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SE HUBS
Co-creating Hubs for Social Enterprises

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DESK RESEARCH ON SOCIAL ENTERPRISES (SE) NEEDS AND CHALLENGES – REPORT

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1. Challenges and needs of social enterprises in the analysed country

1.1. Characteristics of social enterprises in the partner country (concept, statistics etc.)

The latest definition of social enterprise is provided by the Third Sector reform act (Law 106/2016): „A social enterprise is a private organisation (as recognised by book V of the Italian Civil Code) that carries out, on a stable and main basis, an economic activity of social utility". This is the normative definition of what a social enterprise is. But let's try to define it in a more concrete way. A social enterprise belongs to the wider spectrum of the Third Sector: associations (whether with legal status or not), committees, foundations, as well as partnerships, corporations, cooperatives and consortia can be all considered social enterprises, as far as they satisfy one of these two criteria:

- Disadvantaged or disabled workers must be present in the company in an amount at least equal to 30% of the total employees;
- Gaining at least 70% of their profits from the following social activities defined by the law: social and health assistance; education and training; promotion of the cultural heritage; social tourism; protection of the environment and the ecosystem; undergraduate and postgraduate education; instrumental services to social enterprises. These areas are essential for the status of social enterprise, since carrying out the economic activity in a stable way or as the main core business in one of these sectors is a necessary prerequisite for the definition provided by the regulations.

Official data about social enterprise are embedded in a wider census carried on by the National Statistics Data Agency (hence ISTAT). ISTAT has conducted a census in 2020 about the non-profit sector (data date back to 2018). The census reveals that there are 359.574 entities (see Figure 1), of which the majority were non-profit associations (305.868). The picture is completed by social cooperatives (15.751), Foundations (7.913) and entities of other nature (30.042). In 2018, South Italy has the largest increase in non-profit institutions. Institutions grew at a faster pace in the Islands (+4,5%) and in the South (+4,1%), particularly in Sardinia (8,9%), Apulia (7,8%), Calabria (6,8%) and Basilicata (3,8%) - explains ISTAT - while Molise is the only region where they decreased (-4,4%). These increases do not significantly modify the territorial distribution, which remains rather concentrated, with more than 50% of the active institutions in the Northern regions.

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NUMBER OF ENTITIES BY LEGAL FORM	
Legal Form	**Amount**
Non-profit associations	305.868
Social Cooperatives	15.751
Foundations	7.913
Other	30.042
Total	359.574

Figure 1: legal entities of no profit sector. Source: own elaboration from ISTAT data

The most trending sectors are by far that of sport, culture and recreational activities, which alone make the 27% of the whole non-profit sector, heeled by trade unions (4,52%) and the sector of Social Assistance and Civil Protection (3,93%) (see Figure 2).

NUMBER OF ENTITIES BY SECTOR AT NATIONAL LEVEL	
Sector	**N° of entities**
Culture, Sport and recreational activities	231.275 (27,09%)
Research and Education	13.993 (1,63%)
Health sector	12.529 (1,46%)
Social assistance and civil protection	33.564 (3,93%)
Environment	5.482 (0,64%)
Economic development and social cohesion	6.549 (0,76%)
Political activity and protection of human rights	5.801 (0,67%)
Philanthropy and promotion of volunteering activity	3.775 (0,44%)
International cooperation and solidarity	4.313 (0,5%)
Religious entities	17.072 (2%)
Labour relations and representativeness of interests	38.642 (4,52%)
Other	4.738 (0,55%)
Total	853.476

Figure 2: distribution by sector of no profit organisations at national level. Source: own elaboration from ISTAT data

The employment situation in the Third Sector

At national level, the non-profit sector employs 1,36 % of total population in Italy (last data available: 2018). Sicily employs 0,8 % of its population, below average. Taking a look at Figure 4, what comes immediately evident it's a direct correlation between the distribution of wealth and the concentration of non-profit entities. This means that the non-profit sector is strictly dependant by the profit economy and it's strictly related to the level of local economic

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performance. The robustness of this consideration comes from the evidence that the wealthiest Northern regions, together with Lazio, are those occupying the highest percentage of people in terms of relative numbers. On the contrary, Southern regions are still lagging behind, with Calabria, Campania, Sicily and Puglia being at the bottom of this special ranking. However, it has to be noted that the percentage is calculated upon the total population of the region. This means that the huge number of unemployed people in the South biases the survey and do not allow to estimate with certainty the contribution of the non-profit sector to the local regional economies. To establish it with a sufficient degree of reliability it would be necessary to take into account data including only employed population.

