



ripeSS
europe

Solidarity Economy Europe
www.ripeSS.eu

ACTIVITY REPORT 2023

RIPeSS Europe - Solidarity Economy Europe - is the European branch of the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy. Founded in Barcelona in 2011, RIPeSS Europe brings together European regional, inter-regional, national or sectoral SSE networks and organisations in 22 countries. It has integrated Socioeco.org to offer a tool for sharing and visibility of documents and resources on the SSE and transformative economies.

1. A rapidly changing context: the European landscape

The European Union's structural policies, such as the Green Deal and the "Next Generation Europe" recovery and resilience plan, although contradictory in many respects and with other European or national policy lines, nevertheless represent an opportunity for ecological and social transition to which we refer today from an institutional point of view. The populist and right-wing turn in many countries and the pejorative revision of the EU's agricultural, energy and industrial policies have meant that the context - also in view of the forthcoming European parliamentary elections - is not particularly open to change in the direction we are promoting as transformative social movements. The war in Ukraine has continued to disrupt the European landscape, with very serious effects on the European economy: inflation and an increase in fuel and food insecurity.

On the other hand, 2023 was a very important year for the development of the SSE in Europe and the world, and for the restructuring of the network. Among the major milestones to which we have contributed as an international and European network are the United Nations Resolution on the Social Solidarity Economy and the European Commission's Action Plan for the Social Economy, as well as raising the profile of these collective, solidarity-based and democratic models of entrepreneurship and citizen action in several countries, particularly in Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Belgium and Slovakia.

In the countries of South-Eastern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe, despite politically complex contexts and the grip of authoritarianism, the social solidarity economy is beginning to spread, with a revival of the mutualist and collaborative spirit. The creation of third places and greater recognition of social actors are involving more young people in intentional communities and forms of agro-ecological circuits between rural areas and towns.

RIPeSS Europe has also strengthened or entered into new partnerships, notably with ECOLISE and the Communities for Future platform, the GSEF (Global Social Economy Forum), ECG (Economy

for the Common Good), GEN Europe (Global Ecovillages Network), Local Futures (an international network based in the United Kingdom), Transition Network and Transiscope.org.

2. Strengthening the cooperations and alliances

We have essentially continued and intensified our strategy of animating the network by responding to requests from our members or by inviting them to participate in SSE-related events or events that we organise, and by facilitating inter-cooperation through European projects in which RIPESS Europe is involved and co-promoter.

2.1 The Network

The Ripess Europe coordination committee (15 members from all over Europe) met from 19 to 21 January 2023 in Paris to re-elaborate the network's strategy for the next 3 to 5 years: the internal dimension of the network, the evaluation of the strategic objectives to date, the orientations of the General Assembly, and the way in which the team and the coordination work. Secondly, we focused on continuing our efforts to develop and recognise the SSE, to co-construct public policies, and to develop advocacy, alliances and communications. We continued our work with Dunia, a partner of FPH and our 'technological' member for the promotion of FLOSS (free-libre open source) tools, and with the Elabore / Lokavaluto IT cooperative (part of the Complementary Local Currencies movement).

In order to continue promoting territorial ecosystems, a number of agreements have been reached to strengthen the network's structure, based on the decisions taken at the General Assembly in September 2022 in Wroclaw (Poland). In addition to the usual organisation of the network (members, coordination committee, scientific committee and operational team), a co-coordination committee (shared between 2 members, Drazen Simlesa and Ruby van der Wekken) and a 'Care' commission with a particular focus on relational aspects have been set up. The communications team has been strengthened with the involvement of our Greek members and a re-conceptualisation of our online platforms, for better integration between them. We have continued to work with Dunia, a partner of FPH and our 'technological' member for the promotion of FLOSS (free-libre open source) tools, and with the Elabore / Lokavaluto IT cooperative (from the Complementary Local Currencies movement).

The Shared Governance Circle has started work, and we have stepped up all the leadership and inter-cooperation activities between network members, with collective territorial and sectoral cooperation projects. We have also added a 4th dimension to the strategy, based around a shared identity, vision and objective for a post-capitalist society, and therefore a new charter of fundamental principles and all the consequent modes of action: the ability to re-imagine, story-telling, a focus on care (with an eco-feminist approach) and inter-generational (to work much more with the younger generations).

