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2014 was a controversial year for social enterprises in general: the first part was characterized by a strong support and momentum for the development of this type of enterprise at European level; the second part, because of the elections and renewal of the European institutions, was characterized by a lower interest in the topic. Anyway, in both contexts, ENSIE put in place several activities in order to raise awareness and promote the work integration social enterprises (WISEs) beside relevant European stakeholders from the European Institutions to other EU-level civil society organizations. The WISEs are enterprises whose main identifying principles are: the social and professional integration of vulnerable groups, the decision to carry on their activities at the very core of the economic system and a strong pedagogical dimension.

ENSIE also focused its activities in reinforcing its members and their own members in their representation activities to make sure WISEs are also recognized and took into consideration at national level, where they could benefit from this European momentum. Specific and concrete activities were planned in this framework with ENSIE’s support to its members.

Thematic topics were also studied according to the interest of ENSIE’s members and specific activities were organized related to social and economic impact measurement, integration of NEETs and in-work poverty.

Most of ENSIE activities were implemented in the framework of its 4-years framework partnership agreement with the European Commission under the **EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)**.
About us

ENSIE - European Network of Social Integration Enterprises - unites national and regional networks of Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs).

At the moment, ENSIE gathers 26 national and regional networks, representing 18 countries of the European Union (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom) Serbia and Switzerland.

Together, they totalize some 2,500 Work Integration Social Enterprises, and more than 400,000 salaried persons. All these networks pursue, in a manner adapted to local constraints, objectives of social integration of disfavored publics.

WISEs identifying principles

These networks are made up by enterprises of which identifying principles are:

- The social and professional integration of individuals who due to their exclusion and their relegation to a marginal role in society have fallen victim to increasing social and professional handicaps.
- Enterprises at the core of the economic system: work integration social enterprises have decided to carry on their activities at the very core of what is most frequently a major factor in the phenomenon of exclusion: the economic system.
- Enterprises of a strong pedagogical dimension. The work integration social enterprises initiate training and educational programs designed on the basis of existing potential (at professional level and in its participation in society) and develop this individual potential within the enterprise.
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Our team

Director
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Our Members

In 2014 ENSIE welcomed 4 new members: Act Grupa, Cigl Esch, De Omslag and DublinNet.

Act Grupa (Croatia)
Act Group is the first consortium of social enterprises in Croatia. It gathers 9 organizations among which 6 are work integration social enterprises. Most of them work with target groups such as Roma population, women or people with disabilities. They develop local projects in the whole Croatia. The group works mainly at the level of policies and advocacy at national level, as for example on the development of a strategy on social enterprises or on the development of co-operatives.

Cigl Esch (Luxembourg)
The association was born in 1997 and has been created in the framework of the network ‘Objectif Plein Emploi’ (OPE) in the city of Esch-sur-Alzette which has suffered a lot of the end of the industry (25% of youth unemployed and a lot of immigration). It is an association of solidarity economy which aims to fight unemployment with the local actors (shopkeepers, teachers, trade unions, politicians) to detect the needs of the population and create new services in order to put a maximum of people to employment.

De Omslag (The Netherlands)
De Omslag is an independent, non-profit networking organization working on the issues of participation and work. De Omslag is based in Amsterdam. De Omslag is the hub for linking, collaboration and exchange of expertise between a large number of organizations in the field of mental health, social care, addiction, disability, welfare, education and work. De Omslag is also the initiator of the Amsterdam Platform for social firms. Around 62 WISEs participate in this Platform and make use of the lobby, networking opportunities and support program of De Omslag.

DublinNet (Ireland)
The network groups 7 local development communities in the city of Dublin whose main aim is the development of the social economy. Many of these organizations are work integration social enterprises active in different sectors. They support people in a difficult social and employment situation (persons suffering from addiction problems, prisoners, people further from the employment market, etc.) in their integration on the labour market and promote education, lifelong training, economic development and social inclusion.
Our strategic guidelines

At the occasion of the General Assembly Meeting 2014 ENSIE’s members identified the priority guidelines for the next four years and brought it together in ENSIE memorandum.
THE WORK INTEGRATION SOCIAL ENTERPRISES, PROMOTING THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE FURTHEST FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

The 2020 Strategy and the achievement of its goals would move towards the sustainable development of the European Union. Unfortunately, these goals for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth are still far from being achieved, as shown the current data on employment and people in poverty or at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Europe. Also, Europe needs future representative bodies for citizens (European Parliament) and for the Union interests (European Commission) that put in place concrete actions essential to an economic and social policy which addresses the concerns of every citizen, including the most excluded people.

