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Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

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COMMISSION EXPERT GROUP ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP "GROUPE D'EXPERTS DE LA COMMISSION SUR L'ENTREPRENEURIAT SOCIAL" (GECES)

Call for applications for the renewal of the "private" experts

1. Background

In its last paragraph, the Communication on Social Business Initiative (SBI¹) states that "*The Commission ... shall ... set up a consultative multi-stakeholder group on social business to examine the progress of the measures envisaged in this Communication ... **this group could be made up of representatives of the Member States, local authorities, social entrepreneurs' organisations, the banking and finance sector and the academic and university sector.***"

The group, called "Groupe d'experts de la Commission sur l'entrepreneuriat social" (GECES), was set up in 2012 for **6 years** (2012 – 2017). Representatives of Member States have already been appointed for the duration of 6 years. Other members of the group were selected in 2012 *based on a call for applications for a 3 year renewable mandate*². The European Commission is therefore calling for applications with a view to selecting members for renewing the membership of the group for the period 2015 and 2017 in the following categories:

- representatives of regional and local authorities;
- organisations and companies representing social enterprises or delivering pertinent business development and support services to them, and representatives of organisations and companies from the banking and finance sector and;
- individuals appointed in their personal capacity from the academic and research sector.

2. Objectives of the GECES

As all the key actions of the SBI have been concluded by the European Commission, the Commission's work on social enterprise is now moving in to a new phase where the Commission will seek to find new and further initiatives in this area, whilst still implementing what exists. The renewal of the GECES membership thereby offers an opportunity to give a new impulse to the contribution of the GECES in this context.

For the remainder of the mandate of GECES, the group will mainly *be consulted by the Commission, and give strategic advice to the latter, on the opportunity, development,*

¹ COM(2011)682: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0682:FIN:EN:PDF>

² http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/social_business/docs/20120223-geces-call_en.pdf

organisation and implementation of the follow up of the SBI and further actions that the Commission want to carry out in this field.

As concrete missions for GECES in the short term the European Commission sees, for example, the following:

- Help build best practice in granting market access to social enterprises through public procurement;
- Help build best practice / policy in using public funds (often EU funds) to foster social enterprise development;
- Help build best practice / policy in using private funds to foster social enterprise (EuSEF funds, social crowdfunding platforms, social stock exchanges, etc.);
- Help analyse the socio-economic importance of social enterprises, in general and in targeted sectors (e.g., health, education);
- Help nurture a debate on the added value / drawbacks of specific corporate structures;
- investigate possibilities for partnerships with commercial SMEs in the area of social innovation; creation of platforms;
- Advice on initiatives aimed at supporting skills development for social enterprises;
- Promote support services.

In order to ensure that the steps that have already been taken through the implementation of the SBI continue to work in favour of social enterprises in the EU, GECES will also:

- 1) Be consulted by the Commission, on the implementation of the 11 key actions listed in the [SBI](#)³.
- 2) Be consulted by the Commission on the opportunity, development, setting up and implementation of some or all other actions mentioned in the [SBI](#).

3. Features of the GECES

3.1 Composition

The GECES shall consist of a maximum of 70 members. It includes 28 representatives from Member States⁴ and 7 members from regional and local authorities. The members selected from non-public bodies include: up to 16 members from organisations representing social entrepreneurs, up to 8 members from organisations delivering pertinent business development and support services to social entrepreneurs, up to 8 members from the banking and finance sector and up to 8 members from the academic and research sector.

In addition to the members, there will be 15 observers: Iceland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland shall be entitled to send 1 observer each. Furthermore, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund may send 1 observer each.

Member States and observers may also appoint a substitute for each member they propose.

³ Cf. http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/social_business/index_en.htm

⁴ A Member State can decide to be represented at the regional level.

The Commission considers social enterprises to be of such a nature that:

- the social or societal objective of the common good is the reason for their commercial activity, often in the form of a high level of social innovation,
- profits are mainly reinvested with a view to achieving this social objective,
- the method of organisation or ownership system reflects their mission using democratic or participatory principles or focusing on social justice.

