



***“Local plan for employment adjusted  
to the needs of the labor market of Patras”***

**Networking – Transnational actions – ALDA transnational partner**

**[Report about the survey on social enterprises in Italy](#)**



**ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΙΑΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ  
“ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΟΥ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΚΟΥ”**  
Προσανατολισμός στον Άνθρωπο



**Co-funded by Greece and the European Union**

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## Introduction

The project entitled “**Local plan for employment adjusted to the needs of the labor market of Patras**” (MIS 383757) aims at the activation and mobilization of local bodies for ensuring the creation of job placements for unemployed engineers and social scientists (target group- 80 beneficiaries). This is the result of diagnosis of local needs and highlighting of growth potential in the **city of Patras (capital of Western Greece)**, regarded as the **intervention area**.

Emphasis is put to strengthening the provision of social care services and to promoting innovation in entrepreneurship through incorporating new technologies (e-applications, web-design, energy efficiency).

The project action plan is implemented by a **Development Partnership (DP) entitled «TOPSA PATRAS»**. "**Patras Municipal Enterprise for Planning & Development-ADEP SA**" is the Coordinator and partners are:

- Municipality of Patras
- Social Organisation of the Municipality of Patras - KODIP
- University of Patras
- “PRACTICA Western Greece” Vocational Training Centre
- “EUROTEAM” Vocational Training Centre
- Technical Chamber of Greece – Branch of Western Greece
- DATA RESEARCH & CONSULTING SA

The project falls under Operational Plan of “Western Greece, Peloponnese – Ionian Islands”, Action 7:“Local plans for Employment adjusted to the needs local labor markets” / Intervention Category 1: "Active Employment Policies" Thematic Priority Axis 7: "Enhancing the Access to Employment" of the

Operational Program "Human Resources Development" 2007-2013, actions funded by ESF (European Social Fund).

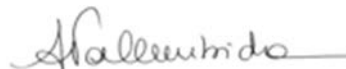
The action plan includes **networking** and **transnational cooperation** through the involvement of "**ALDA: Association of Local Democracy Agencies**" as transnational partner benefiting the conduction of tools, networking and multiple effects abroad.

Within the transnational actions of the project, ALDA was responsible (as sub-contractor) for the conduction of a **survey on social enterprises in Italy** (entitled "*Italian Social Enterprises: Have your Say!*"). The respective call for participants and the **questionnaire** were conducted (please, refer to **Appendix 1 & 2**) and were answered by fourteen (14) people who work in twelve (12) social enterprises, and hold different positions.

This document is the report about the survey on social enterprises in Italy conducted by ALDA. It is submitted to ADEP SA (Coordinator of "TOPSA PATRAS" development scheme) as part of the deliverables in action "Networking / Action 2.5.: Transnational cooperation". ALDA is

Sincerely yours

**Antonella Valmorbida,**  
Secretary General of Alda



## Analysis of the data

Social enterprises analysed were mostly cooperatives (10/12), **almost all (11/12) active for over 10 years**, all in the North/centre North of Italy.

The questions, and above all the answers received, help us to have a more complete picture of this alternate reality to the business model focused on profit - and yet efficient.

First, one of the characteristics of the social enterprise that results from our survey is that the work field is basically the same:

### 1. **Services aimed at supporting vulnerable groups in the community:**

- elderly people
- people who use drugs
- minors in distress
- immigrants
- disadvantaged adults
- disabled

