

WINS

Promoting Workers' Involvement in Social Economy Enterprises

Final Conference**Online (ZOOM)****March 18, 2022 - 09:30 am to 13:00 am CEST****SUMMARY**

The WINS project aimed to promote employee involvement in companies in general and in companies of the social economy (SEEs), encouraging them to know those rights and their obligations and companies to develop professionally in accordance with the principles that govern Social Economy Enterprises especially in Italy, Spain, North Macedonia and Slovenia.

During the last two years, we have faced a series of specific challenges regarding information, participation and consultation rights of workers, and the WINS project partnership decided to focus on a few of them, such as effective operation of these rights in Social Economy Enterprises, digital platform cooperatives, false cooperatives, ESOP models or worker buyouts.

Likewise, we have reinforced a transnational cooperation that had a positive impact on the relationship between representatives of the workers and the workers themselves, which we hope will result in a greater involvement of workers in their enterprises.

But there is still a long way to go to improve employee involvement and there are many challenges to face.

We trust that the conference, together with the written results of the project, will help to face them.

Opening of the event**Luis Miguel Jurado, President, COCETA (Spain)**

He welcomed and thanked the speakers and attendees who were able to participate from the various entities. He thanked the representatives and trade unions from the different countries co-operating in the project. He commented that the worker cooperatives had celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Social Economy Law in Madrid the day before.

He mentioned a few words about the project, saying that the project started two years ago with the purpose of promoting the participation of workers in Social Economy enterprises and their

representatives. Above all, the project tried to raise awareness about the rights and obligations in worker cooperatives.

He pointed out the advantages of having been able to meet the project's objectives as worker cooperatives because they are enterprises with a different management model, more participatory and equitable.

He also commented that recently MEPs visited Spain to observe and ask for input for the new European Action Plan where the social economy is mentioned as a main element that can help the principles of the European pillar of social rights and thus meet the main objectives of the European Union for 2030.

Opening of the event

Luca Pastorelli, Executive President, DIESIS Network (Belgium)

Luca Pastorelli mentioned that he was pleased to be at the final meeting of the project.

He congratulated the colleagues from Spain on the celebration of the anniversary of the Spanish Social Economy Law. He emphasized that it is an achievement for the sector and encouraged to continue pursuing the ideals.

He indicated that the WINS project, initiated 2 years ago, addressed the issue of ICP rights, which consisted of showing companies in Europe the relevance of involving their workers in the life and governance of the company, particularly in the Social Economy.

He mentioned that the project demonstrated the collaboration with trade unions, at national and European level. He thanked the participation of the trade union representatives, as they were part of the shared project always supporting in the process of contribution of the Social Economy to achieve better working conditions, of a sustainable and inclusive economy.

He indicated that the project was launched under two initial challenges, first, the transfer of the enterprises to the employees (WBO) and second, the cooperative platforms.

He mentioned that the context of the crisis by the pandemic raised a different approach to workers' working conditions and the possibility of organizing with other workers.

He mentioned that the experiences of Spain and Italy in saving companies in crisis or those in the process of succession or generational transition testify to the long tradition of social rights and Social Economy. In addition to the new experiences observed in Slovenia and North Macedonia.

He shared that he hopes that this project has provided valuable reflections and information for the development of the Social Economy, as it continues to demonstrate that a democratic enterprise is also capable of responding to the needs of the new EU countries.

He added that the materials collected in the project on ICP rights are available, as well as the conclusions obtained in the Co-creation Workshop.

He concluded by welcoming the representatives of the European Commission, Patrick and Estelle, who were participating in the final conference.

Workers Involvement in Social Economy Enterprises in the EU

The European Social Economy Action Plan: time to deliver

Estelle Bacconnier, Policy Officer - Social economy, DG EMPL, European Commission.

Estelle explained that the European Commission is working on the implementation of the Action Plan, which represents a boost at the European level and is an opportunity to build an alternative model.

She began her speech by recalling the last most important political initiative at European level in the Social Economy, which was the social business initiative of 2011. She noted that since then there have been several important events in terms of EU projects, such as the project that is being concluded today, however, she said that this has not been enough to make the social economy policy visible.

She mentioned that the Social Economy has been positioned as a relevant asset for the digital and green transition at the European level. She said that at the European level there has been a push to argue that the Social Economy has the potential to achieve these two key objectives and that since the coronavirus crisis its relevance has been further confirmed.