Region	Population	No profit employees	Percentage of NPEs on total population
Trentino Alto Adige	1.078.069	23.122	2,14%
Lazio	5.755.700	110.911	1,92%
Lombardia	10.027.602	190.122	1,89%
Piemonte	3.953.305	74.114	1,87%
Emilia- Romagna	4.464.119	81.156	1,81%
Friuli Venezia Giulia	1.206.216	20.260	1,67%
Veneto	4.879.133	80.025	1,64%
Liguria	1.524.826	22.477	1,47%
Val D'Aosta	125.034	1.775	1,41%
Toscana	3.692.555	51.789	1,40%
Sardegna	1.611.621	22.153	1,37%
Umbria	870.165	11.853	1,36%
Marche	1.512.672	19.136	1,26%
Molise	300.516	3.631	1,20%
Basilicata	553.254	5.987	1,08%
Abruzzo	1.293.941	11.619	0,89%
Puglia	4.311.217	37.811	0,87%
Sicilia	4.875.290	40.854	0,83%
Campania	5.712.143	33.583	0,58%

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Calabria	1.894.110	11.098	0,58%
Average			1,36%

Figure 3: data on population and employees of the non-profit sector. Source: own elaboration from ISTAT data

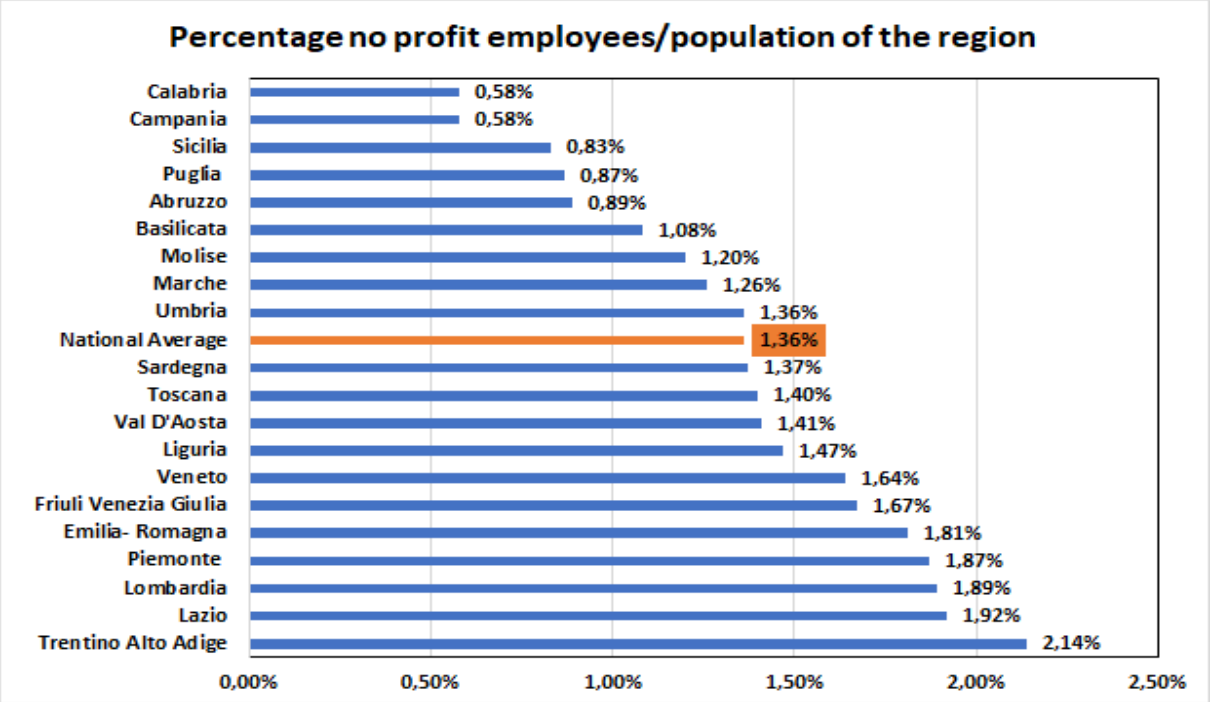


Figure 4: Percentage of population employed in the non-profit sector for every region. Source: Own elaboration from ISTAT data

Employees employed by non-profit institutions, however, grew the most between 2017 and 2018 in the North-east (+2.6%), but also in the South (+1.4%) while declining in the Islands (-1.2%). From a territorial point of view, employees are even more concentrated than institutions. In fact, more than 57% are employed in the North.

Compared to the leading sectors of the economy as a whole, such as industry and services, the incidence of non-profit institutions continues to increase, rising from 5.8% in 2001 to 8.2% in 2018, in contrast to the weight of employees, which remains stable at 6.9% (ISTAT, 2020).

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Figure 5: trend in growth of non-profit institutions and employees in absolute numbers. Source: https://www.redattoresociale.it/article/notiziario/non_profit_il_lavoro_continua_a_crescere_ma_non_come_prima