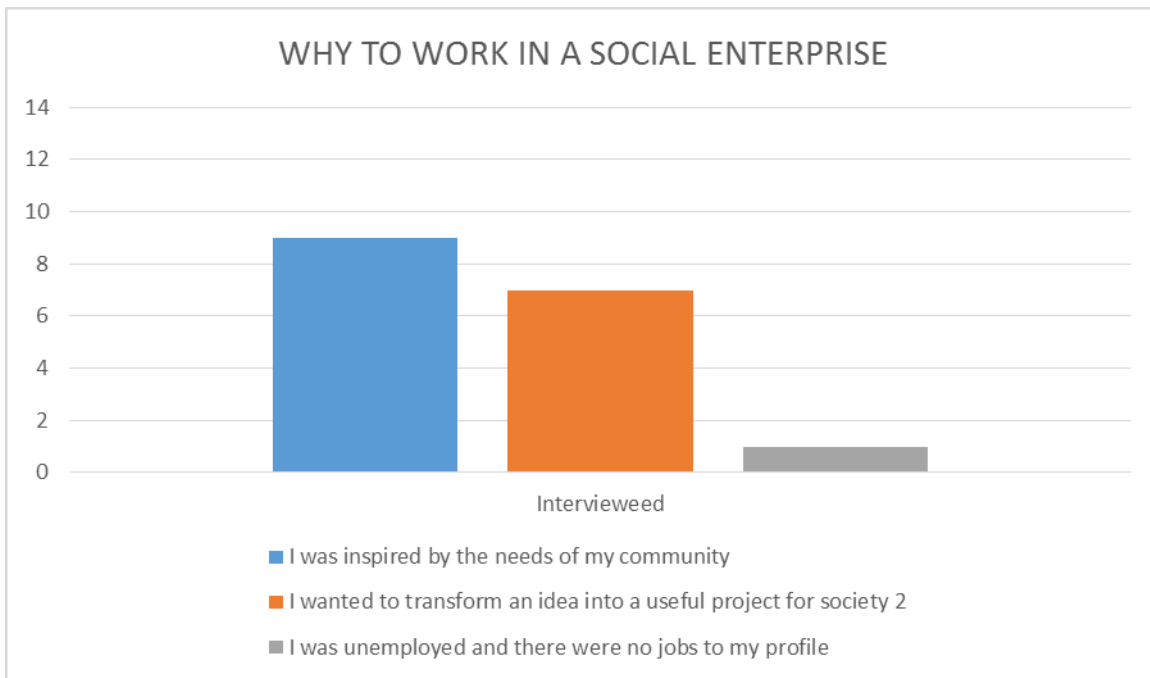
2. **culture and education**, with the management of educational / recreational / cultural services.

3. **social and health services.**

4. **eco-friendly services** (social farm, collecting used cartridges, paper and waste)

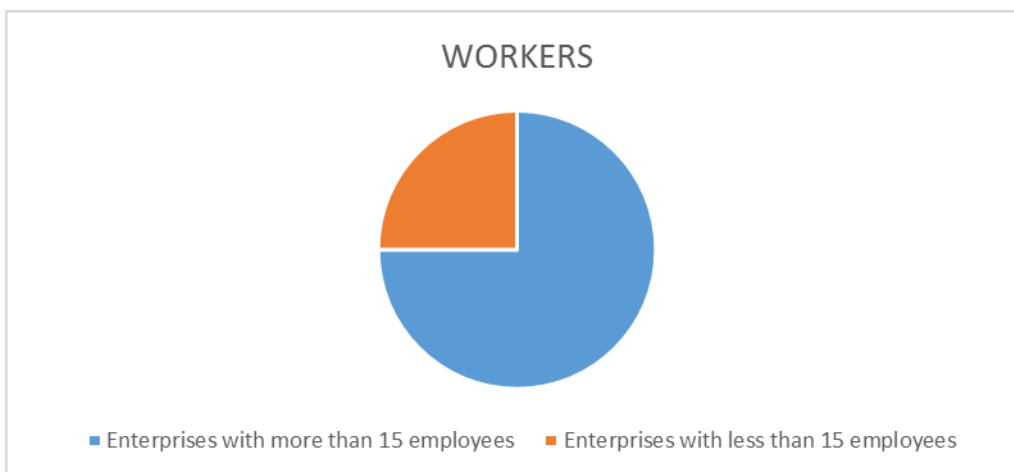
Therefore, **the social enterprise aims to improve the community in which it is operating.**