In addition, she mentioned that they observed the existing differences in the development of the social economy among all member States, which they saw as an untapped potential.

She indicated that a common problem observed in the world of the Social Economy is the diversity of meanings among member States. She said that the Plan tries to find a fair balance in defining what Social Economy means at the European level with the aim of giving flexibility to the member States so that the histories, traditions, and developments of the different states can be respected and included.

She mentioned that the interesting thing about the WINS project was that three criteria were established to define the Social Economy at the European level. The democratic dimension that was addressed in this project demonstrated the relevance of the topic, as it is one of the pillars of the Social Economy and this is what is intended to be disseminated on a large scale to all stakeholders: legislators, intermediaries, financiers, the public and actors in general.

She also congratulated her colleagues from Spain on the anniversary of the Law, saying that it is an important milestone for the country and for other European countries.

She commented that the measures dealt with in the Action Plan serve to learn and take the best of what the member States have done.

She indicated that they are working on the development of policy guidelines and that they have gathered important knowledge on how policies and laws can be framed to promote the Social Economy, for example through work undertaken in cooperation with the OECD. She mentioned that they intend to draw on all these experiences to propose a Council recommendation on developing Social Economy framework conditions in 2023.

She added that specific measures have been enunciated to help public authorities to take better advantage of existing opportunities in relation to socially responsible public procurement and State aid rules, which are very important and relevant to support the development of the social economy.

She concluded her intervention by mentioning that the plan also includes a series of measures to support the development of the social economy at the local and regional level and that work is being carried out with local and regional stakeholders. She said that from the Commission they provide connection at the European level and try to generate partnerships at the local and regional level and among them to learn from each other and to forge more opportunities and the same for the international level.

She said that the momentum they now have at the European level that is beginning to be promoted at the international level is important. In addition, it is important that the European Union leads with good examples and helps to disseminate the model and work with like-minded countries and convince other countries of its relevance.

Patrick Klein, Head of Social Economy Team, EC DG Growth, European Commission

He mentioned that the important thing about the Action Plan is to make the Social Economy visible and, above all, to stimulate opportunities for the actors involved. He said that to achieve this it is necessary to have different instruments. It is the actors involved who make an important contribution to sustainable economic growth, because it has been proven that the Social Economy is present in circular economies, which is why it is necessary to develop specific business schemes for it.

He indicated that the aim is to disseminate the trend throughout Europe, since it is important that Social Economy companies strengthen the Social Economy network. And to inform workers because it is important that they are at the forefront of innovation. He commented that to get to this point it is important that Social Economy companies have the right information, for this reason the European Commission has made available relevant information on financing, initiatives, etc.

He said that this year the European Commission will launch a youth innovation policy to include younger entrepreneurs interested in social economy to attract and empower entrepreneurial

attitude among young people working with politicians and using all their networks of entrepreneurship.

He mentioned that the problem for this type of initiatives is money, therefore, they are working on identifying the functions and products to be launched in 2022 to generate access to funding and thus be able to achieve a common European market through Social Economy entrepreneurship and thus enhance cross-border cooperation between members of the European Union.

Another point he highlighted was the theme of "transition" mentioned in the Social Economy Action Plan. He has remarked that many social enterprises have been seen that are focusing on green and digital transition with specific practices such as goods and services, development, research, etc. He said that the aim is to achieve a digital and green transition to attract future investments and achieve this in the Social Economy. He mentioned that they are working with different actors, and they intend to produce a set of guidelines that can be implemented with the support of the European Commission.

He pointed out that it is necessary to take the step from words to action, this consists of taking the actors by the hand to implement greener and more digital attitudes, for which he hopes that in September a declaration of the plan will be issued that can serve as a guide so that the actors can commit themselves and thus continue to demonstrate that the Social Economy is also important in this green and digital transition.

He mentioned that the European Commission is working on the concept of Social Economy to produce recommendations. He said that they are now in a phase of gathering information to better understand this concept to help create better public policies in favor of the Social Economy.

He concluded by saying that the important thing in the Social Economy Action Plan is to help the ecosystem actors themselves who have a certain potential to create stores, businesses, companies that contribute to development with green and digital practices. He said that everyone involved is very important to achieve this goal. He mentioned that there are several years ahead to implement this plan, so it will be necessary to continue working together as has been done in this WINS project.

ICP Rights

Stefan Gran, Senior Advisor Confederal Secretary, ETUC

He mentioned that the ETUC attaches great importance to the issue of workers' ICP rights, since this is the basis for democratic societies. He informed that the ETUC represents them in its logo within the term of democracy, since most of the society is guided by democratic principles.

