

OPEN LETTER

For the attention of Members of the European Parliament

For the attention of the governments of the Member States of the European Union

In its conclusions of 7 December 2015 on the promotion of the social economy as a key driver of economic and social development in Europe, the Council of the European Union stated that "[t]he social economy further contributes to several key EU objectives, including the achievement of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, high-quality employment, social cohesion, social innovation, local and regional development and environmental protection. It is also an important tool which contributes to ensuring people's well-being".¹

The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union are currently working on a draft Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). The fact that the social economy is only mentioned in one objective of the ESF+, in particular the objective of improving access to employment set out in Article 4(1)(i) of the proposed Regulation, does not reflect its actual role in the European Union. The social economy also plays a role in providing high-quality, universally accessible and affordable services of general interest, as well as in tackling poverty and supporting active social inclusion and local development. The social economy is characterised by multi-dimensionality and therefore impacts on much more than just the labour market. For example, the social economy strengthens solidarity and social cohesion by promoting active social inclusion and equal opportunities, which is more in line with the objective of Article 4(1)(vii) of the proposed Regulation.

Therefore, given the growing role of the social economy in the EU's social dimension, we support fully the position of the European Economic and Social Committee articulated in point 1.10 of the opinion on the ESF+ of 17 October 2018², and call on Members of the European Parliament and the governments of the Member States to include the additional, separate objective of supporting the social economy in the ESF+ Regulation.

Cezary Miżejewski, Working Community of Associations of Social Organisations (WRZOS), Warsaw

¹ <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15071-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

² OJ C 62, 15.2.2019, p. 165