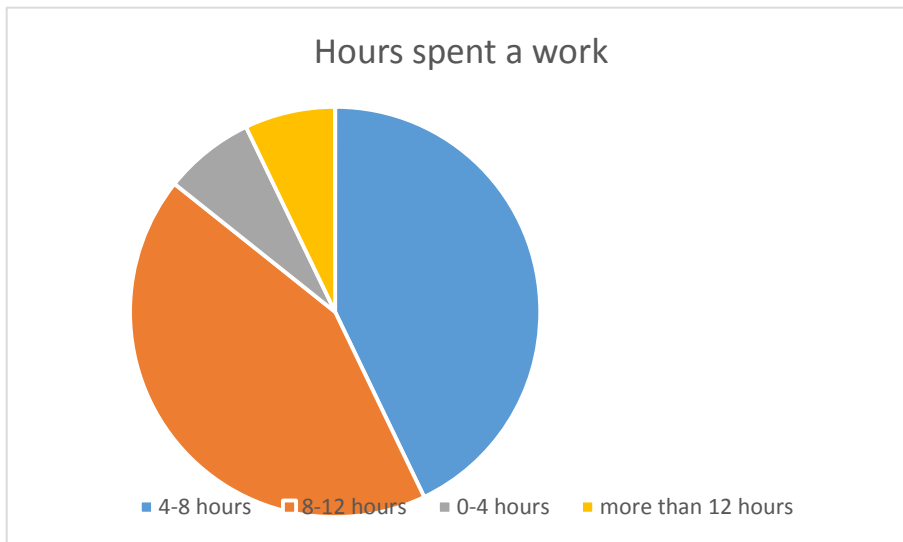
This is evident from the answer to the question "**Why have you started to invest in this kind of business?**". The majority of the interviewees said they were inspired by the needs of their community (9/14) and 50% wanted to transform an idea into a useful project for society.



## Workers:

**9 out of 12 companies have more than 15 employees**, women and men, and for the majority of enterprises voluntary work is only a small part of the work of the company.