He indicated that, based on a series of new treaties and agreements, it has been detected those social rights have a very important impact on the companies that implement them in their

businesses. He mentioned that this type of companies is the most sustainable and are having good results, for example, the increase in the training rate of employees.

However, he said that despite being mentioned in the treaties and in the regulations, there are still problems regarding this issue, especially when talking about SMEs in Social Economy, which has a certain philosophy of company management, that many times the directive may have the impression that it is not necessary to involve workers in the whole process, which is a mistake.

Therefore, he mentioned that he sees it important to generate more awareness in companies about the existence of these rights to change this.

Another point he mentioned is that there is a perception that the guidelines are working on different tracks, and he believes it is important to unite and eliminate the boundaries between them. He mentioned that the workers and unions within the companies are very happy to be able to support the workers and are also willing to help the companies.

Another part of the project that he highlighted is in relation to the issue of the platform economy, where workers who form a cooperative belong to a platform, which allows them some participation in the company. However, he remarked that it has been observed that these companies do not consider the worker as an autonomous worker and therefore do not grant him/her the same rights. He mentioned that new rights have emerged with the digital issue, and that there are already new movements within the EC and platforms to be able to help them.

He concluded by saying that he considers that the WINS project has been very useful and important to make visible and deepen the issue of ICP rights of workers.

New challenges in the participation of workers in cooperatives

Diana Dovgan, Secretary General, CECOP

Diana Dovgan emphasized that employment in cooperatives tends to be more sustainable with less inequality and a higher level of worker satisfaction, because it offers a balance between personal and work life. She said that these conditions are made possible by the accumulation of capital by people in cooperatives. She mentioned that she observes a virtuous effect of company productivity and good working conditions due to the quality work that is guaranteed by the participation and ownership of the workers who make the company's decisions.

She said that cooperatives are also a great laboratory where more innovative and sustainable forms of labor relations are experimented within a company, as is the case of industrial and service cooperatives that have developed as cooperatives since the industrial revolution with an innovative creativity in labor relations.

She has also indicated that, throughout history, there have been many opportunities for cooperatives to reinvent themselves due to the labor crisis and the sanitary emergency. From this, new forms of non-standardized and precarious work have emerged, adopting various forms such as freelance contracts, on-demand contracts, informal work, among others. She mentioned that due to this diversity of typologies, the State has not offered adequate mechanisms to provide access to social rights.

She cited as an example the case of the digital sectors, where it has been observed that workers lose collective power and maintain a virtual connection with the employer, which prevents them from joining forces for labor demands and a basic income that often does not guarantee a decent life and favorable conditions for workers.

She mentioned that there has been a growing trend of new cooperatives with independent producer holders where conventional occupations characterized by the self-employed, such as: artisans, architects, doctors, cab drivers, among others, are not recognized as having a high risk of precariousness, as well as creative activities or the digital economy.

She pointed out that crises have been key to identify reactions in favor of the cooperative movement and workers. For example, the humanitarian crisis of the 1970s gave rise to the first social cooperatives that began to offer and provide social and personal services. Also, the industrial crisis of the 80s in Italy, with hundreds of enterprises transformed by the workers into cooperatives, a fact that led to the recognition in the Law. And the 2000 crisis in Argentina.

She mentioned that the current experiences in Spain and Italy serve as an inspiration for many countries. However, he mentioned that workers' rights will remain in permanent tension and not only in times of crisis.

She indicated that one of the consequences of these crises was the high level of youth unemployment and that, in addition, at this time, it was observed that young people were not only looking to cooperatives as a source of income, but as a way of giving meaning to work. Since then, she said, there has been an increase in the creation of cooperatives in sectors related to the preservation of the environment and the planet.

She mentioned that she is pleased to see how the cooperative formula has always been the same since the Industrial Revolution, especially because they can react and adapt in crisis situations, however, the participation of workers remains a challenge.

Some of the most important challenges on worker participation in cooperatives that she mentioned are:

- Alliances in the cooperative movement and trade unions, which should be strongly encouraged at all levels.
- Adaptation to new democratic governance tools such as digital governance.
- Skills training: increasing and updating skills for the digital green transition.

- Financing.
- Equitable cooperatives guaranteeing access to all people. Initiatives such as the gender equality plan, for the prevention of discrimination and gender-based violence, are important.
- Multisectoral cooperatives, in sectors of general interest such as education, culture, energy.