The work integration social enterprises are part of the wider sector of social economy based on three principal fundamentals:

- The primacy of the person and the community purpose;
- The democratic governance and inclusiveness;
- The collective ownership of the profits and surpluses which are reinvested.

ENSIE strongly believes in the possibility to develop ‘another way of entrepreneurship’ that would not be the victim of the profit maximization, of speculations and that would not be done to the detriment of society. Moreover, the social economy initiatives that have shown evidence all around Europe concerning the satisfaction of social and economic needs (integration, training, local and alternative trade, personal services, etc.), usually have a strong local dimension. It represents an important return on investment for the community that has to be taken into account. ENSIE thus calls the candidates to the European Parliament and the European Commission to take into account these three priorities concerning the social economy and to some extend to work integration social enterprises:

To set up a new European Parliament Social Economy Intergroup.

To create within the European Commission a dedicated unit or a transversal department in charge of social economy issues with a specific work integration social enterprises related focus.

To define a European Action Plan for the development of social economy enterprises, in particular work integration social enterprises, in line with the actions initiated by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee in the framework of the Social Business Initiative. This action plan have to focus on the creation of appropriate national legal framework for work integration social enterprises in the countries where it doesn’t exist yet, as well as increasing the visibility of these enterprises and their added-values.

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As direct actors in active social inclusion, ENSIE and the work integration social enterprises more particularly call on:

The implementation of a concrete strategy to fight against poverty and exclusion that aims, among others, the creation of jobs and that takes into account the positive economic and social impact of work integration social enterprises on employment, inclusion of the most disadvantaged people and local development.

The provision of assistance and guidelines beside public authorities in the transposition of the ‘public procurement’ Directive in order to ensure the relevant implementation of the new development opportunities for work integration social enterprises (introduction of social considerations on disadvantaged people employment and reserved contracts).

The establishment of a taxation system, adapted to the Work Integration Social Enterprises’ economic model that fulfill a mission of general interest, with reduced VAT rates and compensation by the State.

The development of a monitoring mechanism for the use of the European Structural and Investment Funds and, in particular, the European Social Fund. This mechanism must ensure that the percentage of the Fund for the reduction of poverty (20%) is respected and the implementation of partnership agreements takes into account the representation of Work Integration Social Enterprises and the promotion and development of this type of companies.

The organization of an annual public hearing beside the European institutions on work integration social enterprises, representing their managers and workers in order to ensure the needs of the sector to be taken into account.
16 & 17 January
Strasbourg, France

ENSIE organized its Board of Directors meeting during the conference ‘Social Entrepreneurs: Have you say!’ in which the team and the members actively participated: presence of the network with a booth during the event, speeches on different topics such as state aids or public procurement. The members had also the occasion to meet relevant stakeholders from their country such as the French Ministry of Social Economy Benoit Hamon or representatives of EU level such as the EU Commissioner Internal Market and Services M. Barnier or Ms L. Fransen, DG Employment, Social Affairs et Inclusion Director responsible for Social Policies.

5 & 6 June
Porto, Portugal

In Porto ENSIE members met for the General Assembly Meeting. At this occasion the team provided a training session on the EU policy process, in particular on the European Semester. The network also promoted the international seminar: “SOCIAL ENTERPRISES AND WORK INTEGRATION IN EUROPE 2020” organized by RESIT Portugal with the following objectives: to present RESIT Portugal – Network of Work Integration Social Enterprises, the Portuguese member of ENSIE; to present ENSIE its structure, objectives and challenges and to promote the European strategies and policies programmed for 2014-2020, related to social enterprises and work integration.
22 & 23 October
Ljubljana, Slovenia

ENSIE in cooperation with Slovenian member ŠENT and other Slovenian partners organized the International Conference “5th Days of Social Economy – Social Entrepreneurship - the first step towards an inclusive society” from 22 to 24 October in Ljubljana. This conference focused on social entrepreneurship and inclusion through employment of people far from the employment market. Charlotte Gruber, as ENSIE’s expert, took part in the discussion to share its experience on models to employ disadvantaged people on the traditional labour market.

