



# Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe: main comparative findings based on the “EU Mapping Study”



European  
Commission



SOCIAL ENTERPRISES  
AND THEIR ECOSYSTEMS  
IN EUROPE

Comparative  
synthesis report

Social Europe

# Mapping Study Methodology



## Key figures

35 countries mapped  
More than 70 researchers engaged  
More than 750 stakeholders involved  
More than 100 concrete examples of good practices of SE investigated  
50 exploratory case studies conducted in 11 countries

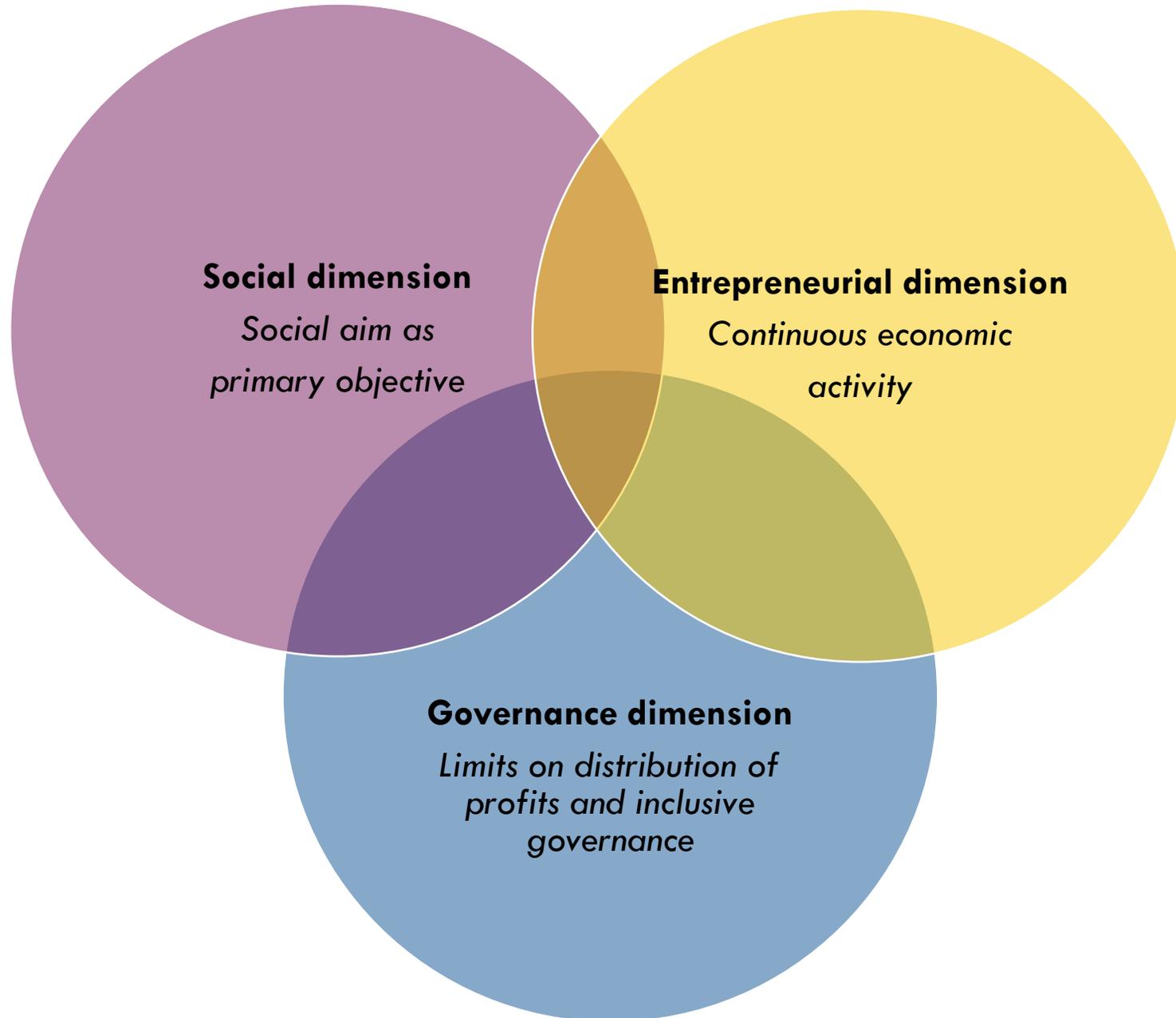
## Challenges

- Difficulty of exploring an emerging phenomenon which is not clearly defined
- Lack of reliable data and official statistics on SE
- Limits of comparability due to country specificity of SE
- Fast-changing phenomenon subject to frequent policy changes