Regional statistics of Sicily

In Sicily the proportion does not change much: in its context of widespread unemployment such as Sicily, with economic indicators that tell how much work must be done on the road to sustainable development, the Third Sector in Palermo and Sicily has a significant employment impact. The distribution of the sectors proves to be almost the same, with a sharper concentration towards the sector of sports, culture and recreational activities (58,89%), the social assistance and civil protection services (12,53%) and trade unions (9,15%) creating a marked greater difference with other sectors. The huge numbers of the cultural/sport sector is also explainable through the plenty of entities in the sector of sustainable tourism and enhancement of cultural heritage, a sector that is benefiting from the growing trend of tourism in Palermo and throughout Sicily. There is still space for social enterprises which want to invest in tourism and cultural heritage, since new funding opportunities are now available for non-profit and social enterprises, for example the so called "Cultura Crea" funding scheme by the Italian government. Production and employment are also growing in social cooperatives that manage assets confiscated from the mafia, as reported by a 2018 study by SCS for Legacoopsociali. The galaxy of anti-mafia organisations and associations in Sicily benefits from funding from the Ministry of the Interiors and Education but also from the Sicilian region. In 2018, it is the South that has the largest increase in non-profit institutions. According to the ISTAT report (2020): "In 2018, institutions grow at a faster pace in the Islands (+4.5%) and in the South (+4.1%), particularly in Sardinia (8.9%), Apulia (7.8%), Calabria (6.8%) and Basilicata (3.8%) - explains ISTAT - while Molise is the only region where they decline (-4.4%). These increases do not significantly change the territorial distribution that remains rather concentrated, with over 50% of the active institutions in the Northern regions".

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The archipelago of associations and social cooperatives on the island has more than 40.000 employees: a number that has grown exponentially in the last ten years. In a region with an unemployment rate of 23% (twice the national average). The employment spill-over in the Third Sector is however a comforting element, despite a thousand difficulties, for example, linked to the budgets of local bodies, with which social cooperatives (1.785, that is 7,9 percent of non-profit institutions in Sicily) and associations (19.008) work.

NUMBER OF ENTITIES BY SECTOR AT REGIONAL LEVEL (SICILY)	
Sector	**N° of entities**
Culture, Sport and recreational activities	13.204 (58,89%)
Research and Education	1.015 (4,52%)
Health sector	769 (3,42%)
Social assistance and civil protection	2.810 (12,53%)
Environment	313 (1,39 %)
Economic development and social cohesion	367 (1,63%)
Political activity and protection of human rights	272 (1,21%)
Philanthropy and promotion of volunteering activity	300 (1,33%)
International cooperation and solidarity	135 (0,6%)
Religious entities	1.011 (4,5%)
Labour relations and representativeness of interests	2.053 (9,15%)
Other	171 (0,7%)
Total	22.420

Figure 6: Field of action of non Profit entities in Sicily. Source: own elaboration from ISTAT data

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1.2. Models of the functioning of social enterprises - legal perspective

In these last years we've been assisting to a huge re-regulation of social enterprises and the whole Third Sector in Italy. The milestone of the reform process, as stated in the previous paragraph, is the law 106/2016 which defines the Third Sector as "the complex of private entities established with civic, solidarity and socially useful purposes which, on a non-profit basis, promote and carry out activities of general interest, through forms of voluntary and free action or mutuality or production and exchange of goods and services, in line with the purposes established in their respective articles of association or deeds of incorporation". More specifically, the Third Sector cannot include political formations and associations, trade unions and professional associations of economic categories; the provisions of the law and the implementing decrees deriving from it do not apply either to banking foundations.

Thanks to the reform, the sectors of general interest activities are rationalised through the compilation of a single list, with an attempt to unify the regulations previously envisaged for tax and civil law purposes. In addition, it has been foreseen that the periodic updating of activities of general interest should be carried out by a D.P.R. (Decree of the President of the Republic).

Article 4 highlights the scope pursued by the law, in order to revise the discipline contained in the Civil Code regarding associations and foundations, to be implemented according to the following principles and directive criteria:

- Simplification and revision of the procedure for the recognition of legal personality;
- -Identification of the general and common provisions applicable to Third Sector entities;
- -Identification of the activities of general interest that characterise Third Sector entities;
- Providing for the prohibition of distribution, even in indirect form, of profits or management surpluses and assets, except for specific provision for social enterprises;
- -Guarantee, in public contracts, economic conditions not inferior to those provided for by the national collective work contracts adopted by the most representative trade union organisations definition of the compulsory information to be included in the statutes and in the deeds of incorporation;
- Distinction, in the keeping of accounts and reports, of the different nature of the accounting items in relation to the pursuit of the corporate purpose and definition of the criteria and constraints according to which the business activity carried out by the body in a non-prevalent and non-stable form is aimed at achieving the institutional purposes;
- -Prevision of transparency and information obligations, also with forms of publicity of the budgets and other fundamental acts of the body as well as through their publication on its institutional website;
- -Reorganisation of the registration system of entities (and of relevant management acts), through the development of a single national register of the Third Sector (to be set up at the Ministry of Labour and Social Reorganisation, whose registration is mandatory for all entities that make use "predominantly or permanently" of public or private funds collected through public subscriptions, or European funds.

The delegating law has subsequently been defined by the Third Sector Code 112/2017 containing a special section reserved to social enterprises.

