<sup>14</sup> <http://unsse.org/?p=1205> or <http://www.rencontres-montblanc.coop/en/page/high-level-event-international-leading-group-sse>



An international platform of Social economy projects was already set up, especially to help young startups to find partnership. It should be developed from now.

In Chamonix on 28 November 2015, an International network of members of Parliament for Social economy will be launched.

An expert mentioned that the European Commission should be part of the ILGSSE, mirroring what it does in the European Health Forum Gastein ([EHFG<sup>15</sup>](#)).

OECD representative explained that OECD was part of the scientific committee of the Mont Blanc Meetings and of the UNSSE, and expressed views that an adequate participation at the ILGSSE should be reached.

Ann Branch (EMPL) encouraged Member States to participate in the International Leading Group on Social and Solidarity Economy<sup>16</sup> and mentioned that the EC services would attend the Chamonix meeting end of the week.

### **Ongoing work on a competence framework for "sense of initiative and entrepreneurship"**

Godelieve Van den Brande (Skills & Qualifications Unit, DG EMPL) presented the "[Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship](#)" Reference Framework. The framework is being developed by the JRC-IPTS on behalf of DG EMPL. Its aim is to define entrepreneurial skills in order to be able to measure them. This can have a wide use (e.g. in education, the training sector, public employment services) and would allow to bridge the worlds of education and work. The aim of the presentation was to involve GECES members in the process of identifying and describing the assessment criteria that would be used for measuring the entrepreneurship competence.

To measure the entrepreneurial competence, the Commission has relied on an existing framework of eight competences. One of these – the digital competence – has already been developed and has proven to be successful. 12 EU countries are currently using the Digital Competence Framework.

On the basis of existing literature, interviews and consultations with thematic working groups, the IPTS drafted the various dimensions of the entrepreneurial competence. A very broad definition has been drawn up; the definition applies to both individuals and groups/organizations and touches upon several spheres of life.

Three competence areas have been identified embracing knowledge, skills and attitudes: 1) resources; 2) ideas and opportunities; 3) getting into action. Under these three areas, 17 competences have already been identified and described. Some of these competences are crosscutting. They should reflect both the business and social dimensions of the entrepreneurship competence.

The GECES critical view would be needed with regard to the completeness of the 17 competences that have been identified and to fine-tuning their description and, based on this, identifying the right assessment criteria. Those who are interested were invited to first check the work that has been already done and which is available on the [EntreComp website](#) and then to engage with the researchers of IPTS ([Margherita Bacigalupo](#) is the contact person).

---

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.ehfg.org/home.html>

<sup>16</sup> After the meeting, the EC (GECES secretariat) sent an email to all GECES MS representatives to invite them to contact their counterpart in the Ministry in charge of Foreign Affairs and/or Ministry of International development to advocate for such kind of participation. Representatives should send to the GECES secretariat by end March their feedback related to this action in order to distribute the information during the 09<sup>th</sup> GECES meeting scheduled on 14 April 2016.

An expert asked how would social dimension be taken into account and how would the framework be used in specific fields. DG EMPL clarified that social competences are a key competence in the framework developed in 2006. Since then, some transversal or soft skills (e.g. being social or collaborative) have been considered. They are often interlinked and difficult to grasp. The 17 competences identified by IPTS are already taking on board the social entrepreneurship dimension. Now is the right time to discuss if these competences could be even more specific to social entrepreneurship. On the second question, DG EMPL explained that the framework is not meant to be restrictive and that the intention is to use it in different sectors. The social entrepreneurship competence could be useful for instance if you are an employer looking for someone that has this specific competence.

Another expert asked if the competences would be transferred into the needs for teachers to get children to learn. DG EMPL explained that this is intended, but some work still needs to be done in between.