She expressed that the business model based on platforms related to the cooperative model cannot be distanced from the disruptive behaviors of technology companies that maximize profits and apply technological imagination to exercise a form of cooperation and collaboration that serves people. She concluded that it is gratifying to know that the European Commission is developing an initiative to encourage increased transparency in the use of algorithms on platforms so that cooperative platform owners are given ownership and control in the domain of algorithms.

**Juan Manuel Sánchez Terán Deputy Director of Social Economy of the General
Directorate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy**

He thanked for the opportunity to participate in the final Conference of the WINS project. He made a brief reference to a plea for peace and for the cessation of armed conflicts in Ukraine and expressed his solidarity with the cooperative movement in Ukraine.

He noted that the WINS project has been dedicated to promoting the participation of workers in the Social Economy, in a context of accelerated transition due to the pandemic and the recent adoption of the European Action Plan on December 9, 2021. He said that both events have triggered projects linked to investment funds that should be taken advantage of by the Social Economy.

He indicated that as a society we face two important issues identified by the United Nations 2030 Agenda, on the one hand, humanity, and the concern for the reduction of inequalities, and on the other hand, environmental protection.

He pointed out that inequalities have multiple causes, some of which are structural in nature, for example: the inequitable or unfair distribution of wealth or the existence of prejudices towards certain groups, and others deriving from an economic crisis, a pandemic, or a military conflict such as the current one.

Regarding environmental protection, he emphasized that we are at a point of no return, immersed for some time now in a climate emergency that does not only affect governments and companies, which is why it is an issue that must be addressed with a definitive change of direction, where governments and citizens act immediately.

He mentioned that the climate emergency also generates inequalities and that this is where the social economy can contribute, particularly the cooperative movement, to a fair, more democratic, sustainable, and egalitarian transition.

He indicated that in a changing economic and social environment, the Social Economy and cooperatives defend a form of enterprise that is more flexible and resilient to change and that allows access to quality, egalitarian jobs, and markets under more favorable conditions.

He mentioned that, in this context, Social Economy enterprises adapt to the current circumstances of uncertainty and respond to it with solidarity within enterprises and towards society.

He pointed out the following elements in favor of the Social Economy:

- The Social Economy has a decisive role in the transformation of the world economy towards a more democratic model as it gives members and communities direct control over their future in areas that are as relevant as agricultural production, health, industry, commerce, education, housing, energy distribution or finance.
- The Social Economy is a crucial element in territorial development as it has a greater presence in areas at risk of depopulation.
- The Social Economy is characterized by a certain sectorial specialization, most of the services are linked to the social services, education, culture and agriculture sectors, where a significant presence of submerged employment and irregular employment has been observed, which through the cooperative figure can lead to a regulation and organization of these types of jobs.
- The transformation of commercial companies in crisis or in a situation of lack of generational replacement.

He shared the experiences and actions that are being and continue to be worked on by the Spanish Ministry of Labor and Social Economy, especially with the recovery funds of the European Union to promote the Social Economy in Spain:

1. Promotion and stable maintenance of public policies in support of the Social Economy. Through aid that comes from national resources, managed, and executed by the regions. For example: aid for the incorporation of cooperative members, investment aid or technical assistance aid.
2. The delimitation of the Social Economy in the legislative Spanish framework. He mentioned that a few days ago the 10th anniversary of the Spanish Social Economy Law took place, this Law was a legal framework that delimited the entities that are part of the Social Economy in Spain and provides guidelines based on the principles and values of the International Cooperative Alliance. This Law provides stability to the Spanish territory to subsequently implement the relevant Autonomous Laws according to the particularities of each of the regions of Spain.
3. Support measures aimed at social economy cooperative entities during the pandemic.
4. Visibility of the Spanish social economy, which accounts for 10% of the gross domestic product; however, there is still a certain lack of knowledge about the nature of Social Economy entities, which causes a series of consequences such as the lack of visibility in the design of public policies.
5. Promotion of the Social Economy in the educational curriculum at all levels of Spanish and European education. Promotion of collective entrepreneurship. Through public-private

- collaboration, organizations representing the sector, and networks of Social Economy entities.
6. Promotion of the Social Economy through the European Social Fund with the Operational Program for Social Inclusion and the Social Economy.
 7. Promotion through the Next Generation Funds of a comprehensive plan to support the Social Economy.
 8. Support for the transformation of companies that are going through a difficult time or that do not have generational replacement in social economy entities, especially in cooperatives and worker-owned companies.
 9. Promotion of sustainability understood as sustainability from the environmental point of view, but also as sustainability from the point of view of the inclusion of disadvantaged groups, of social inclusion.
 10. Promotion of digitalization in the different families of the social economy, such as collaborative platforms.
 11. Promotion and creation of networks that provide services to society. Promotion of partnership work and the creation of networks rooted in the territory.
 12. Promotion of the plan of measures for the demographic challenge for the creation and consolidation through a pilot project of cooperatives and insertion companies created by women and young people in areas at risk of depopulation.

