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Mapping European Social Economy:  
Employment, Social Dialogue  
and the European Pillar of Social Rights



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# Social Economy and Social Dialogue in Poland

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## Definitions

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**Social economy:** the activity of social economy entities for the benefit of the local community in terms of social and professional reintegration, creation of jobs for people at risk of social exclusion and provision of social services, implemented in the form of economic activity, public benefit activity and other paid activity (Social Economy Act, 2022).

**Social enterprise:** a social economy entity which:

- conducts economic or paid public benefit activity,
- employs and professionally activates vulnerable groups,
- does not privatise profit or balance surplus,
- is managed in a participatory manner.

**Legal status:** social&work cooperatives, non-governmental organisations, reintegration units.

## Key Facts

### 1 400 Workers' and Social Cooperatives

31 800 persons employed on the basis of an employment contract\*.

### 88 600 Non-Profit Organisations

15% of NGOs employed a total of 167 300 workers\*.

### Employment in SE

Estimated share of employment: **2.3%**

### SE Sector Size

Production volume in the social economy sector: **2.94% GDP\*\***

\* *Development of the social economy in 2019. The results of pilot studies.* Statistics Poland 2021.

\*\* *Social Economy Satellite Account for Poland 2018.* Statistics Poland 2021.

## Social Dialogue Council

### 3 Trade Unions

- ❖ 12,500 trade unions with a total membership of 1.5 million people\*.



### 6 Employers Organisations

- ❖ 400 active employers' organisations with 19,100 members. \*

\* *Social dialogue partners - employers' organisations and trade unions in 2018.* Statistics Poland 2021.

## Bipartite Dialogue

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### Leverages

- ❖ Electability and terms of office of members of boards in SEEs.
- ❖ Debate about the quality of employment in NGOs.
- ❖ The integrative dimension of employment that empowers people working in social cooperatives.

### Obstacles

- ❖ Temporary contracts, low wages, due to which workers are in a weak bargaining position and are afraid to raise the issue of quality of work.
- ❖ Considering work in SE as a mission – SEEs are not perceived as workplaces both by employers and employees.
- ❖ Vulnerability of people working in social cooperatives, deepening inequalities between employers and employees.

# Tripartite Dialogue

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## Leverages

- ❖ Permanent representation of SE in sectoral dialogue bodies.
- ❖ ESG as an opportunity for the social economy in establishing cooperation between SE and business.

## Obstacles

- ❖ Limited financial and human resources in SE sector.
- ❖ Low recognition of social economy by social partners.

## Recommendations

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### To social economy actors

1. A sectoral forum for dialogue between employees and employers.
2. Representation of ES in tripartite dialogue.

### To social partners

Actions on working conditions.

### To public sector

Active contribution to strengthening social economy entities within the existing legal framework by:

- a) including social clauses in tenders - and addressing them seriously,
- b) not applying the requirement of financial contribution and restrictions on cost categories in tenders for the provision of public services,
- c) commissioning social services in a multi-year mode, allowing SEEs to be financially stable.





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