In this framework ENSIE organized a Board of Directors meeting on October 23 to discuss the current activities and financial situation of the network. After the meeting, the team provided the training session: “Public Procurement – Transposition of the new directive in the Member States” to give the members relevant information concerning the main possibilities offered by the new European Directive. Some tips about how to better integrate these possibilities at national legislative levels were discussed with the participants.

Focus

Economic and social impact of WISEs

Two meetings on the economic and social impact of WISEs were organized with interested ENSIE members in Brussels and Milan. The second meeting lead to a common basic measurement tool which will be tested within few ENSIE’s members and further developed in 2015.

NEETs integration

Youth unemployment being an important challenge to tackle at European level, some members addressed their interest to work on this topic with the team. A study visit and exchange meeting was organised in Villena, Spain in December.

In-work poverty

ENSIE participated as an expert in a project lead by its Belgian member RES on how to increase the WISEs workers purchasing power. In this framework a working group called ‘G+’ (I have more) was created with the interested members of RES to constitute a representative group of workers in order to be able to negotiate attractive prices for a panel of services dedicated to the WISEs workers.
Representation at EU level

New membership in

Member of:

Social Economy Europe 

RIPESS 

Network for sustainable development in Public Procurement.

Advocacy

Press releases and consultations

- Press Release on the Declaration of Strasbourg
- Press Release on the new directive on public procurement
- Written declaration of the European Parliament on promoting social inclusion and combating all forms of discrimination in the labour market
- Press release EPSCO Council
- Joint Statement EPAP convention on public procurement
- Press Release on the re-establishment of the social economy intergroup
- Consultation on a draft General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) on state aid measures
- Consultation on review of existing VAT legislation on public bodies and tax exemption in the public interest
- Consultation EUROPE 2020
- Consultation Small Business Act
- Consultation on Corporate Social Responsibility
- Unlocking The Potential Of The Social Economy For EU Growth, Italian Presidency
- ESMA Consultation on its Technical Advice to the European Commission on the implementing measures of the Regulations on European Social Entrepreneurship Funds (EuSEF) and European Venture Capital Funds (EuVECA)

A few numbers

34 Spoke at EU level
2 Spoke at international level
3500 Website views
522 Facebook likes
305 Twitter followers
Who we met

- Commissioner Internal Market and Services M. Barnier
- New Commissioner Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility M. Thyssen
- DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
- DG Internal Market and Services
- DG Competition
- DG Enterprise and Industry
- 1 meeting with the Director for Social Policies of DG Empl. L. Fransen
- 1 meeting with the Director-General of DG Empl. M. Servoz with the Social Platform Informal
- 1 meeting of EU Ministers for employment and social affairs: EPSCO Council
- 2 MEPs met bilaterally
- Several MEPs met during the Parliamentary Intergroup on Social Economy and the Parliamentary Intergroup on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights
- The Croatian Permanent Representation
- The Slovenian Permanent Representation
- The Italian Permanent Representation
- The Portuguese Permanent Representation
- 4 national members of the Social Protection Committee
- Several EU level Civil society organizations
- 2 European social partners organizations
- 3 Foundations
- 2 consultant firms

EU level conferences spoke and participation

- Social Entrepreneurs have your say!
- Mobilising Social Policy Innovation
- SEEING project final conference
- Third European Fair of Enterprises and Cooperatives in Social Economy
- Public policy exchange conference - Employment and social inclusion in Europe
- Seminar The social enterprise as an agent of the social economy
- 5th Days of Social Economy
- INWORK conference
- Unlocking the potential of the social economy for EU growth
- European Platform Against Poverty and social exclusion Convention
- Added value to improving employment opportunities through innovative and cooperative structures in Europe
- ESF Launch conference
- The new EU rules on procurement and concessions
- Seminar on addressing social divergences in European societies: improving minimum income support
- Social Entrepreneurship: a tool for addressing local development, youth unemployment and social needs
- Job creation incentives: how to better integrate policies to create sustainable jobs
- European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty 2014
- The Europe 2020 poverty target: lessons learnt and the way forward
- From active inclusion to social investment
• Social economy and social innovation as drivers of competitiveness, growth and social well-being
• Parliamentary Intergroups: Social Economy, Extreme Poverty and Human rights
• Expert group on social entrepreneurship (GECES) meetings
• European Structural and Investment Funds partners group of experts meeting

Successes in 2014

• Voicing WISEs’ workers experience during the side event organized by ENSIE in partnership with other EU level networks at the EPAP Convention
• New article 35 ‘Aid for compensating the costs of assistance provided to disadvantaged workers’ in the revised General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) for state aid
• Re-launch of the Social Economy Intergroup
• Selection in the European Structural and Investment Funds partners group of experts
• Participation in EPSCO Council meeting
• Contribution to the Strasbourg Declaration
• Written declaration of the European Parliament on promoting social inclusion and combating all forms of discrimination in the labour market
• New membership in the Social Platform

Projects

EUROPE4ALL!