Organisations or entities that apply to be part of the GECES as representatives of social enterprises should demonstrate that they represent entities that fall under the above criteria.

3.2 Confidentiality

The obligation of professional secrecy which, by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them, applies to all members of the institutions and their staff is also relevant for expert groups advising the Commission. In the same manner, the provisions of the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of EU classified information, laid down in the Annex to Commission Decision 2001/844/EC, ECSC, Euratom, shall be applicable to expert groups. Members of expert groups and their representatives, as well as invited experts and observers, are bound by those obligations. Should they fail to comply with those obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures.

3.3 Transparency

The European Commission and the European Parliament have been operating a joint Transparency Register since June 2011. Today the Register includes over 6,500 interest representatives of various nature and size such as public affairs consultancies, trade associations, NGOs, think tanks, law firms, self-employed lobbyists and others. Registrants provide online basic information about their organisation and activities aimed at influencing the EU policy and decision-making process. They also sign up to a Code of Conduct thereby committing to a common set of rules.

On 15 April 2014 the Parliament and the Commission signed a revised Interinstitutional Agreement (IIA) on the Register that entered into force on 1 January 2015. Therefore all organisations proposing an applicant for this call must register, sign up to the Code of Conduct and **provide at the top of the letter joined to the application: the identification number in the register and the registration date and time (dd/mm/yyyy hh:mm:ss)**. For further information and registration please go to <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do?locale=en#en>

The member's name will be collected, processed and published in accordance with Regulation (EC) 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

The list of members of the GECES shall be published in the Register of expert groups⁵.

⁵ Members who do not wish to have their names disclosed may apply for derogation from this rule. The request not to disclose the name of a member of an expert group shall be considered justified whenever publication could endanger his or her security or integrity or unduly prejudice his or her privacy.

Personal data will be collected, processed and published in accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 45/2001⁶.

3.4 Attendance at meetings

Applicants must be prepared to attend meetings systematically, to contribute actively to discussions in the group, to examine and provide comments on documents under discussion, and to act, as appropriate, as "rapporteur" on ad hoc basis.

The group shall normally meet on Commission premises in accordance with expert meeting procedures.

Applicants should take into account that meetings will involve preparatory work.

4. Selection criteria for the members of the group and their representatives

The Commission will take the following criteria into account when assessing applications:

- members must show a proven competence and experience in relation to social enterprise that aims at achieving social objectives, be it at local, national, European or international level, and they must explicitly refer to this experience in their application;
- organisations proposing members must show proven experience in activities promoting/supporting social enterprises;
- participants (members and observers) must understand written English⁷;
- members must be nationals of one of the 28 Member States of the European Union, or of a candidate⁸/ potential candidate⁹/ European Economic Area¹⁰ country, or Switzerland.

When assessing applications, the Commission will seek to achieve gender and geographical balance within the GECES, as well as a balanced representation of relevant stakeholders.

5. Application procedure

The duly signed applications must be sent by **Sunday 15 March 2015 (midnight Brussels time for an application sent via email)** at the latest, in the format requested by the Commission services. Only applications sent to the below addresses will be taken into account. The date of sending will be established as follows:

⁶ Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data (OJ L 8 of 12.1.2001, p. 1).

⁷ Official plenary meetings of the GECES will be interpreted in at least 6 languages (English, French, German, Polish, Spanish and Italian), plus up to 6 other official languages of the European Union, upon requirements of members. The Commission will provide all documents in English. Members and observers are able to provide documents / statements in another official language of the European Union, but in this case the Commission will not translate them and thus in order to be able to be read by all participants of the GECES, a courtesy translation in English could be conveniently provided, together with the original copy.

⁸ Albania, Iceland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey

⁹ Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo

¹⁰ Liechtenstein and Norway

- Where applications are sent by e-mail to the following address: GROW-SOCIAL-ENTERPRISE@ec.europa.eu the date of the e-mail will be the date of sending.
- Where applications are sent by post to the following address: European Commission, Directorate-General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, SPA2 8/35 B – 1049, Bruxelles (Belgique), the postmark will be considered the date of sending.
- Where applications are hand-delivered to the following address: European Commission, Directorate-General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Unit B5 Secretariat, Pièce 8/35, Rue de Spa 2, B – 1000, Bruxelles (Belgique), the date on the receipt given upon delivery will be considered the date of sending.

