

SEEDING

Social Economy Enterprises addressing

Digitalisation, Industrial Relations and the European Pillar of Social Rights

Sixth transnational online workshop

Wednesday 19th of May 2021 (10:30-12:30 CET)

Zoom meeting

NOTES

The sixth online transnational event in the framework of the Seeding project took place on the 19th of May 2021 on Zoom. This event focused on Spain and Italy. 33 people registered and around 26 people attended the online meeting, mostly but not exclusively from social economy enterprises from Italy and Spain. The event was moderated by Melinda Kelemen (project manager of the Seeding project).

Luca Pastorelli (executive president, Diesis Network) welcomed the audience and referred to the long and interesting journey of the SEEDING project. Mr. Pastorelli highlighted the importance of the project topic in the Social Economy sector, especially nowadays at these particular times when digitalisation has been accelerated due to the pandemic, and it is a key topic in the agenda of the European Commission. Regarding EU events, Mr. Pastorelli mentioned the next EUSES summit on the 26-27th of May where Diesis Network will be organising two workshops and participating in other sessions as rapporteur.

Melinda Kelemen (project manager, Diesis Network) gave an overview of the Seeding project activities. The project has been ongoing already two years, therefore most of the project activities and outcomes are available on the project website: the Case Study Report, Background Report, 21 case studies, and detailed information on the previous events, including recap videos. A final publication - Policy Guidelines - will be available soon and the project final conference will probably take place in September 2021.

Andrea Laguardia (Head of the multiservice sector at Legacoop Produzione e Servizi, and President of ONBSI), first gave a summary of the historical scenario of industrial relations in the cooperative sector in Italy. He considered that there has been a fundamental change since 2001, pointing out the importance of the national labour agreements which regulate labour costs and work rules. Besides, Mr. Laguardia referred to the bilateral entities that are involved in these specific contracts. In this regard, he illustrated the national bilateral entity ONBSI active in the services sector, of which he is currently president. Mr. Laguardia mentioned that they have objectives very defined and they are working to support for instance the clean-up workers who have been at high risk and in inadequate conditions during the pandemic. Indeed, they are currently considering implementing more technology for the innovation of these enterprises. They have also set up a training program, focused on the professional qualification of this sector, as well as they are working on the promotion and support of the cleaning service system. In this regard, Mr. Laguardia believes that bilateral entities like ONBSI are the biggest expression of the joint work between trade unions and associations, which so far are working together for the time being to progress and improve the mentioned sector.

Anna Voltolini (Executive director, CGM) started with a few facts about CGM. Moreover, she presented the organisation strategies for spreading digitalization and open innovation throughout their network. For instance, they have focused on working towards several social challenges that the pandemic generated in their region, such as school dropouts, low access of women into the labour market, but also, she mentioned that they are paying great attention to the young generations. In this regard, Ms. Voltolini stated that CGM's approach is very much focused on the digital and technological world, believing that the future is the open innovation, and expressing the idea that social economy can improve the problems of their stakeholders. Therefore, they have looked for a partnership with start-ups to work towards open innovation, aiming at understanding the possible areas of collaboration. They realised that social enterprises and start-ups matched in the capacity-building process, advanced training, and investment planning. To conclude, Ms. Voltolini finished with an example of how they have put some learnings into practice. "Welfarex"- a corporate welfare platform evolving into a community service multichannel

platform. Today welfare is a start-up that has created 31 local channels, employs 108 welfare managers, and above all has created an integrated management model of public, private, and territorial welfare.

Antonella Conti (President, Formula Servizi) gave a broad overview of Formula Servizi activities in Italy. Ms. Conti considered that the implementation of technological and digital transformation into their work has been always essential for Formula Servizi. One of their recent projects has been the tech implementation in cleaning services. Indeed, she considered that their cooperative has improved a lot in the last 3 years thanks to the effort of having adapted to digital developments. Besides, she mentioned that it is very important to consider that the technological transformation must be in line and within collaboration with the public administrations in order to achieve common objectives for the benefit of the regions. As an example of digitalisation activities that the organisation carried out these last times, Ms. Conti mentioned the promotion of technological alphabetization formation for their employees. To conclude, Ms. Conti mentioned that social dialogue is key to work towards digitalisation in the social economy. She said that at Formula Servizi they are connecting with trade unions to work towards digitalization because they see it as a must in this period of epochal change. *"We believe it is important to do it together so that no one is left out."*