### **The mapping study on social enterprises and their eco-systems in Europe<sup>17</sup>**

Risto Raivio (EMPL) reminded members about a document sent on 6 November concerning the planned follow-up of the mapping study ([INFO](#)). The Commission will launch the follow-up using a participatory method. The experimental exercise will cover seven countries and will be based on the currently available country reports in English language.

The participatory method requires active approach and governmental members of GECES are invited to submit proposals how their country would support the exercise in practice, in case the country would be included in the pilot exercise. The proposals are expected by end of November.

An expert commented that qualitative studies such as the mapping study are very interesting and useful. However, in addition to this initiative, there is an urgent need to take concrete actions in this area. In particular, there is a need to be able to measure the impact of the social economy (its turnover, added value, gross operating surplus, gross capital formation, employee remuneration, the female/male /youth employment it generates, etc). He mentioned the worked carried out by CIRIEC on behalf of the European Commission since 2005. CIRIEC has developed a methodology for implementing satellite accounts in the systems of national accounts. There are countries that have already developed satellite accounts based on this methodology. However, more needs to be done to promote this topic. He suggested that a proposal in this direction should be made at the Presidency conference taking place in Luxembourg.

Risto Raivio confirmed that that the implementation of national accounts is relevant and that work should continue in that field. This is also going to be discussed by WG2. As for the Mapping, he added that this is not a theoretical exercise, but a descriptive one and that several voices have expressed the need for a continuation of this exercise.

The rapporteur of WG3 (Dorotea Daniele) informed the GECES about the ESF thematic network on Social Economy. The network is being launched and will have its first meeting in Brussels in January. As Managing Authorities are members of this network, GECES representatives of public authorities were invited to liaise with the transnational contact points in their country and to encourage them to take part in the Social economy network.

### **Plenary III: Debriefing of the afternoons sessions in plenary**

Sven GENTNER (DG FISMA) welcomed back the Members from the breakout sessions. The floor was given to Luxembourg to update on the logistics of the upcoming conference in Luxembourg. Before giving the floor to the rapporteurs, the Chair reported a message from the Slovak representative announcing

---

<sup>17</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2149&furtherNews=yes>

Slovakia would organise a conference next year in December, which could also be a platform to present the GECES report.

Sven gave the floor to the different working groups for a debrief.

### **WG1 "Improving access to funding, Andreja ROSANDIC**

The Rapporteur explained WG1 further divided their Members into 3 sub-groups or "key policy domain" (KPD). During the breakout session mostly one KPD was discussed, namely the one on removing blockers which prevent social enterprises to access funding. The other two KPD (removing obstacles for private funding, and mobilising public funding) will be further developed in Luxembourg. WG1 agreed that some topics should be cross-checked with other WGs, in particular the divisions of the stages of development of social enterprises (pre-start-up phase; start-up or pilot phase; early stage growth; and later stage growth).

### **WG2 "Increasing visibility of social entrepreneurship", Konstantina ZÖHRER**

There was some work between the GECES meetings, in particular on clarifying objectives of WG2. In order to be more efficient, the group developed a visibility matrix in order to identify specific measures and objectives that would be targetable. For instance, develop a stakeholders' driven social enterprises label or making more mainstream products produced by social enterprises. The refugee crisis was not tackled that much as it will be addressed during the Luxembourg conference.

A Member reported some concerns and cautions on the label, reporting the UK example where it was not clear how much it was driven from the enterprises and how much from the state. The rapporteur confirmed the approach is bottom-up as there were failing examples using a top-down approach.

### **WG3 "Improving the legal environment", Daniele DOROTEA**

DG COMP made a presentation during the breakout session on the State-Aid under the 2012 package on Services to General Interest and how the different kind of exemptions may be applied to social enterprises. WG3 discussed some examples on how national and local authorities may face State-Aid issues and decided to make some recommendations already ahead of the possible public consultation on State Aid review in 2017 or 2018. Also, WG3 discussed an internal document on "legal framework for social enterprises" and agreed not to recommend only one legal form, but to find the main legal characteristics that social enterprises should have (e.g. governance, capital structure, objectives, etc.), and the main issues that should be dealt by public policy. WG3 recommendations would be addressed to Member States who do not have a legal framework yet, or just want to use some part of the legal recommendations. Indeed, the frameworks are very different across the member States, so WG3 cannot recommend a single system which applies to all.