Challenges and solutions for worker participation

Workers' buyout and economic democracy

Giulio Romani CISL National Confederal Secretary (Italy)

He spoke about the experience in Italy regarding the acquisition of companies in crisis by workers.

He mentioned that this mechanism was born in 1985 with the Italian Marcora Law, which took up experiences from Europe and from Spain, such as the case of Mondragón, which was an original project characterized by a cooperative relationship between non-cooperative companies, with more traditional capital instruments and cooperative work cooperation instruments.

Furthermore, he commented that the Marcora Law was born from the historical philosophical thoughts that were being produced in Europe at that time who contributed this eloquent modality of making workers owners of their own work to favor democracy and peace.

He contextualized that the general sensibility in these years was related to promoting the cooperation of workers who had been subjected to an ERTE, the solution of companies in crisis and the preservation of jobs. He said that through this modality there was the possibility of creating savings funds, funds that could provide solutions in difficult situations. This became a tax incentive to create this type of cooperative.

He also mentioned the important task of disseminating and consolidating experiences supported by the European directive that have to do with the participation of workers in companies and the organization of a more participatory economic model and that these can be disseminated in a stable and permanent manner throughout the European continent and also outside Europe.

He mentioned that as an Italian trade union he realizes that through the consolidation of the experience of the takeover of companies by the workers there is an economic importance, but also a social and inclusive one, since individuals who were immersed in circles of delinquency have been recovered.

He said that in January 2021 the Italian trade union reached an agreement with the cooperative associations to strengthen the strategy of acquisition of companies by working people and ensure a further implementation of this type of mechanism. In times of pandemic and what has been seen in terms of difficulties consolidates the need to resort to instruments that can safeguard jobs in the greatest possible average and give continuity to companies that had suffered crises linked to the pandemic.

He insisted that we not only have to think about cooperatives, but also about the participation of all the workers in the enterprises themselves, in all European countries. He alluded that we must imagine this mechanism of enterprises in crisis as the positive example of a phoenix that rises from its ashes and is reborn more beautiful than before.

He mentioned that to create this type of companies it is important to grant a financial fiscal support, which for Italy is an important objective mentioned in article 46 of the Statute. It is necessary to offer instruments such as the advance payment of the worker's severance pay, but also other types of mechanisms for access to credit, such as access to the operation of cooperation in general or ERTES.

He concluded that he sees the need to start thinking in terms of building collaboration with the credit systems and with the more ethical financial side.

Using Employee Stock Ownership Plans to Democratize Labour-Based Platforms

Tej Gonza, Director, IED (Slovenia)

Tej Gonza explains the concept of what a worker-based platform is and exposes some of the problems faced by this type of platform and gives some ideas on how these problems could be addressed. He bases his contributions on a recently published study of his own, which mainly discusses the use of ESOPs.

He explained that by platforms he means labor-based platforms, which are platforms that provide services in different sectors such as: accommodation, finance, logistics, services in general. Basically, they are platforms where platform service providers perform work.

They have been considered a growing sector for some years now and even mentioned that by 2023 there will be 80 million people working on labor-based platforms.

They are platforms that during the pandemic provided many types of services.

He indicated that this type of model depends on three factors: technology, network effect and the denial of labor rights.

1. Labor-based platforms as a technological innovation. It uses sophisticated tools such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and other technologies to organize work. Imposes control, direct labor and exerts power, racial, gender, etc. discrimination.
2. The labor-based platforms include new ways of organizing work, since they are not workers but a kind of freelancers who at the same time do depend on and having a different name, they can establish a series of rights. While the contractor usually works for a platform, there is no employment. This leads to precarious working conditions, de-skilling, isolation, inequality, loss of professional identity, etc.
3. They are natural monopolies. Network effects present a feedback loop, in which the larger an LBP is in terms of users and suppliers, the greater its competitive advantage in the market.