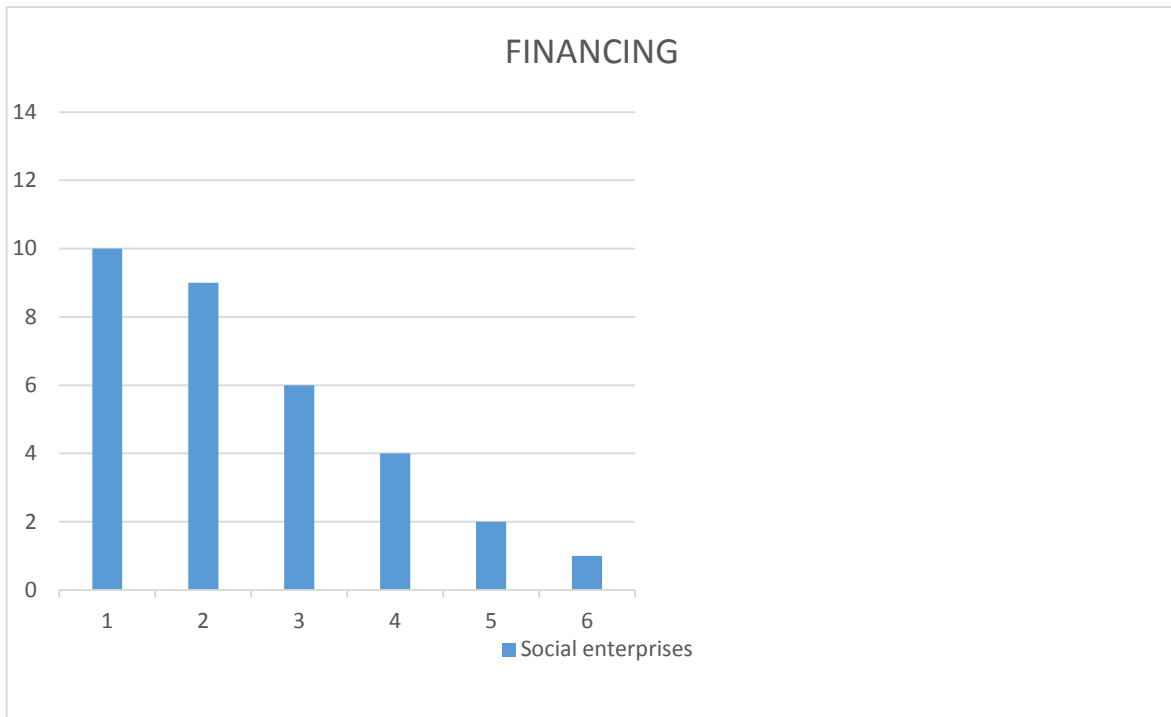




## Financing:

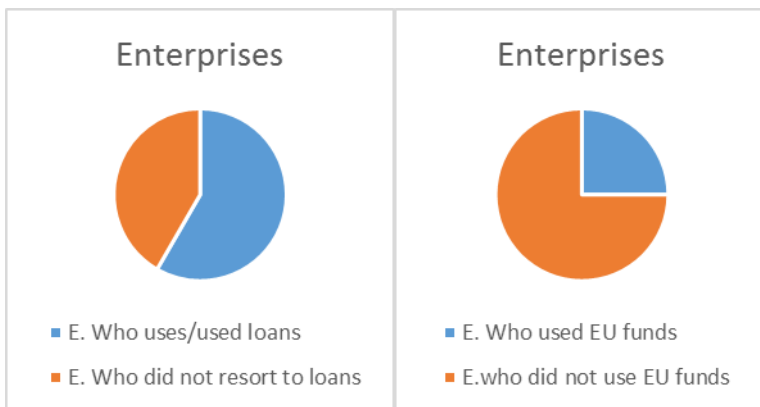
10/14 benefit from regional funds, 9/14 are financed by banks and **6/14 claim to have raised funds at the local level, reflecting the fact that the community recognizes the value of the social enterprise.**

The type of funding (public or private) varies greatly depending on the company, 7/12 say that they resort / have resorted to loans, but only 3/12 use funds of the EU.



Vertical axis: number of interviewees

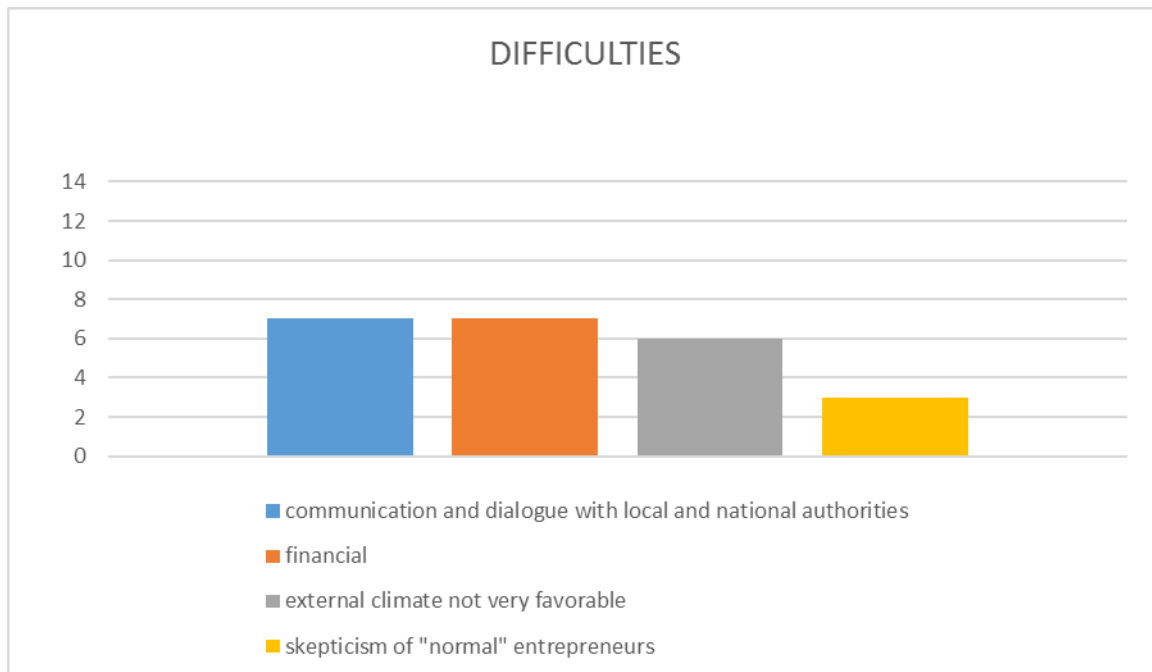
Horizontal axis: 1- Regional funds; 2- Banks; 3-Local fundraising; .4- private funds; 5- fundraising via internet; 6- waldesian church