### **WG4: "External dimension": Laura CATANA**

WG4 explained that the ultimate goal of creating impact and supporting social enterprises will be addressed indirectly through recommendation to the role of the EU in enhancing the role of various enablers (e.g. the Commission, development banks, other international financial institutions, etc.). The ultimate objective is to identify ways to align the various efforts and ensure they foster the social impact of social enterprises in a more efficient way. There not a single solution, but WG4 wants to play the role of a combiner, also allowing "big players" to communicate to each other. WG4 is possibly looking for a PhD student willing to engage in a mapping exercise on which are the international players targeting only social enterprises. The study would be done through in depth interviews to identify the common points that bring them together. The study would serve as a basis for the final recommendation to the Commission. Next step is to understand how to best use the best experiences in different countries, on (i) the internal side i.e.

how to foster internal coordination inside the Commission on humanitarian side (DG EEAS, DG DEVCO, DG ECHO, DG NEAR), and on cooperation, trading and access to market (DG TRADE); and (ii) the external side i.e. how to build the position of the EU as lead convener in the discussions on the role of social enterprises on development.

The Rapporteur reported the last two points discussed in the WG4: how to enhance new co-creation approaches between traditional for-profit companies and social enterprises; and how to bring together the external dimension with refugees and migrants.

**In his capacity of rapporteur général** Denis STOKKINK concluded that the GECES Members will have the opportunity to meet again in Luxembourg next week, and after this second meeting the structure of the final report will become clearer. The Rapporteur General insisted that the final report should be a "readable" document limited to 20 pages (excluded annexes), that is 3 pages for WG. In this framework, the recommendations should be very specific and clear. The Rapporteur General reminded that if the final report should be adopted in autumn 2016, a first draft should be ready in April 2016 for the GECES to have time to review and discuss it.

The Chair welcomed the steer from the Rapporteur General on the timing and on a short and operational final report. After an update on the logistics of next GECES sub-group meetings in the framework of the Luxembourg conference, Michel CATINAT confirmed the support to the Rapporteur General on the different aspects of the preparation of the final report. Risto RAVIO confirmed that the correct date for the last GECES meeting will be 15 November 2016.

A Member asked the GECES to reflect how best to explain and promote the role and the work done by the group. Michel CATINAT confirmed the final report will not be the end of the process, and that's why clear and focused recommendations are helpful to make policymakers aware and ensure an adequate follow-up. Also, the final report will not be able to cover all possible topics, which means there will be some points to be fine-tuned and investigated further in the future.

FR asked about some previous GECES work that was translated in French and German but no longer available on DG GROW website. Michel CATINAT confirmed there was a restructuring in the Commission websites. This meant indeed that some SBI material has been removed. Only material in EN was now available on the web.

The Chair concluded highlighting the importance of having an operational final report which captures the interest of the public. The Chair thanked all Members for their active contribution during the day and closed the meeting.

Operational conclusions:

1. GECES members are invited to prepare with rapporteurs the draft final report by submitting recommendations for the different working groups.
2. The rapporteurs and the rapporteurs general will meet in Brussels on 25 January and 15 March to discuss the preparation of the draft final report
3. The rapporteur general will present the draft final report on 14 April during the 9<sup>th</sup> GECES meeting.

The next 9<sup>th</sup> GECES meeting will take place on **14 April 2016 in Brussels**.

Brussels, 21 January 2016

*Minutes written by the European Commission, amended further to GECES members' comments (as appropriate), and implicitly agreed by all attendees (Agreement via exchange of emails between 6 and 17 January 2016) for formal adoption at the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.*