He noted that there are many problems related to the platform economy with some sociological and social needs.

First strategy: Regulation

He showed the example of a test (ABC test) launched by the California Supreme Court that was not institutionalized at the national level.

He mentioned that this has also been tried in the United Kingdom where minimum fees have to be paid and also in Spain where there have been some possibilities of regulation.

He indicated that 3 years ago in Slovenia a legislation was passed where there were certain licenses for example for cab drivers.

He emphasized that academics and researchers are trying to see what a truly effective way is to deal with the Social Economy.

Second strategy: Cooperative competitors

He mentioned as a second strategy for this type of platform is a cooperative within the platform.

He indicated that the platform has to control the technology itself, the ability to regulate working conditions, benefits, advantages, etc., and also to distribute and share the benefits. He mentioned that it is an intuitive system, a simple solution that has had a lot of momentum in recent years. He mentioned that there are many communities that are focusing initiatives to establish competencies to introduce new work systems. He noted that there are more than 129 platforms registered in 2021.

He noted that one of the common problems is scaling. Cooperatives have historically had difficulty scaling -LBP as a natural monopoly only reinforces this problem.

Third strategy: Conversion

- Convert existing labor-based platforms into cooperatives. And analyze which is the ideal strategy.
- The Institute has created a concept based on good practice in the United States (ESOP) and the United Kingdom (EOT), where a functional model has been developed that puts workers as owners of private companies through an equity participation plan.
- He gives an account that they have had experience of its application with normal companies, which they can now do on platforms. Transition to employee ownership for platform workers.

How does it work?

First: A certain amount of money is sent to the platform.

Second: with legislative backing.

Third: Once this debt repayment is achieved the workers within the cooperative have new democratic rights that they can exercise their influence within the platform, and they also have some financial advantages and receive profit sharing.

How do we do it?

1. Government intervention (subsidies, tax incentive, even decrees)
2. Spontaneous incentive (EO platforms as competitive advantage)
3. Trade Unions

Workers' involvement- the perspective of marginalized groups

Aleksandra Loparska-Iloska, Policy Researcher, Association for research, communications and development "PUBLIC" (North Macedonia)

Aleksandra Loparska-Iloska presented on ICP rights related to marginalized groups.

She said that before the 2019 pandemic, new marginalized groups were already under consideration, however, recent events in the labor market are also alerting to the development of new marginalized groups, which are pending discussion to redesign public policy and ensure greater inclusion of all these types of groups.

She stated that it is true that technology is creating many new opportunities to increase democracy in the workplace, also increasing opportunities for ICP rights of employees. However, she mentioned that if these are not adequately supported with effective mechanisms, then conditions will be created for increased exclusion and especially for marginalized groups.

She indicated that there is an emerging need to review national and international guidelines and policies in favor of new and existing marginalized groups.

She mentioned the main challenges currently facing the Western Balkan labor market in terms of information, consultation, and participation rights:

1. There is a high rate of informality in the market, around 25%.
2. Crisis regarding the unemployment rate, which before the pandemic had stabilized, but is now re-emerging again.
3. Talent drain. The latest estimates mention that 19% of young people are leaving the Western Balkans and young and talented workers with skills are looking for opportunities outside the region.

She indicated that from the research they have done they have found that people leaving the country are not provided with information about ICP rights. She also mentioned that evidence shows the existence of politicized unions with reduced membership and weaker social dialogue.

She mentioned that during the last year they have started an initiative and are implementing an investigation to check what are the ICP rights of workers with special focus on marginalized workers.

The results of their research show that companies have a low understanding of the concept of marginalized groups. They are mostly identified as people with handicaps or disabilities. It stated that inclusive work environments and ICP rights are seen as general within the companies' internal procedures and policies aimed at promoting inclusion and diversity in the work environment.

She found that companies in the Western Balkans do not recognize or implement policies that promote inclusion.

She indicated that the biggest obstacle for marginalized groups is that despite their personal competencies, they are not always given the opportunities to grow and develop professionally due to weak capabilities within the company.

She mentioned that the needs of marginalized groups are multifaceted and must be placed at the center of any policy intervention to ensure equality.

She emphasized that at the European level all the characteristics of marginalized groups and the rise of non-standard employment should be considered, and new ways should be found to promote social innovation such as job crafting, job carving, inclusive entrepreneurship in social enterprises, etc.