Project ‘Europe4all!’ – financed by EACEA, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency about the promotion of “Europe for citizens” programme and its measure “citizens’ project” among Work Integration Social Enterprises and the exchange of experience and best practices about citizens’ active participation or innovative approach/methods in order to raise the citizens awareness within WISEs and their workers.

★ 6 national information and debate sessions
★ 2 European meetings
★ 1 European exchange platform
★ 3 transnational projects successfully submitted
★ Numerous examples of good practices of citizenship and empowerment in the WISEs disseminated offline and online
★ 302 people trained from 18 European countries
**RESPEC**

Project ‘RESPEC’ – financed by the PROGRESS programme: Mutual learning in the field of skills and employment, EU Sector Skills Councils, Restructuring and developed by Feclei and the Lesmes Foundation. The project aims to favour the identification, exchange, dissemination and transfer of good practices and successes in the field of social economy, in particular Work Integration Social Enterprises, to enable the employment creation for people in or at risk of social exclusion, the development of their competencies and to promote their integration on the labour market.

- 4 partners from 3 EU Member States
- 1 EU expert
- 2 transnational meetings: Budapest, Hungary – Liège, Belgium
- 1 final conference: Burgos, Spain
- 1 Study on the social benefit of WISEs

**RE:DIALOGUES**

Project ‘RE:DIALOGUES’ - financed by the European Commission under the line Industrial Relations, developed by Groupe Terre from Belgium. The objective of the project is to find some answers to the industrial relations (social dialogue) that would be adapted to the social economy enterprises in order to enable an harmonious growth favouring quality employment. There is thus a need to prepare the change within the enterprises developing a democratic and participative management. This innovative management raises tensions and paradoxes. It is important to solve it without undermining the social partners.

- 7 partners from different European Member States
- 4 experts from EU and national levels
- 1 final conference at the European Parliament
- 9 meetings with national, regional and EU levels social partners
Old challenges new pathways: social enterprises fostering improvement and social innovation on social inclusion

Project ‘Old challenges new pathways: social enterprises fostering improvement and social innovation on social inclusion’ - financed by the European Commission under the Grundtvig action Learning Partnership, in which ENSIE is involved as observers. This project is focused on the role of social enterprises - namely work integration social enterprises (WISEs), and other social and solidarity initiatives - in promoting social inclusion of disadvantaged groups. Its main objective is to explore and contrast different models of intervention in the field of socio-professional integration of disadvantaged groups, which have been widely developed in the last decades in European countries.

★ 5 partners from different European Member States
★ 3 transnational meetings: Ghent, Belgium – Luxembourg, Luxembourg – Prague, Czech Republic
★ 3 projects newsletters
Perspectives for 2015

This year 2014 represented a turning point at European level with the elections and the renewal of the European Parliament and the Commissioners. Next year will thus require a strong involvement of ENSIE and its members to ensure the continuity of the representation of the work integration social enterprises in Europe.

Following the priority guidelines given this year by the members the team will focus its activities on:

- **Networking** meetings and event on topics linked to work integration social enterprises to reinforce the members’ capacity as relevant stakeholders in employment and social policies; as well as **Concrete projects on** social and economic impact measurement of work integration social enterprises in Europe, on combatting in-work poverty, on integration of homeless people in the framework of partnerships among work integration social enterprises and public authorities.

- **European and national political activities** linked with the follow-up of the European Commission Social Business Initiative by the new Commission representatives, the transposition of the public procurement Directive in the different EU Member States, the recognition of work integration social enterprises in their contribution to the employment and social policies.

- **Activities on different projects** notably linked to the cooperation between public and private funding for the development of specific local/regional financial tools supporting social enterprises, the professional competencies of work integration social enterprises, the civic engagement of citizens in disadvantaged areas with local and EU level decision-making processes.