The Code delimits the perimeter of the Third Sector by enumerating the entities that are part of it identified as: voluntary organisations (ODV), associations for social promotion (APS),

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philanthropic entities, social enterprises, including social cooperatives, association of networks and mutual aid societies. The notion of Third Sector entity is defined as an "entity established in the form of a non-profit association, whether with legal status or not, or a foundation, for the pursuit of civic, solidarity and charitable and socially useful purposes through the carrying out of one or more activities of general interest in a voluntary manner and the provision or exchange of goods or services". In note no. 2088 of February 28, 2020, the Ministry of Employment and Social Policies, responding to a number of questions regarding the Code of the Third Sector, has specified that, among the requisites necessary to define the entity of the Third Sector (ETS) are:

- The private nature of the entity, the nature of the entity, the teleological element of the pursuit of civic purposes, solidarity and social utility social benefit, the absence of profit-making purpose, the carrying out, exclusively or principally, of one or more activities of general interest in the form of voluntary action.
- The registration in the single national register of the Third sector (RUNTS).
- In particular, the absence of the purpose of profit, translates into the obligation of exclusive destination of the financial and instrumental resources of the Third Sector entities (ETS) to the pursuit of institutional purposes. In order to avoid any possible circumvention of the destination constraint, the regulations prohibit the direct or indirect distribution of profits and operating surpluses, funds and reserves, even in the case of withdrawal or any other hypothesis of individual dissolution of the associative relationship.

Furthermore, the Code provides for the obligation, by 31 March 2021, for all Third Sector bodies to amend their articles of association to include the indication of Third Sector entity or the acronym "ETS"; defines the status of volunteers and lays down rules aimed at encouraging the promotion and recognition of the culture of volunteering in schools and the workplace. The Third Sector Code also establishes the principle of gratuitousness of the volunteer's activity, with the exception of the reimbursement of expenses incurred and documented within predefined maximum limits, the prohibition of lump sum reimbursements and the incompatibility between the position of the volunteer and any form of paid work by the organisation to which the volunteer belong.

The Code also rationalises the sectors of general interest activities through the compilation of a single list, with the attempt to merge the regulations currently provided for tax purposes with those provided for civil law purposes; introduces new sectors of activity, including: fair trade; community communication; social housing; humanitarian reception and social integration of foreigners; social agriculture; international adoptions; redevelopment of unused public assets or assets confiscated from goods confiscated from organised crime. The possibility of updating the list of activities of general interest is also foreseen with the activities of general interest with D.P.C.M. Finally, activities in the general interest may also be financed through requests to third parties for legacies, donations and contributions of a non-remunerative nature. The Code also provides detailed criteria for determining the commercial or non-commercial nature of ETSs, taking into account the activities they carry out and the operating methods they use. The Code reinforces the fight against contractual dumping to the detriment of the cooperative sector; and guarantees the absence of profit-making purposes through the principle of proportionality between the different economic treatments of employees. The registration in the RUNTS register gives the right to access the facilities provided for the Third Sector and gives the possibility to enter into agreements with public administrations to carry out social activities or services of general interest for third parties.

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The Code, in force since 3 August 2017, had envisaged that the Register would be fully operational in February 2019, after postponed to March 2021, as it had allowed one year for the adoption of implementing measures at national level (Decree implementation measures at national level (decree establishing the RUNTS by the Minister of Labour and Social Policies, adopted after agreement at the State-Regions Conference) and a further six months for the Regions to provide for their aspects falling under their own competence.

Section on social enterprise

The Code dedicates a special section to social enterprises, although, it should be recalled that this decree does not exhaust the discipline of social enterprise. The rules set out in Legislative Decree 117/2017 on the Third Sector Code apply to this entity, if compatible, as well as, for those aspects that remain unregulated, the provisions of the Civil Code concerning the legal form in which the social enterprise is established (Article 1, paragraph 5, Legislative Decree 112/2017). Legislative Decree 112/2017 defined social enterprises as "all private entities that carry out on a stable and principal basis a business activity of general interest, non-profit and for civic, solidarity and social benefit purposes, adopting responsible and transparent management methods and favouring the widest involvement of workers, users and other stakeholders in their activities". Companies constituted by a single shareholder, public administrations (including companies and administrations of the State with an autonomous system, Regions and local bodies and their consortia and associations, all non-economic, national, regional and local public bodies), and bodies whose constitutive acts limit, even indirectly, the supply of goods and services in favour of members or associates only, cannot acquire the status of social enterprise. Social cooperatives and their consortia acquire by right the status of social enterprises. To them the provisions of Decree 112/2017 apply in compliance with the specific regulations for cooperatives and insofar as they are compatible. The sectors of activity of social enterprises are enlarged. Newly introduced (with respect to the dictate of Legislative Decree no. 155 of 2006) are, among others, the activities attributable to: scientific research of particular social interest; organisation and management of cultural, tourist or recreational activities of particular social interest; redevelopment of unused public assets or assets confiscated from organised crime; social housing; microcredit; social agriculture. By way of derogation from the general prohibition, the Decree allows the distribution of a portion of the profits and of the annual surpluses, innovating with respect to the previous regulations. However, this share must be less than fifty percent of the total profits and surpluses, deduced by any losses accrued in previous years.