## Milestones

- In-depth analysis of 28 national contexts according to a shared framework
- Updated estimates of SE in 35 countries
- identification of country clusters based on capacity to self-organise; visibility and recognition of SE; access to resources; research, education and skills development
- Analysis of the key factors explaining country commonalities and variations

# Nature of the social enterprise concept



## Social enterprise drivers

- SEs have emerged and developed thanks to the interplay between:
  - ✓ **Bottom-up** (community-led) and
  - ✓ **Top-down** (externally-led) dynamics
- Country patterns (relevance of top-down versus bottom-up drivers) are shaped by two main factors:
  - ✓ **Degree of coverage of general interest services;**
  - ✓ **Importance of civic commitment.**
- Fields of activity:
  - ✓ **Health and social services;**
  - ✓ **Work integration** of disadvantaged persons;
  - ✓ Tackling of **other societal challenges** (e.g. sustainable development, migration, delivery of other personal services such as cultural and recreational services, etc.).

## Capacity to self-organise

- > Civic engagement
- > Networks and mutual support mechanism

## Visibility and recognition

- > Political recognition
- > Legal recognition
- > Private recognition
- > Self-recognition



# SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ECOSYSTEM

## Resources

- > Non-repayable resources for start-up and consolidation
- > Resources from income-generating activities
- > Repayable resources
- > Tax breaks and fiscal benefits

## Research, education and skills development

- > Research
- > Education on social enterprises and social entrepreneurship
- > Skills development

DENMARK  
National Strategy for Social Enterprise (2014)

UNITED KINGDOM  
Social Enterprise Strategy (2002)  
Big Society reform agenda (2011)  
Civil Society Strategy (2018)

IRELAND  
National Social Enterprise Policy 2019-2022

LUXEMBOURG  
Action Plan for the Development of Solidarity Economy (2011)  
Strategy for Social and Solidarity Economy 2019-2023 (under development)

SLOVENIA  
Strategy for Social Entrepreneurship 2013-2016  
Strategy for the Development of Social Economy 2019-2029 (under development)

FRANCE  
Growth Pact for Social and Solidarity Economy (2018)

CROATIA  
Strategy for Civil Society Development 2006-2011, 2012-2016  
Strategy for Social Entrepreneurship Development (2015)

GREECE  
Strategic Plan for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship (2013)

Policy framework addressing social enterprise (directly or indirectly)  
Under development

SWEDEN  
Strategy for Social Enterprise and Social Innovation (2018)

ESTONIA  
National Development Plan for Civil Society 2015-2020  
National Development Plan for Civil Society 2021-2030 (under development)

LATVIA  
Cabinet Regulations on the Status of Social Enterprise (2018)

LITHUANIA  
Conception of Social Business (2015)  
Guidelines for Social Enterprise Projects (2017)