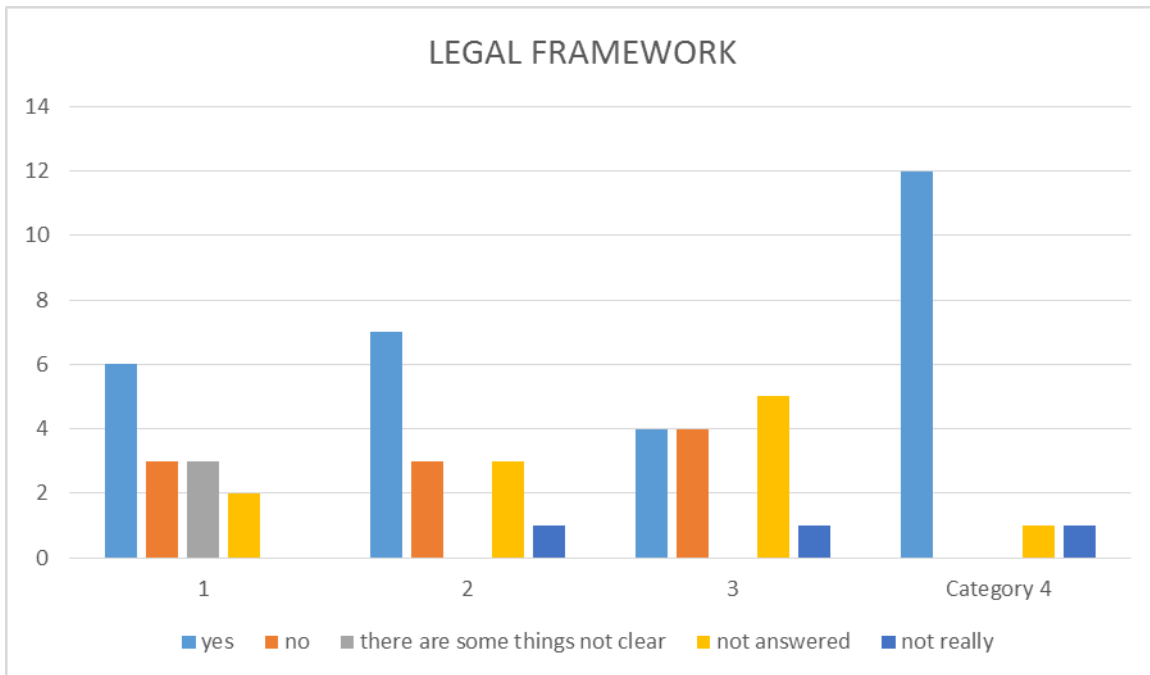
## Problems and legal framework.

The most reported difficulties are in communication and dialogue with local and national authorities (7/14) and financial (7/14).



Vertical axis: number of interviewees

However, only 3/14 stated that the Italian legal framework on social enterprises is not sufficiently developed.