The distribution of this share is permitted for social enterprises constituted in the forms set forth in Book V of the Civil Code, only in the following ways following modalities:

- Free increase in the share capital subscribed and paid up by the shareholders, within the limits of the changes in the annual general national index of consumer prices for the year;
- Distribution of dividends to shareholders, also by means of a free share capital increase or the issue of financial instruments, in any case cannot exceed the maximum interest rate of interest-bearing postal savings bonds increased by two and a half points with respect to the capital actually paid up.
- As far as accounting records are concerned, social enterprises are obliged to:

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- keep the journal and the inventory book;
- draw up and file with the company register the financial statements for the year, drawn up in accordance with articles 2423 et seq. pursuant to articles 2423 et seq., 2435-bis or 2435-ter of the Italian Civil Code, insofar as compatible;
- to deposit the company's financial statements with the Companies' Register and publish them on their website.

The decree includes provisions aimed at encouraging the involvement of workers, users and reference stakeholders. These provisions do not apply to prevalently mutual cooperatives and ecclesiastical bodies. Involvement is implemented through consultation or participation tools in order to exert influence on the decisions of the social enterprise, with specific (but not exclusive) regard to working conditions and the quality of goods and services produced or exchanged. As far as work regulations are concerned, the decree reaffirms the principle of the non-inferiority of the economic and normative treatment of social enterprise workers compared to what is foreseen by collective agreements. It adds a limit to the possible wage gap between the social enterprise's employees. This gap cannot be greater than the ratio (calculated on the gross annual salary) of one to eight.

The admission of voluntary work within the social enterprise is confirmed (but volunteers cannot exceed workers).

Finally, it should be noted that social enterprises can allocate a quota not exceeding three percent of their annual net annual profits, after deducting any losses accrued in previous years, to funds set up by bodies and associations (including recognized associations), as well as the Fondazione Italia Sociale, specifically and exclusively destined to the promotion and development of social enterprises through actions and initiatives of such as the financing of study and research projects on the subject of social enterprise or training activities for social enterprise workers, the promotion of the establishment of social enterprises or their or the financing of specific development programmes of social enterprises or their associative bodies. As far as fiscal provisions are concerned, profits will be tax exempt if they are fully invested in the activity of the social enterprise, as well as in the activity of the social enterprise as well as the IRPEF deduction of 30% of the sums invested by private individuals (up to one million euros) and maintained for a limit of three years, as well as the IRES deduction of 30% of the sums invested by companies and maintained for at least three years.

1.2.1. Legal forms for establishment of social enterprises according to the local legislation (NGOs, trade company, cooperatives, etc.)

As already defined in the previous paragraph, The Law decree 112/2017 set the criteria to acquire the status of social enterprise. Companies constituted by a single shareholder, public administrations and bodies whose constitutive acts limit, even indirectly, the supply of goods and services in favour of members or associates only, *cannot acquire the status of social enterprise*.

With the exclusion of banking foundations and *political formations and associations*, trade unions and professional associations of economic categories every company can get the label of social enterprise, as long as it respects one of the two parameters quoted in the first paragraph:

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- Getting at least 70% of profits by operating in the aforementioned areas
- Disadvantaged or disabled workers must be present in the company in an amount at least equal to 30% of the total employees.

1.2.2 Special registration procedure of social enterprises (if any) – where, how, why Incorporation and registration and deeds to be filed

A social enterprise must be established by public deed, which must be filed within 30 days with the Register of Enterprises in whose district the body registered office is established by the notary or the administrators, either electronically or by submitting it in electronic form.

Therefore, associations, whether with legal status or not, foundations and committees that qualify as "social enterprises" must also be registered in the special section of the Register of Enterprises for social enterprises.
In addition to complying with the rules laid down for each type of organisation, the memorandum of association must state the social character of the enterprise by indicating the social purpose with reference to Art. 2.
Paragraph 3 of Article 11 of the Code of the Third Sector, Legislative Decree 117/2017, provides that the registration of social enterprises in the special section of the Register of Companies also counts as registration in the single national Register of the Third Sector, while for cooperative companies the obligations of registration in the special section of the Register of Companies and in the Registers of Cooperatives remain, namely the National Register held by the Ministry of Economic Development and the Regional Registers of Social Cooperatives.

The documents and acts to be submitted to the Register of Enterprises in whose district the registered office of the social enterprise is located are the following:

- The Incorporation act, the Statute and any subsequent amendments to them. The deeds of incorporation must provide for the appointment of one or more public officers (often majors) who meet the professional requirements set out in Article 2397 of the Italian Civil Code and for whom there shouldn't be any grounds for ineligibility or disqualification;
- The financial statement;
- The social report which is an act required only to social enterprises and going further the simple description of financial and economic flows.

For the assignment of the activity code, social enterprises have as reference the ICNPO (International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations), a classification developed by the United Nations in 2003 and used to assign economic activity codes to social enterprises.

The filing of the aforementioned deeds and documents is carried out by the notary or the administrators, within thirty days from the occurrence of the event (e.g. from the approval of the balance sheet or from the adoption of the amendment of the memorandum of association), without prejudice to the other legal obligations to define the timeframe for the drafting and filing of these deeds, using the models approved by the Ministry of Economic Development for the submission of applications for their registration in the Register of Enterprises.

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The Office of the Registrar of Companies that receives the application for the filing of the deed verifies its formal completeness and the presence in the deed of the corporate purpose and the absence of a profit-making purpose before proceeding with the registration in the appropriate section and may, if necessary, invite the social enterprise to complete, amend or supplement the application within a reasonable period, after which, by reasoned decision, it refuses to file the deed.