Two new members have joined: UCOOP (Réseau de Cooperative des Etudiants, France) and FEKETE SEREG (Youth-led network, Hungary).

2.2 Intercooperation and projects

One of the areas we wanted to explore further was the possibility of fostering collective action between and with network members, particularly through European projects or support for regional and translocal initiatives. thematic webinars and collaborations with academic institutions.

Several online meetings and webinars on different themes were organised thanks to Erasmus projects and working groups, on various topics (youth, cooperative platforms, territorial cooperation,

solidarity tourism, feminist economy, advocacy for SSE in Europe, etc.), thus strengthening links between members and other SSE initiatives. The Scientific Council promoted a series of webinars on ecofeminism.

This has been accompanied by an increase in relations with academic institutions, both through RIUESS (the inter-university network for SSE) and directly with certain universities and joint projects, where we are associate partners, such as the EPOG+ Masters and PhD programme (led by Paris-Sorbonne and with universities involved in 6 countries) and ERUA (led by Paris8 and with 8 countries involved). New member UCOOP - the network of student cooperatives - has added an extra dimension of direct interaction with students and researchers.

The network has also worked with new partners to develop larger-scale European projects, in particular the DEAR project selected by the European Commission entitled "YOU(th) CARE for CHANGE: Engaging new generations on innovative, joint and multidimensional actions addressing the Global Challenges". Over the next 3 years, this project will enable us to work with and support a number of youth initiatives and businesses to promote SSE and fair local development with an intersectional and feminist approach.

See the attached list of projects activated over the last two years.

3. Advocacy and perspectives

In previous years, we have worked on our convergence strategy with other movements, promoting the World Social Forum on Transformative Economies and participating in various coalitions and campaigns, including Transformative Cities, with TNI (Trans National Institute) and Friends of the Earth.

RIPESS Europe joined the *Communities for Future* platform/campaign on community climate initiatives promoted by the ECOLISE network. The collaboration aimed to develop advocacy documents on thematic policies and the "Manifesto for Collective Action" ahead of the 2024 European elections in order to promote a strong European Green Deal aligned with solidarity economy values. In addition, in 2023 RIPESS Europe became a member of ECOLISE.

The network's advocacy efforts focus on promoting and supporting the social solidarity economy (SSE) to the European institutions at different levels. Networking community initiatives is certainly one way in which SSE - as a vector for change and real transition - can play an important role. This is why we believe that, in the perspective of an even more neoliberal Europe oriented towards policies far removed from our values and practices (from militarisation and the war economy to the indefectibility of ecological transition, from Fortress Europe to migrants and security themes that limit rights and freedoms), it is important to join forces and make our voices heard, and the Manifesto for Collective Action can help us to come together.

3.1 Follow-up Actions

Four main actions were proposed to implement the strategy over the next few years:

- Strengthen advocacy for European SSE policies through closer collaboration with allied networks and joint development of positions, involving Social Economy Europe, ECOLISE, FTAO/WFTO Europe, REVES, URGENCI, NYELENI and Via Campesina, the GSEF (Global Social Economy Forum), ECG (Economy for the Common Good), GEN Europe (Global Ecovillages Network), Local Futures, Transition Network, Remix the Commons and Transiscope.org - among others....

- Campaigning for the follow-up to the 2024 European elections by working on the "Time for Collective Action" campaign with ECOLISE, focusing on local initiatives, citizen engagement on energy and climate, finance, mobility and the commons.
- Supporting members in their work on local policies, exchanging practice and research, translating and adapting existing guides, and drawing on the network's expertise.
- Launch a special SSE campaign during a specific period of the year, in coordination with the Communities for Future platform and Sustainable Communities Week, which could evolve into an SSE awareness-raising initiative. This will involve online events to showcase what RIPPSS Europe members are doing on the ground.