Vertical axes: number of interviewees

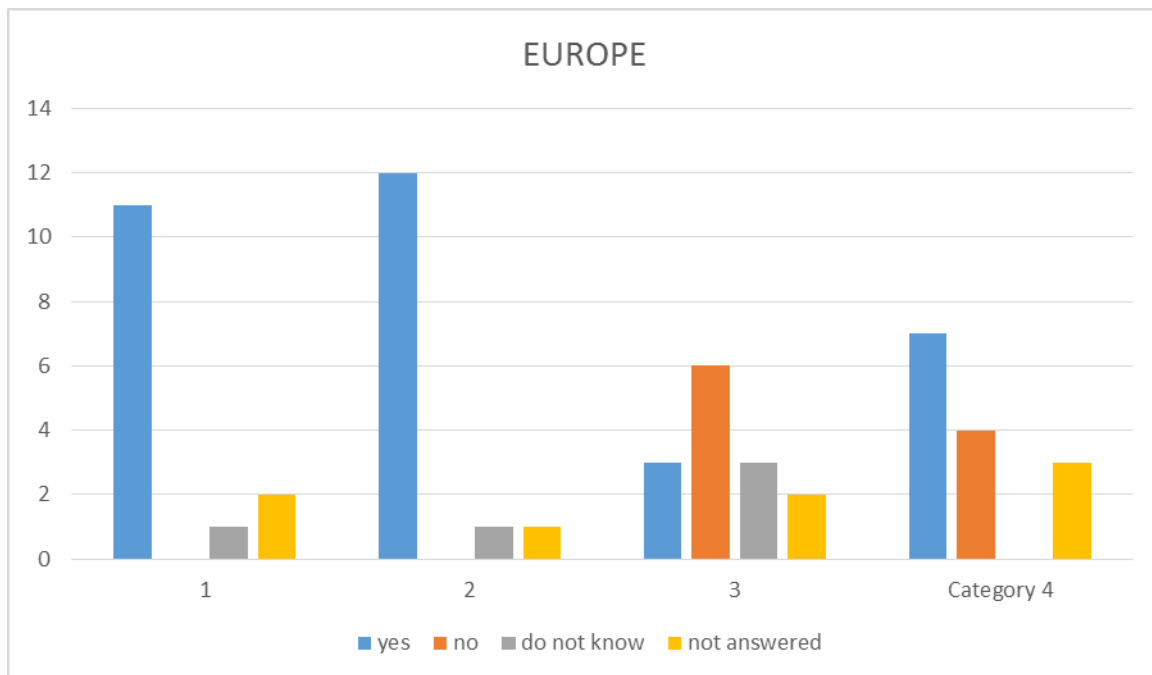
Horizontal axes: questions.

- 1- Do you think that the legal framework of social enterprises is sufficiently developed in your country?
- 2- Does it meet the daily needs of a social enterprise?
- 3- Do you believe that the national legal frameworks are in conflict with the European legal framework?
- 4- Do you believe that a stronger and more cooperative dialogue between the national and European institutions on the topic of social enterprises will help all European social enterprises to co-exist?

## Links with foreign countries.

One thing that is interesting is that well 5/12 firms have links with foreign countries, which may appear at odds with the nature of social enterprises, deeply rooted in community, even if only 3/12 currently active partnership with foreign organisations. On the other hand, all those who answered to the question "Would you like to be part of a transnational project in the future?" answered positively.

All interviewees believe that there is a discrepancy between the legislation in force in the EU and the one in Italy and among the various legal systems of European nations as well. To the question "Do you believe that the European Union has adequately supported the development of social enterprises until now?" We find six "no" and three "I do not know":



Vertical axis: number of interviewees

Horizontal axis:

- 1- Do you think that there is a lack of legislative uniformity in Europe regarding social entrepreneurship?
- 2- Do you think that there are any discrepancies between the Italian legislation and the European legislation?
- 3- Do you believe that the European Union has adequately supported the development of social enterprises so far?
- 4- Do you believe that Europe is recently taking an interest in the strengthening of the social economy sector?

There is, ultimately, **a lack of connection between the EU and social enterprises**, although the majority still believes that there is an interest of the EU in the field of social economy in general.

12/14 believe that greater dialogue EU-Italy could bring benefits to the community.

## Conclusions

The longevity of the enterprises themselves, and the large number of workers who are part of it, demonstrate that a non-profit can be productive and offer quality services.

The model of the social cooperative is successful, deeply tied to the needs of the community, and its value is recognized and appreciated by the community itself.