For the purposes of registration, the Office of the Registrar of Companies acquires the declaration of the legal representative of the entity and if applicable files the registration of the SE in the special register of enterprises for the Third Sector, which also serve as registration in the RUNTS (the sole national register for the Third Sector).

1.2.3 Special benefits for social enterprises provided by legislation (for example – tax benefits, "reserved tenders", right to use public property, special grants, impact funds for SE, etc.)

Although it is not technically a question of tax benefits for social enterprises, it is worth remembering that anyone (individual or company) who contributes with their own resources to the financing of a new social enterprise can benefit from a very interesting provision. These resources can be deducted from the gross income tax of individuals for an amount equal to thirty per cent of the sum invested, provided that the company in which the individual invested has not been existing for more than five years. The same provision also applies to companies, but with the mechanism of deduction from taxable income. The limits for deduction equal to €1 million per year for individuals and €1.8 million per year for companies, and the investment should be kept for at least 5 years.

As for measures directly addressed to social enterprises, the law establishes some elements not contributing to the formation of taxable income:

- For example, the sums allocated to special reserves provided for by the law. These are profit reserves made up of operating surpluses and intended to carry out the statutory activities or to increase the assets.
- The sums allocated to the payment of the contribution for inspection activity: this is the verification activity carried out by the National Labour Inspectorate at the request of the Ministry and aimed at verifying compliance with the regulations on social enterprises.

Furthermore, the law foresees the possibility to distribute up to 50% of the annual profit, resulting from net of resources allocated to cover losses from previous years to the following scopes:

- Free capital increase
- Releasing financial instruments or distributing dividends to shareholders
- Donations to other third sector organisations not being part or mingled with the one in object.

The use of reserves to cover losses is permitted and does not lead to forfeiture of the benefit, provided that no profits are distributed until the reserves have been reconstituted.

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On the other hand, profits and operating surpluses distributed in any form are taxable, even if this takes place in the form of a free increase in the capital subscribed or paid up by the shareholders, or through the issue of financial instruments, or even through donations in favour of ETS other than social enterprises (which are not founders, associates, partners of the social enterprise or controlled by it) aimed at promoting specific projects of social utility.

As for public tenders or dedicated programmes, it is worth to be highlighted the crucial role played some of EU programmes such as COSME and EASI, the instrument dedicated to Social Innovation. At national level, besides the already quoted funding scheme "Cultura Crea", it has also to be mentioned the Smart & Start programme, a series of economic and fiscal facilities thought for start-ups, including a particular category, which is socially innovative start up. The Ministry for Economic Development has launched a dedicated easy funding programme for Social Enterprises.

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1.2 Review of available research carried out in partner country in the three identified areas

1.2.1. Staff recruitment, retention and internal training of SEs' personnel promoting inclusive educational approaches and mainstream practices

Although the literature in these fields is not really prolific, there are some interesting trends emerged through some authors that put a great effort on the dynamics, the pros and the cons concerning the management of human resources within the non-profit sector, which can be a good proxy for social enterprises too. A research on human resources management dating back to the late 1990s (Spazzoli, 1999a) highlighted some typical weaknesses of the Italian non-profit sector: the lack of a clear organisational framework for human resources, the accentuated turnover, the lack of adequate remuneration policies for staff, the inadequacy of the labour jurisdictional context. However, the research showed a good level of "loyalty" of NPOs staff, in particular their adherence to moral and ethical principles, the quality of work and the company climate, which made the prospect of working in the NPOs attractive.

During the same time, another emerging topic was that of the training for the Third Sector to foster structural and managerial growth of the non-profit sector. A conference (Spazzoli, 1999b) held at the University of Bologna began to explore the theme of training, academic in particular, aimed at the management of the Third Sector but also at those who wanted to approach the Third Sector, students in particular, with good cognitive and operational tools.

Also, in this case it was evident not only the fragmentation of training provision, evidently also along North-South geographical lines, but above all with regard to the curricula required for quality training throughout the country. In those same years, dozens of academic modules, masters and bachelor/short-cycle diplomas were created, covering multiple aspects of training, from fundraising to human resources, from planning to education, fiscal and legal aspects.

The academy in particular has not succeeded in creating a single and shared model of higher education for the non-profit sector, which may also have a negative impact on its ability to build a common ground.

As authoritative observers point out, non-profit operators compensate for lower remuneration, compared to for-profit or public enterprises, with so-called intangible benefits: fairness of remuneration, quality of relationships, democratic participation in the governance of companies, freedom of choice, flexibility of working hours, adherence to the mission, that individuals have or develop along the way within organisations (Gui, Pellagra, Angiari, Canino, 2007).

Social enterprises must preserve these characteristics because the tendency in many organisations is instead to homologate to managerial models similar to for-profit or public organisations, with a loss of identity that would undermine the delicate balance of exchange between individuals and organisations (Zamagni, 2002; Zamagni, Bruni, 2004).

The intangible benefits, considered by for-profit organisations as an added value to productivity, are the main motivational levers able to balance the gap between the high personal investment of workers and low salaries.