She mentioned that since the Association Public have started an initiative to categorize social innovation that strengthens inclusion in work environments and the ICP rights of marginalized groups through a tool called "social mentoring" that aims to focus on socially excluded and marginalized people who have no opportunity in the labor market.

Platform Cooperatives

Antonio Martinez Bujanda, Director, ANEL/COCETA (Spain)

Antonio Bujanda made a reflection on cooperative platforms.

He stated that the cooperative model has been a model that has responded to different social circumstances. At present, new challenges arise, one of them is the digital transformation where the issue of digital platforms is framed.

He mentioned that a CECOP working group has been working on two objectives: 1) the promotion of the cooperative model for the development of digital platforms and 2) to prevent the creation of false cooperatives in this area, to solve the problems, they are generating.

He made a distinction between two types of digital platforms.

1. Those that are intermediaries between those who offer a service in the market and those who buy it, which reduce the entire intermediation chain, as could be the case of AIRNB, for example.
2. Those other digital platforms that develop an underlying service that is developed through the people who work, which generates job creation opportunities, as in the case of UBER, GLOVO, etc.

He pointed out that his work is focused on this second distinction, where he considers that opportunities can be generated for the creation of worker cooperatives and the generation of jobs in the cooperative model.

He indicated that this business model generally requires strong capital input and seeks quick profitability, with a capitalist vision.

One of its strong key tools is the algorithm to maximize the profitability of the value proposition of decision making. He emphasized that this model has generated increasingly precarious working conditions.

He questioned whether the cooperative model could be a solution to the platform business model.

The difficulties he observes are:

1. The cooperative model often presents the difficulty of growing the business.
2. Difficulty in the intensive entry of capital.
3. The democratization of the algorithm.

In relation to the democratization of the algorithm, he emphasized two situations:

1. That partners and workers own the platform's algorithm.
2. A digital platform is rented that allows them to manage the algorithm according to their own decisions.

In relation to the prevention of false cooperatives, he mentioned that it is not only enough for the worker-members to manage the algorithm, but it is also necessary that the management of decision-making be adopted in accordance with cooperative principles. He emphasized that the key is for the workers to be the ones who decide on the management of the software tool and for them to be the ones who make the decisions on the operation of the cooperative.

**Raquel Boto, Confederal Secretary of Trade Union Action and Employment, CCOO
(Spain)**

She mentioned that they are working on the analysis on working conditions in platform companies aimed at the European directive. She said that the main problems are the lack of definition and understanding of the issue. In addition to the lack of understanding that the platforms must be governed by the principle of labor conditions.

She stated that from the union, contributions and allegations have been made to bring about changes not only in the delivery companies, but also in all sectors of the platforms. She indicated that the delivery platforms that are being observed are only the tip of the iceberg, underneath there are many platforms dedicated to other sectors such as translation, legal work, etc.

In this regard she mentioned two points:

- The union likes work cooperatives on platforms, they believe it to be a good labor model. However, the problem they find in this model is the precarious working conditions and the fact that false cooperatives are being created. Therefore, the union's objective is to detect false cooperatives or false self-employed at all levels.
- The criteria they establish for this is to strengthen the role of the representative bodies of the workers of the cooperatives and to respect the working conditions and wages agreed in collective bargaining in the agreements of each sector.

She claimed that there should be an improvement in national statistics broken down by gender and the implementation of equality plans in those platforms that have contracted workers.

She mentioned that he does not agree with what Antonio Bujanda said about the algorithm. She said that for them the important thing is that in addition to the worker-members of the cooperative, all other workers also have access to the algorithm.

In Spain they are trying to regulate the access to the algorithm information, to the artificial intelligence systems applied, with the purpose of using them for issues related to the worker's working conditions, especially hiring, promotions, etc.

She indicated that the main problem is to know that it is necessary to understand the algorithm, not only that it is delivered, but to understand it. Therefore, they plan to request the following information:

1. The justification of what the cooperative wants to do with the artificial algorithm.

2. A pseudo code, between natural language and machine language. To follow the development of the company's approach, without the need for computer skills.

In addition to this, she mentioned that they are looking to organize direct lines of work with the cooperatives and the workers who may be affected.

Launching specific awareness campaigns to locate the actions of false self-employed, through a communication plan with the media. In addition to the analysis of the different regulations, especially at the community level.

She concluded that it is essential to stimulate union membership and promote alliances with cooperative entities of those emerging from the digital economy.