Paolo Cova (Marketing director, Naturcoop) illustrated in a very practical way their work at Naturcoop onlus and the tech implementation on their services. Mr. Cova mentioned that they have started to work also with the profit sector and not only with the public administration. Recently they have started to work with people with mental and physical disabilities, therefore, they have had to implement new technology and new innovative ideas to support and satisfy the necessities of these employees. Naturcoop onlus focuses on cleaning services, waste recycling, and maintenance of green areas. Regarding the examples, Mr. Cova illustrated some of the interactive maps that they have designed to make the work of their employees more convenient. For instance, they work with a new software for the maintenance of green areas. Through these interactive maps, the workers know exactly what they need to do, and how they need to do it. Mr. Cova mentioned that these technological improvements have created less stress for the employees,

more efficiency when doing the job, and for the public client is also a good service since they do not have to go to verify if the task was done since they can also follow the maps. Mr. Cova mentioned that the software is also connected with the public inspection, they have quality certification and they have also a group of experts that go to the worksite to evaluate the workers' challenges and difficulties.

Pedro Blázquez (Project coordinator, COCETA) started his intervention by mentioning a few facts about COCETA's work and aims in Spain. He continued talking about digitalization and work conditions in SEEs in Spain. In this regard, he emphasized 4 key factors of change for the digital transition of social enterprises in the social economy. The first one was the "social values and principles" - the capacity for self-management and democratic participation, education training, and information and cooperation-. According to Mr. Blázquez, if new platforms are designed by people aiming for cooperation, it will be simpler to achieve the paradigm of change in the social economy sector. The second key point that he considered was "the productive sector and productive specialisation". The sectorial specialization in the social economy versus the mercantile economy. He admitted that the social economy could take advantage of it, in sectors such as social services, education, and energies, water, and waste. The third point highlighted was "the size of the companies". For instance, in Spain, there are a lot of micro-enterprises and there are investment difficulties. The last key point was "the competencies and reskilling", mentioning the development of highly qualifies jobs enterprises with low and medium qualifications and with 50% of employees that will need to be reskilled by 2025. To conclude, Mr. Blázquez introduced the digital policies and plans in Spain by referring to the upcoming digitalisation plan for small businesses and public administration. Furthermore, Mr. Blázquez stated that he believes in a prosperous future for digitalisation in the social economy in Spain, as Spanish enterprises have the tools to work towards the sustainable and green digital transition within the current Spanish legislative system.

Carmen Pastor (Director of the Technical and Legal Committee, BlockchainFUE) explained to all participants the possibilities of blockchain technology for social economy enterprises. As mentioned by the speaker, blockchain technology has the peculiarity that needs a community that supports it. Therefore, it is

interesting that Europe considers the implementation of this technology, especially in the social economy. She continued explaining what blockchain technology is and the possibilities that bring to cooperatives, such as reinforcing the cooperative's values since the governance system of this technology works within a network of nodes. Moreover, Ms. Pastor presented BlockchainFUE, the cooperative where she works. She said that it was born in 2020 to distribute this technology in a more sustainable way making it open and accessible for everyone and creating a very heterogeneous community of users that can benefit from it -of course following the cooperative aims-.

To conclude with the Spanish cases, **Cristina Couce Prieto** (Manager, Ambulancias Barbate) presented Ambulancias Barbate, a Spanish cooperative with almost 38 years of existence that focuses its work on improving the regional medical assistance in Andalusia (Spain). They decided to start the project of digitalisation of Ambulancias Barbate to meet the technological requirements for public calls (they work for the public administration), for the need to secure their business continuity as well as to survive to the competence in their sector. Therefore, they have improved their services: they always have contact and communication between medical vehicles and the Andalusian Public Service of Health, they have direct interaction with medical centres and they have improved the patient's medical assistance. To conclude her presentation, Ms. Couce Prieto mentioned their next objective in the organisation which is to move towards an electrified medical vehicles fleet.

To conclude, **Melinda Kelemen and Luca Pastorelli** gave a short summary of the event and thanked all speakers and participants for joining and sharing interesting cases. The final meeting will take place in September 2021.

19th of May 2021.