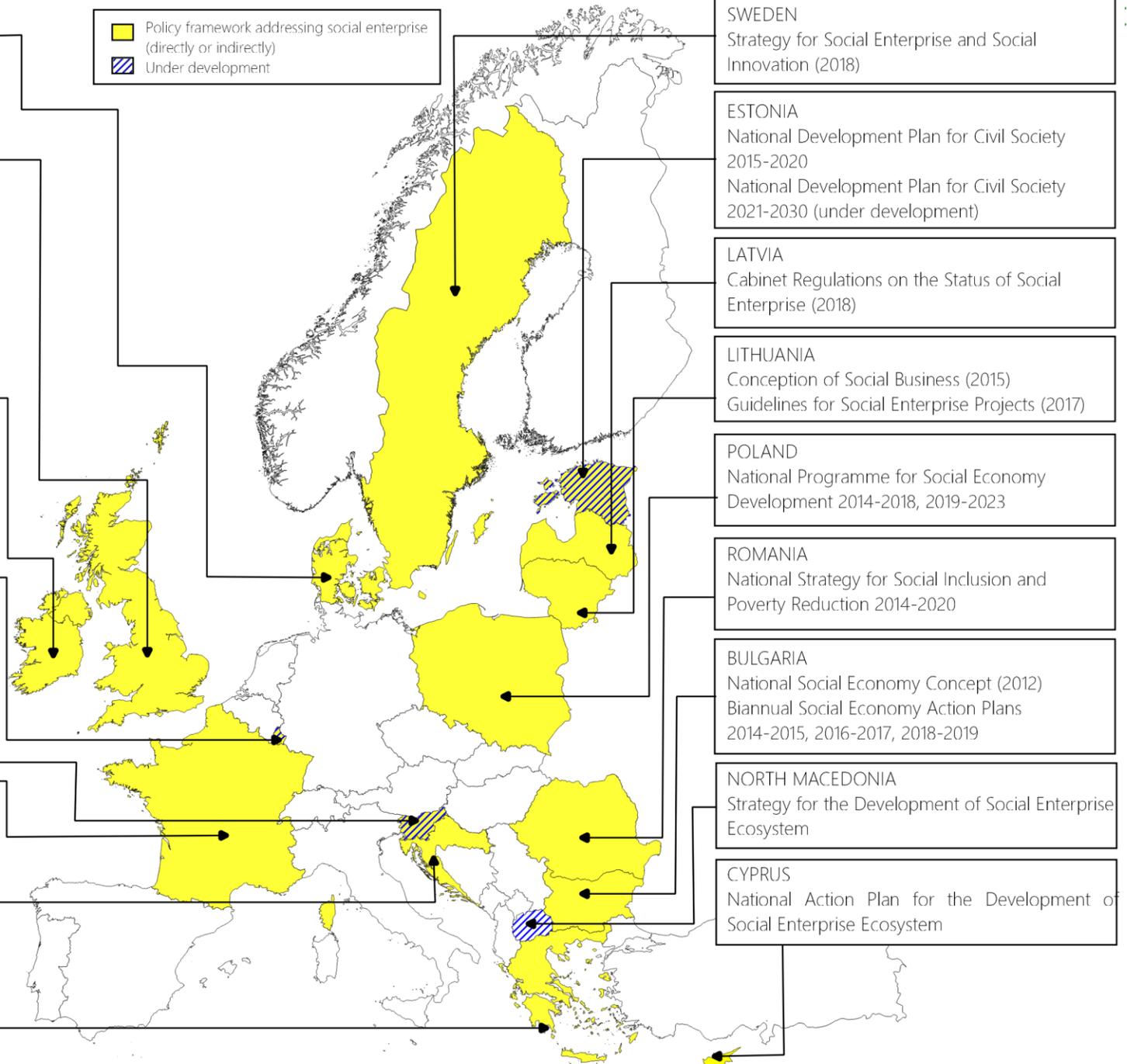
POLAND  
National Programme for Social Economy Development 2014-2018, 2019-2023