For all e-mails about the call for applications sent to GROW-SOCIAL-ENTERPRISE@ec.europa.eu **the subject line should only say "GECES - Call for applications 2015" and nothing else.**

Applications must be completed in English or French and must clearly indicate whether the application is made for individuals appointed in their personal capacity, for an organisation or company, or a regional or local authority. Applicants have to provide evidence that they meet the criteria listed above (in section 4).

All individual applicants must document their professional experience and expertise in full by means of a curriculum vitae and a letter (maximum 2 pages) in support of their application.

Organisations or entities may provide a list of maximum three individuals to represent them in the expert group. The list provided should be in order of preference, an organisation can only be represented in the expert group by one person. It is important to note that it is the organisation which is the member, represented by the individual. If the organisation wishes to change its representative in the GECES, it can ask the Commission to swap representative with another applicant who has sent an application for this call and has not yet been selected as a member and in the end the Commission will decide in the best interest of the GECES.

Organisations should provide one letter (maximum 2 pages) in support of the organisation's application(s) and a CV for each individual representative they nominate. If an organisation/entity presents 2 or 3 individuals, it should be done via a unique email or mail regrouping the 2 or 3 CVs and with a unique/single letter. In principle, the letter should be signed by another person than the person(s) whose CV is/are joined to the application.

Only CVs following the European format (Europass¹¹) shall be examined. At least the following information should also be included:

- The organisation/company/authority for which the applicant has been working and the length of time he/she has worked there.
- Other organisations/companies/authorities, for which he/she has worked in the past.
- His/her specific competences in relation to the actions mentioned in the annex.
- The specific projects and or tasks he/she has been involved in.

¹¹ <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae>

- Any works that he/she has published on social entrepreneurship and related matters.
- Any experience he/she has acquired at EU and international level.
- His/her major professional challenges foreseen in the near future.
- Any interests that he/she has, which may prejudice his or her independence.

Applications from organisations/companies also have to include information on:

- The role which social entrepreneurship development plays in their organisation/company; the type and quality of their relations with social entrepreneurs;
- The scale and scope of their activities related to social entrepreneurs;
- Their mission and their mandate (where applying organisations/companies represent several social entrepreneurs)

Applicants selected to be part of the GECES will be informed via email by the GECES secretariat by 29 May 2015. If applicants do not receive any information by that time, it would signify that their application has not been selected.

6. Terms of the appointment

Members shall give the Commission an independent opinion free from outside influence and shall respect the conditions of confidentiality laid down by the Treaties and their implementing rules, as well as with the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of EU classified information, laid down in the Annex to Commission decision 2001/844/EC, ECSC, Euratom¹². They shall commit to act independently and in the public interest. Should they fail to respect these obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures.

Travel and subsistence expenses incurred in the activities of the group by participants¹³ coming from outside Brussels shall be reimbursed by the Commission in accordance with the provisions in force at the Commission¹⁴ within the limits of the available budgetary appropriations. Members will receive no remuneration for their duties.

For any further information please contact:

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Information about the GECES and its work since 2012 could be found on the [GECES website](#)¹⁵. The two next meetings of the GECES will take place in Brussels on 26 June 2015 and 24 November 2015, and the European Commission expects all selected experts to duly attend these meetings. As soon as an expert fails to attend two meetings, or if an expert is not fulfilling her/his task, the European Commission will be entitled to withdraw this member from the GECES, and, to replace her/him, choose another applicant who was not selected at the renewal of the group beginning 2015.

Information on the results of the call for applications will be published on the Internet site of the Directorate-General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs.

¹² Commission Decision of 29 November 2001 amending its internal Rules of Procedure (OJ L 317, 3.12.2001, p.1)

¹³ Members and observers

¹⁴ Rule 16 of C(2010)7649

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/social_business/expert-group/index_en.htm