

DIAGNOSIS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

(Draft Version)

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On the basis of the document diagnosis and proposals for RIPESS Europe approved by the COCO in the month of March 2014, this document will summarize and update the main ideas and will suggest improvements for the new phase of our network.

Updated diagnosis

It is necessary to acknowledge that the economic crisis, under the influence of a neoliberal wave and a recessive fiscal and monetary policy, continues to degrade the livelihood and work of citizens, especially in the peripheral Countries of Europe. In addition, the existing power relationships of the entire European Union push the European Authorities to favor this line of policy. The last elections show that the political landscape has not changed and that citizens' disaffection has increased. Our network has not seized the opportunity to take a position in these elections.

Inside the network there are the same weaknesses observed and analyzed in the paper circulated in our general assembly. For example, the fact that the CoCo has too little contact with network members has been underlined. Moreover, the absence of a close dialogue with the European Institutions have been stressed. Furthermore, we have not been able to build bridges with other European networks in the context of a common approach for solidarity economy in Europe. We have changed organizational model, no longer having an executive secretary. At the same time, we have set up two working groups making proposals that will be discussed in our general assembly. Relations with RIPESS International have been developed and our international presence is extended. The website, social networks as well as the newsletter are maintained.

Some proposals for improvement

These recommendations are made with the ultimate scope of advancing our network, taking into account our experiences and the weakness of our means. We therefore aim to be realistic, without lacking of enthusiasm.

Promote internal interactions between the members, the CoCo and the working groups

The internal dynamism of the network derives from the capacity and commitment of network's members, from the working groups we will be able to build, from the activities of the CoCo as well as from the relationship between these three levels of organization. Knowledge should be developed on how to build a process of sharing and coordination with the scope to favor information flow, common work and joint activities that will give a unique identity to our network as well as a sense of belonging. Only through collective efforts and the participation of everybody we can build a strong and open network.

Initiate and build stable relations with EU bodies and networks and existing European social movements

We do not want to be a lobby that gravitates around the European institutions, but we must assert our presence and positions. We want to become a partner capable of meeting the various challenges posed by European decisions. This must be done through dialogue and alliance-building with all the networks and social movements who want to transform the economy and society and share the values of solidarity economy.

Enhance the visibility of the network, creating links with other Countries of Europe and expand its international presence

Our network should increase its visibility by using all means of information and communication. It takes efforts to expand our network to Anglophone, Baltic, Scandinavian Countries and to Eastern Europe, because of the need to coordinate the plurality of cultures and sensibilities that pertain to solidarity Economy at the European level. But in a world of increasingly global and starting local experiences, we must continue to affirm our international dimension in all areas of the solidarity economy (responsible consumption, ethical finance, local services, cooperatives of production, local development, not monetary markets, environment and alternative energies, ...).

Deepen the theoretical and strategic capacity of the network

We need to have a tool with which we can conduct a thorough theoretical and strategic thinking in the long term. To achieve this goal it is necessary to bring together people, witnesses and actors which may create a historical heritage of the network, develop records, initiate internal debates with other stakeholders and respond to any request from the members of the network.

Pursue the animation of the working groups

These are the organic basis of the network. They are not defined "from above", but by members on the basis of daily concerns experienced in networks. Participating in a European working group is not wasted time. By contrast it contributes to strengthen the decision-making capacity, while showcasing good practices and building prospects for the future.

Two working groups have effective leadership and perfectly complement each other. They are on the agenda of this meeting: **the state of the art** (mapping and network resources) and **identity and perimeter** (contours and evaluation of the added-values of our organizations).

3 more groups are in stand-by (but could restart): popular education, responsible consumption/production and educational visits.