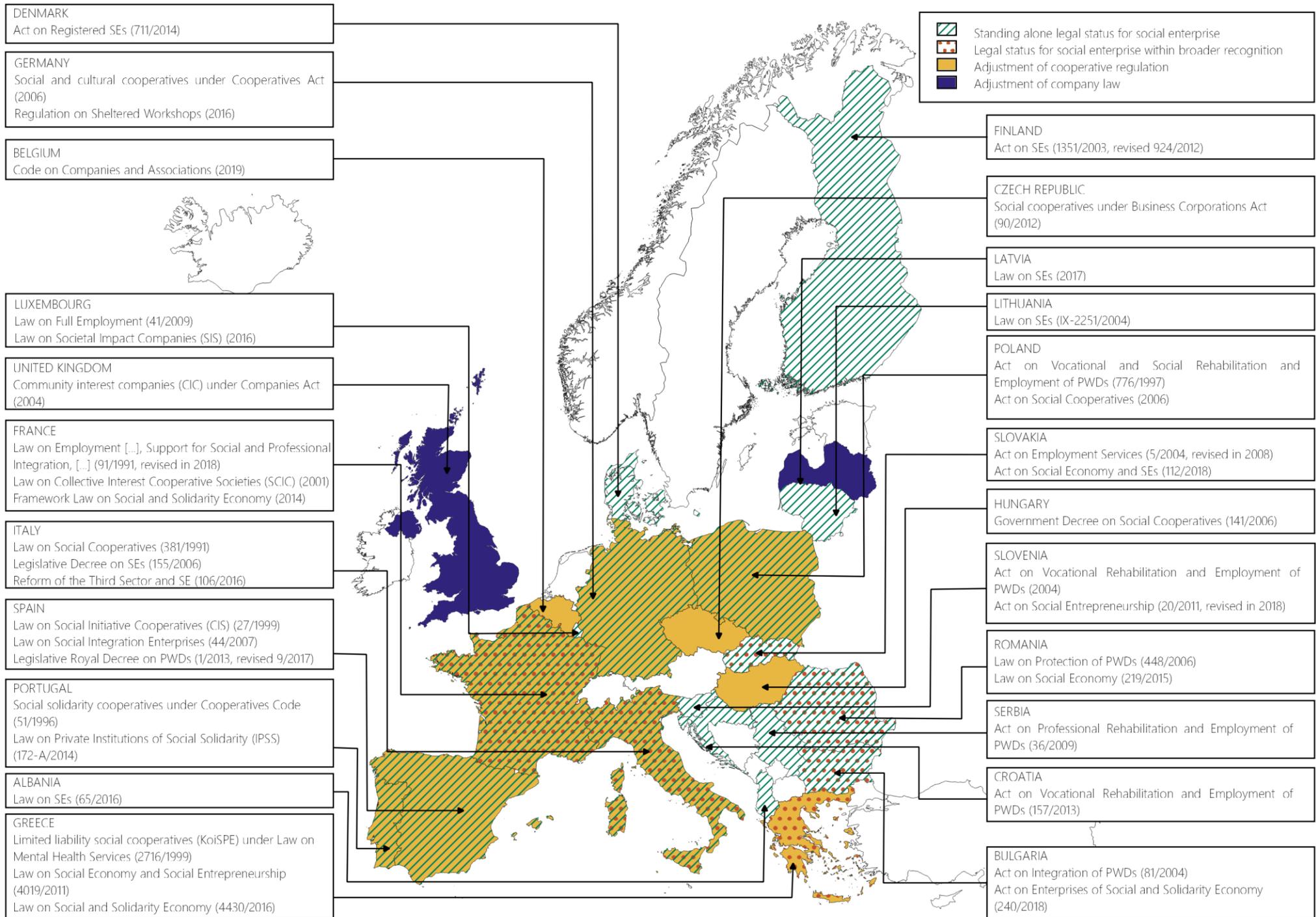
ROMANIA  
National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction 2014-2020

BULGARIA  
National Social Economy Concept (2012)  
Biannual Social Economy Action Plans 2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

NORTH MACEDONIA  
Strategy for the Development of Social Enterprise Ecosystem

CYPRUS  
National Action Plan for the Development of Social Enterprise Ecosystem





## Main conclusions

- SEs exist in all countries mapped: they mainly result from a collective dynamic often originating from traditional social economy;
- The role and potential of the SE stems from its peculiar features: hence the definition of the SE is far from being neutral and it has important implications for policy;
- Conceptual clarity key;
- Both the interest in and phenomenon of SE has increased over the last decade;
- Positive role of EU funds, SBI and Social Economy Action Plan (2022) that have increased coherence;
- Country variations are however still high especially in terms of size and diffusion, as well as legal and policy solutions;
- Balanced and consistent ecosystem essential;
- More attention ought to be paid to capacity building.

# Thank you!

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