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The development potential of social economy enterprises is linked to the ethical challenge of knowing how to move between the state and the market, promoting and proposing strong values, high professionalism and innovative management tools, within a paradigm centred on participatory governance.

On the other hand, with regard to employees more generally, we can state that it would be desirable to adopt some guiding principles described in the book by C.L. Barbeito (Barbeito, 2004). He identifies some essential points for Human resources policies in a non-profit company:

1. A clear determination of the interactions between employees and board members to eliminate any risk of confusion and overlap with the role of management;
2. A clear remuneration policy, based on a job description that highlights the responsibilities, duties and qualities necessary to achieve the determined objectives and, as far as possible, adapted to territorial elements;
3. The presence of elements of verification and control of performance, as much as possible shared and "explained" to the employee.
4. Finally, there is another crucial issue concerning the non-profit sector: the credit and the image it enjoys in some for-profit and productive circles in general.

Many for-profit managers and other professionals, in times of industrial and financial crisis tend to see non-profit work as a highly rewarding and exciting career option, in some cases a life choice. Non-profit organisations have a huge need for these professionals in order to capitalise and restructure the work done, but often - for various reasons - these worlds do not meet.

In conclusion, the mainstreaming of the incentives granted by the work in the field of social enterprise are and always will be a hard task: when it comes to financial resources it will always be more remunerative to work in the profit sector. Intangible advantages (such as those listed above), the real strong element of the sector, are not easy to communicate and transmit in an immediate and concrete way, and nonetheless, are of course only targetable to a small category of people, where money is on the contrary a universal value-positioning and more easily appealing element.

1.2.2. Securing of training facilities and expert knowledge on communication of SEs' impact and community importance

Training facilities

In Palermo there are many structures that could ease the access to an open space for trainings. Some of them:

Moltivolti

A great business example, two entities: one for-profit restaurant specialised in ethnical menus and combining receipts from 5 different nationalities (Italy, Gambia, Greece, Senegal, Afghanistan) and a co-working space hosting Third Sector organisations (mostly in the human rights protection field) and a meeting room, also available for seminars, movies screening and debates. The peculiarity of the place is to be perfectly symbiotic with the surrounding neighbourhood: Moltivolti is located in Ballarò, an area where communities of African and Bengali

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migrants settled and perfectly mixed with natives of the area. To explore more: https://moltivolti.org/ristorante/

Cre.zi plus

Cre.zi plus combines even more aspects. It is at the same time a social kitchen, a "cineporto" (a rent service for the movie production), an incubator for start-ups, a coworking space and a space for events and workshops. It's a really dynamic reality, with lots of enterprise incubated and different professionals working and confronting day by day in heterogeneous sectors. To explore more: https://www.creziplus.it/.

Magneti co-working

MAGNETI is a co-work space situated in the heart of Palermo that aims to contribute at the professional, cultural and social development of the city. "Magnets" is a co-work for expert in different sectors, freelancers, students and young people who want to live in a cross-fertilisation space which stimulates professional growth by developing common strategies. For further info: http://www.magnetico.work/.

Communication

The aspect of communication is often a weak point of no-profit organisations. As a personal statement, the main characterising weakness of the communication aspect is a simple one: most of the communication of the Third Sector is related to non-marketable aspects, such as ethical values and missions. In the point of view of the reader, there is often the perception of not catching the concrete side of the appealed values. Or, even when this happens, the reader perceives them as really far from his/her common life, and barely understands or empathises with the dynamics of which most of NGOs talk about. To put in another words: often what is communicated is the solidarity for solidarity, not clarifying how this value is translated into action.

There is not a great literature strands on this aspect, but we would like to quote a really interesting blog article where there are many interesting and agreeable aspects. According to the author, "underestimating communication is a common mistake in the non-profit sector. In associations, in many foundations and in small or medium-sized non-profit companies it very often does not exist" (Ronchetta, 2020).

Often, messy communication is entrusted to volunteers, who manage it in the best way they can, not as professionals.

The author suggests that to communicate it is necessary:

- to have a clear idea of the own identity of the social enterprise
- to identify a clear message to work on and spread it.
- to have a single voice that speaks to the outside world and instead, often, the souls of the associations are different, there are many voices, they overlap and clash, creating chaos and ineffective communication.

Here are the most common mistakes:

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- A volunteer or every staff member manages them. Communication should be delegated to an expert knowing the mission of the company and able to autonomously build a strategy according to its expertise and experiences. There is not a single appropriate strategy. There are many things that can be told on-line, building a narration that uses the appropriate language for each social media. Stories about people, campaigns, data and infographics, news and updates, links to interesting articles. Everything has to be planned and structured to tell the story and create engagement.
- The data collected are not analysed: the data tells a lot about the effectiveness of the communication and helps to adjust the focus.
- There is no professional image and video bank to use at all times: on social media, to create a new campaign, to tell the story of what is being done.

Impact assessment

Another trending aspect is that of the impact communication. The issue of the SEs impact has been discussed for decades without getting to unidirectional solutions. In general, the problem of assessing the social return of the interventions carried forward by SEs or non-profit sectors still remains.

