

Joint Statement

The importance of developing social dialogue in the Social Economy

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Social Employers and EPSU joint statement

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[EPSU](#), the most representative trade union federation of workers in social services, be they public, non-profit or private, and [the Social Employers](#), representing social services employers across Europe, call together on the European Commission to acknowledge and strengthen the role of social partners in developing a framework for the social economy.

Social services providers represent a large part of the social economy, including associations, foundations, mutuals, cooperatives and social enterprises and their number is expected to grow in coming years. It is important that regulatory frameworks protect their social mission, and that social partners are active in ensuring the providers have sufficient, well-trained and healthy workers in order to deliver quality services for all.

Social dialogue and collective bargaining in the social economy, especially for social economy organisations in social services, needs to be strengthened in many Member States.

The social services sector is currently the biggest economic sector in terms of employment which is still outside the scope EU-level sectoral social dialogue. For this reason, our expressed objective is to work towards a coverage of the whole sector of social services by structures of EU-level social dialogue.

As the COVID-19 outbreak highlighted, it is essential to provide a place to better organise and manage workforce in a European Perspective and to structure cooperation among social partners. With regards to the social economy organisations in social services, social partnership is of particular importance with regards to:

- Social dialogue is a key tool for the Social Economy actors to be better involved in the determination of social and economic policies, to improve working conditions and social security, and to contribute to general interest.
- Demographic change and the increased numbers of persons in need of care and support services present the sector with a variety of challenges. Social dialogue can help to best respond to those challenges, linked to questions of the workforce, soft skills and hard skills, recruitment & retention, workforce mobility, safety & health at work, digitalisation, etc.
- This is particularly needed for social services, where social partners already agreed on joint positions on [recruitment and retention](#), on [digitalisation](#) and on [resilience of social services after Covid-19](#).
- Further capacity building is needed to build strong social dialogue and collective bargaining systems in social services in all EU Member States.

- The social services sector also needs to be represented at EU level, through a dedicated and recognised European sectoral social dialogue committee, which in turn will help to develop Social Dialogue in Member States and support them in facing their challenges.

The Action Plan should address the need to further develop social dialogue and collective bargaining in the Social Economy, and especially at sectoral level in social services, where it is crucial to tackle current workforce challenges and best prepare for the future.

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