Special focus of the WINS project: Worker buyouts

Feedback from the co-creation workshop

Fabrizio Bolzoni, Director, LEGACOOP Produzione & Servizi (Italy)

Fabrizio Bolzoni made a synthesis of the work developed in the Wins project that has had a special focus on the theme of Worker Buyouts (WBOs). WBO is an important topic for the Social Economy in Europe, coinciding with the launch of the Action Plan for the Social Economy, which recognizes the importance of developing specific instruments of a financial nature to support the spread of WBOs in all countries of the world.

He mentioned that the WINS project partners wanted to contribute with this work to the Action Plan that has a reference to WBOs with the involvement of experts in the 6 events that have characterized this project and the previously organized co-creation workshop in which more than 30 experts from the partner countries participated and who have tried to deepen the current perspectives of the WBOs in the different countries.

He said that the elements hindering the development of these models have also been considered, as well as possible solutions and recommendations in terms of proposals and actions for the development of policies at the European level.

He mentioned the main recommendations that emerged on policy issues:

1. it is noted the existence of several models of WBOs that are determined by the regulatory framework in the different countries.

Spain and Italy are characterized by a relevant presence of the cooperative movement. These experiences have served as a reference to develop a more structured regulatory framework compared to other latitudes. The Marcora law and the financial tools can represent a point of reference for the development of other experiences at the national level.



In other contexts, such as in Slovenia, where neither a regulatory framework nor dedicated financial tools exist, different business models have emerged, based on the hybridization of the ESOP model with the Marcora Law.

Despite the different framework conditions and business models, the creation of a worker cooperative is considered as the ideal instrument for the development of WBOs. This requires the creation of a common legal, regulatory, and a coherent framework at the European level that includes all the countries of the European Union and also the countries in the pre-accession phase to support the development of these worker cooperatives.

2. The development of WBOs at the European level is affected by low awareness and strong prejudices against the cooperative model. He mentioned that this is an element that has emerged in the debate by all partners and represents a common area of work at national and local level with all potential stakeholders in the WBO process. He indicated that the activity of promoting the cooperative model must be placed at the center of the action plan for the Social Economy.
3. Financial aspects are fundamental in the constitution process of any WBO through the different models available. Workers must have the opportunity to use financial tools. As in the case of the Slovenian model, the worker cooperative itself can finance the startup of the company. Successful experiences in this field, with funds participated by private public capital to support the capitalization of WBOs and mutual funds, cooperative and participated by the national cooperative system in Italy, their joint intervention with the banking system and with credit guarantees, represent successful experiences capable of multiplying the resources made available to workers.
4. To foresee a series of fiscal incentives in the process of capitalization of worker cooperatives, but not only in times of crisis, but also in the processes of succession of the company, so that the option of transferring a company to the workers themselves is attractive.
5. Provide for privileged and regulated access to European resources to finance investments in the development phase of WBOs, especially in certain environments such as industrial and more capital-intensive environments.
6. Consider support activities. A network of facilitators of WBOs processes must grow and consolidate through training, coaching and exchange of experiences both at national and transnational level. Integrated by exponents of the cooperative movement, trade union and the other stakeholders that are able to represent during the beginning of the WBO process.
7. In the cases of companies undergoing bankruptcy proceedings, it is essential to create preferential access for workers to the company's assets. International regulations will have



to converge towards the recognition of a right in favor of the workers in the presentation of offers for the detection of all the company's assets.

8. To develop in the different countries new early warning systems for companies in crisis and to develop instruments at different levels, to foresee situations of companies that have serious financial problems and are on the way to bankruptcy.

He insisted that it is important to accelerate the implementation of the European directive on the level of financial health of companies and to make available dedicated advice to overcome the crisis with a mechanism for consulting all stakeholders, first and foremost the employees.

Closing of the event

Melinda Kelemen, Project Manager, DIESIS Network (Belgium)

She thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in the event and during the WINS project.

She emphasized that it is of utmost importance to ensure and improve the rights to information, consultation, and participation (ICP rights) in all European countries.

She mentioned that this project addressed different perspectives on ICP rights. The different countries involved addressed issues related to WBOs, but also direct participation, financial participation, platform economy and democracy at work.

She also announced that the materials developed in this project (brochures, leaflets, videos, and later, final report and policy pointers) are available on the WINS website and on the Wins Knowledge Platform.

She encouraged to disseminate the materials, since it is necessary to train and inform the workers on their rights (not only) when it comes to ICP.