APPENDIX

EUROPEAN PROJECTS 2022-2023

HATI-SOS

The project focuses on supporting SSE in the development of alternative educational approaches in four Central and Eastern European countries (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic), by strengthening cooperation and networking between SSE trainers and activists. In addition to training for educators and activists, the activity focused on developing soft skills and competencies in facilitation, governance and relationship building to strengthen civil society organisations. A cookbook on soft skills and a handbook for organisers in 5 languages will be published in 2024.

https://www.socioeco.org/bdf_fiche-biblio-32_en.html

DEVISUS

For a number of years now, the issue of social impact/utility assessment has been at the forefront of the social economy. Seven organisations, most of them members of RIPESS Europe (the European network for the solidarity economy), wanted to work together to build a shared vision by pooling their experience and lessons learned on the subject. This is how the DEVISUS project (Développement d'un Ecosystème de Valorisation de l'Impact Social et de l'Utilité Sociale) came into being, funded under the ERASMUS + programme. Through a series of exchanges of practices, knowledge, experience, skills and resources, the aim of the project was to: Improve the skills of coaches, teachers and trainers working in the SSE field; build a shared culture between partners, and then develop benchmarks and guidelines that can be disseminated throughout Europe. <https://rip-ess.eu/en/devisus-project/>

YOU'CONOMY

This project has set up training activities to promote ethical and solidarity-based finance - particularly in the European Mediterranean region - by stressing the importance of keeping our savings in entities that invest in social projects rather than in armaments or the speculative economy. On the other hand, this project was created by and for young people, as it was born out of a participatory process following an activity carried out at the World Social Forum of Transformative Economies with various young people from around the world who saw the need to focus on what we do with our money as one of the tools for social transformation. <https://ripess.eu/en/activities/projects/ethical-finance/>

YITEG

The YITEG (Youth Impacting Transformative Economies through Game-design) project aims to launch a participatory and empowering process geared towards learning by doing, in which groups of young people already active in SSE map the practices of Transformative Economies (TEs) and co-design educational tools, resulting in a game on TEs and a handbook. All these activities will be accompanied by training sessions and awareness campaigns to involve other young people who have not yet approached the world of SSE. This process enables young people to acquire skills, build community links at local and European level and become involved - as agents of change - in promoting the shared values and practices of transformative economies. <https://sseds4youth.org/yitegproject/>.

COOPTERR

This is a European Erasmus+ project that brings together 6 partners from different countries. The project aims to highlight all the key skills inherent in the development of territorial cooperation at the cultural, knowledge, economic and social levels. The aim was to train and help professionals and volunteers from these organisations to implement more sustainable territorial cooperation. <https://ripess.eu/en/activities/projects/territorial-cooperation/>

MEETINGS AND EVENTS 2023

18 January, UCOOP meeting (inter-university network of student cooperatives), Paris
19-21 January, Coordination Committee - Strategy, Paris
24 January, EPOG+ Master seminar, Univ. Paris Cité
6-7 February, DEVISUS meeting in Namour
9-10 February, COOPTERR transnational meeting in Paris
23 February, Future opportunities and challenges for SSE following the ILO 2022 action plan, Webinar
14-15 March, Training on advocacy campaigns - ECOLISE, Brussels
20-21 March, OECD meeting Shaping our future with the social and solidarity economy, Paris
22-24 March, YITEG transnational meeting, Barcelona
24-25 March, Transiscope.org meeting, Paris
1-5 May, GSEF World Social Economy Forum 2023, Dakar
24-26 May, RIUESS Conference, Avignon
27-28 May, SSE Festival, Slovakia
9-10 May, Transiscathon, Strasbourg
10-11 May, SSE Tunisia meeting, Tunis
10-11 May, Solidalia festival SSE Italy, Parma
13-14 May, DEVISUS final meeting, Brussels
15-18 May, Fundacion Assembly, Cluny
28-29 June, Urgenci - Salsifi advocacy agroecology meeting, Brussels
12-16 July, GEN-Europe gathering of ecovillages, Germany
19-21 September, RIPPSS Europe General Assembly, Villarceaux
23 September, European Day of Sustainable Communities, all over Europe
25 September, US Coop federation meeting, online
29 September - 1 October, Planet Local Summit, Bristol
13-15 October, Rethinkable Festival, Gorizia-Nova Goriza
7 November, ECOLISE advocacy meeting, online
13-14 November, European Conference on the Social Economy, San Sebastian
23 November, KONFERENZ OF SOCIAL ECONOMY, Vienna
10-12 December, ERUA university meeting, Las Palmas