# Appendix 1

## Call for Participants

## Call for participants

The project “TOPSA PATRAS -Local plan for employment adjusted to the needs of the labor market of Patras” aims at the local labor market of the Municipality of Patras and focuses on supporting beneficiaries and companies for matching supply and demand. It focuses on the areas of strengthening social services and aid visibility promoting innovation and entrepreneurship through the integration of new technologies (e-applications, web design, energy planning, etc.). Emphasis is placed on serving the needs of existing local business, and to extend this through the support and assistance to young entrepreneurs and the emergence of new viable fields of activity.

The project points at creating and strengthening the interconnection among representatives of european social enterprises, such as persons involved with the aim of creating economies of scale both on the achievement of common results and the promotion of common goods and services produced.

One of the pillars of the project is the transnational action consisting in providing the beneficiaries of the knowledge and experience of their colleagues abroad with whom they can share know-how on social economy practices focusing on welfare issues.

ALDA, partner of the project, will produce a survey of best practices on social economy targeting welfare issues which aims to identify, to evaluate and to record down best examples of social economy on welfare issues. A respective guide will be produced and circulated as a “tool” for further activation and exchange among interested beneficiaries.

Would you like help us to create a useful guide of best practices on social economy?

It is easy, you have just to answer to our questionnaire! We will implement the survey by using also your experience!

Don't miss this opportunity to keep in contact with other social entrepreneurs like you!

It could be an interesting opportunity to exchange experiences and expertise to improve the results of individual projects and export of important conclusions. You could keep in contact with a huge number of social enterprises in Europe.

For further information please contact:

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# Appendix 2

Questionnaire *“Italian Social Enterprises Have Your Say”*:

# Italian Social Enterprises

## Have your say!



**Let's start from you**

**Please, check which one of the following corresponds to yourself:**

- I am a social entrepreneur
- I am an employee in a social enterprise
- I am a volunteer in a social enterprise

**Please, provide us with the following data:**

Name of social enterprise:

Contact details:

Address	
Street: .....	No.:
Postal code: .....	
City: .....	
Country: .....	
Web site:	

Contact person



(Mr/Mrs)

Name:

Surname:

Position:

Tel: (country code-local code-phone no.) .....

Fax: (country code-local code-phone no.) .....

Email:

Short description of activities of your social enterprise (max 500 words)

**Please specify the legal status of your social enterprise as it is in the official register of the social enterprises:**

- Social Cooperative
- Foundation
- Association
- Mutual organisation
- Charity organisation
- Other

*Please specify*

**How long has the social enterprise been operating?**

- More than ten years ago
- More than five years ago
- Less than three years ago
- Less than one year

**What is the sector of activity of the social enterprise?**

- Health care
- Social Assistance
- Education and training

- Other

*Please specify your answer*

**In which part of Italy are the headquarters of the social enterprise?**

- North  
 Centre  
 South

**In which part(s) of Italy does the social enterprise do business?**

- North  
 Centre  
 South

**Which were the obstacles you had faced when forming the social enterprise?**

- Financial  
 Administrative  
 Legal

*Please specify your answer*

**Which were the obstacles when operating a social enterprise?**

- A non favourable external environment  
 The scepticism of the employers in the social enterprise  
 The lack of communication with local authorities  
 The lack of dialogue with other local social enterprises

*Please specify your answer*

**Which are the advantages of a social enterprise from your point of view?**

- It contributes to maximize improvements in human and environmental well-being;
- It answers to the needs of a local community by ensuring a strong social and economic impact
- It uses the strengths and the natural characteristics of the area where it is based

*Please specify your answer*

**Why did you start this type of enterprise? Please, tick (one of more reasons) as appropriate to you):**

- You felt the necessity to transform an idea into a social project for your community
- You got inspiration from your personal needs (disabilities)
- You got inspiration from your community needs (social problems, exclusion)
- You were unemployed and there weren't jobs corresponding to your profile

*Please specify your answer*

**Do you have previous experience in the field of activity of this social enterprise?**

- Yes
- No

**If "yes" please explain**

**How many hours per day do you work (are involved) in this social enterprise?**

- 0-4 hours
- 4-8 hours
- 8-12 hours
- More than 12 hours

**Are there any members of your family involved in this social enterprise?**

- Yes
- No

**If “yes” please explain**

**How many employees work for this social enterprise?**

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- More than 15

**Please give the number of men and women employees that work for this social enterprise:**

No. of male employees:

No. of female employees:

**How many volunteers are involved in this social enterprise?**

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- More than 15

**Please give the number of men and women volunteers that work for this social enterprise:**

No. of male volunteers:

No. of female volunteers:

**Have you experienced any type of discrimination until now?**

- Yes
- No

**Is “yes” please specify**

- **Do you expect that the number of employees in your social enterprise be increased in the next three years?**

- Yes
- No

- **Do you expect that the number of volunteers in your social enterprise be increased in the next three years?**

- Yes
- No

**Which are your customers:**

- Friends and relatives
- People living in your community
- People living in the area where your social enterprise is
- Supermarket chain owners
- Store chain owners
- Other

*Please specify your answer*

**Which are the topics that you need to be supported about:**

- Financial difficulties
- Communication and dialogue with local and national authorities
- A legal framework not so clear
- Other

*Please specify your answer*

**Do you have links abroad?**

- Yes
- No

If “yes” please provide us with the following information on every partner/link abroad:

*City:*

*Country:*

*Name of partner organisation:*

Type of partner organisation:

Type of business you cooperate for:

**Have you participated in projects?**

- Yes
- No

If “yes”, please provide us with the following information on every project:

Name of the project:

Source of financing:

Brief description of the project:

Role of the social enterprise and tasks:

Web site (if any):

**Do you wish to take part in a transnational project in the future?**

- Yes
- No

## Legal Framework

- **Do you think the legal framework dealing with social enterprises is sufficiently developed in your country?**

- Yes, it is
- No, it isn't
- There are some things that are not very clear

Please motivate your answer

- **On your opinion was it useful during the start up phase of creating your social enterprise?**

- Yes
- No

- Not properly

*Please motivate your answer*

- **Does it answer to the everyday needs of your social enterprise?**

- Yes  
 No

*Please motivate your answer*

- **Do you think national legal frameworks are in contrast with the European legal framework?**

- Yes  
 No  
 Not properly

*Please motivate your answer*

- **Do you think a closest cooperative dialogue between national and European institutions on social enterprises could create a more coherent context and help all European social enterprises?**

- Yes  
 Not  
 Not so much

*Please motivate your answer*

## Financing

Which was the source of financing when starting the social enterprise:

Funds coming from the public sector:

- National funds
- Regional funds

Funds coming from the private sector:

- Enterprises
- Banks
- Investors

Civil society financings

- Crowd-funding at local level
- Crowd-funding at national level

- **Does your social enterprise resort to private or to public funds?**

- Private Financing: ..... %

*Please specify*

- Public financing at regional level: ..... %
- Public financing at national level: ..... %

- **Does your social enterprise usually resort to European funds?**

- Yes
- Not

- **Please specify what kind of financing instruments have you used:**

- PNUD
- UN Agency
- Online crowd funding
- Private financing
- Church
- Other

*Please specify*



**Have you used loans:**

- Yes
- No

**If “yes”, what is your experience about this procedure:**

- I have never used loans
- I always use loans
- I have used this procedure that helped me
- I have used this procedure, but it engendered problems
- Other

*Please specify*

**If “No”, would you do that in the future in case of economic difficulties:**

**Yes**

**No**

*Please specify*

- **According to the recent data collected by the regional chambers of commerce Italian social enterprises usually resort to traditional resources as cash flow and loans from traditional lenders; can you confirm it?**

- Yes
- No

*Please motivate your answer*

## Italian Social Enterprises and Europe

- **Do you think there is a lack of legislative uniformity in Europe on social entrepreneurship?**

- Yes  
 No

*Please motivate your answer*

- **Are there any contrasts between the Italian national legislation and the European legislation according to you?**

- Yes  
 No

*Please motivate your answer*

- **Do you think the European Union has sufficiently supported the development of social enterprises until now?**

- Yes  
 Not

*Please motivate your answer*

- **Do you think Europe seems to be recently interested in strengthening the social economy sector?**

- Yes  
 No  
 If yes, how?

*Thank you for your cooperation!*