The impact assessment is a really complex and multi-faceted process. There are too many factors and dimension to take into account, and none of these is less important. This can give a clue about how it is difficult to really assess the social impact. According to literature, these are the main elements (Figure 7) considered when it comes to impact assessment (Berardi et al., 2020, p.3):

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Criteria	Dimension
Type of measurement	quantitative (monetary, non-monetary), qualitative
Reference time horizon	short, medium, long term
Production of added value	social, cultural, economic, institutional
Impact value chain	input, activity, output (or outcomes), outcome (or results), impact
Recipients	- Reporting to external parties (investors and other stakeholders) [measuring to prove] - Internal management of activities and basis for strategic planning [measuring to improve]
Motivations	> to make (ex-ante) decisions on whether to support a project > to assess its outcomes (ex post) and inform beneficiaries or the community
Steps in the measurement process	5 phases: defining objectives, analysing stakeholders, measuring results, assessing impact, monitoring and improving

Figure 7: elements to take into account for social impact assessment. Source: IRIS - Rivista Impresa sociale

In a way, the Italian Third Sector reform has tried to take into account the dimension of impact assessment. The choice of the Italian legislator to require some organisations to publish the social report, which also contains information on the impact of their activities, represents an important choice, even if it has been mitigated by the provision to limit compulsory publication only to a very few organisations with revenues at least equalising €1.000.000 that take part in public procedures for the provision of services of general interest with very substantial projects and initiatives. The social report will be an annual report, to be realised together with the other compulsory documents, describing extra-financial parameters, such as for example the level of commitment to stakeholders and the community, the impact of the activity realised and other social elements enabling to understand the real presence of a SE in its local community. This decision shows Italy's intention to embark on a path aimed at making Third Sector organisations increasingly transparent and accountable, in line with what is recommended (though not equally compulsory) in countries considered a "point of reference" in terms of economic-financial and social transparency. The challenge that ETSs have to face will also represent a great opportunity in terms of cultural innovation that will spread beyond compulsory disclosure, even for all organisations that, although not legally required to measure and communicate social impact, will also benefit from new reference standards on the subject and experiment with new methods and models of social reporting.

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1.2.3. Distribution of SEs' goods in a sustainable way visible for the community

On this matter, SEs should find a market space fitting both their social mission and the market request. The public visibility comes from marketing, and marketing comes from branding, which on his turn lies on a solid identity and self-awareness. The real question is: which aspect of a social business can give a competitive advantage compared to classic business and give them a deserved visibility?

On this topic, we would suggest a really intriguing example: Moltivolti, a multi-ethnic restaurant, with a co-working space nearby hosting Third Sector social organisations. The business is kept alive mostly by the profit part, that is to say the restaurant. Apparently, there were no reasons for which this initiative could lead to success: the restaurant is located in a suburb of the city where illegality is quite prosperous and dumping on prices of competitors is really common. How could the restaurant (which is also a pub) keep competitiveness when the unit price of a beer or a meal is the double than those of surrounding pubs and restaurants of Ballarò, that through tax evasion succeed in lowering sale prices? It seemed a lost battle from the beginning, but the facts are proving that competitive positions are not only gained struggling on the prices. Moltivolti has been able to build a solid brand of multiculturalism, sustainability and respect of workers right. That has been sufficient to grasp a good market share only basing on their missions and values, also supported by the fact that they are probably the only restaurant in Palermo offering this kind of experience and merging all these elements together which forms a successful mix.

Going back to the general concept, in Italy the legislation did not address the issue of visibility and recognition of SEs products through quality certificates or labels at all. Probably, it is only the market deciding how much some values are relevant in addressing the purchasing choices. And it is the market to establish if the appeal to ethical principles in the product itself or in the process of production are valuable enough to convince customers.

1.3. Conclusions on the needs and challenges in the three identified areas

The problem emerged during this short analysis can be summed up as follows:

- Problem of high turnover and difficulties in efficiently managing human resources in the Third Sector: as we saw, social enterprise tend to be characterised by the huge volatility of staff, by a low legal regulation of working contracts and in general by less remunerative wages. On the contrary, SEs build their solidity mostly on intangible values, such as commitment of the employees to the mission of the company, and the possibility to have a more flexible life and to work in a more autonomous way;
- Lack of a centralised and homogeneous training programme for the Management of the Third Sector: given that non-profit sector can be a really wide field, some common elements to boost professionalism in the sector should be found and put together;
- Relevance of communication: for most of the Third Sector entities, communication is something marginal and that can be downgraded to an easy task to delegate to volunteers. On the contrary, it is really important to give it the central role it deserves,

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caring also the type of messages that are channelled through campaigns and day by day communication;

- The long-standing problem of the social impact assessment: how to know if all these efforts are worthwhile if it is not possible to measure the impact of all these sets of actions? How it is possible to check whether they generate a change, an effect, a reaction in the context where they are implemented?
- Italy is shyly trying to circumscribe this problem by obliging bigger social companies (with annual revenues equal or above to €1.000.000) to annually draft the social report, collecting feedback from local actors on the effectively generated social impact. Probably, the problem could lie in the social impact itself, a too multifaceted concept. Which strategies should be pursued by social enterprises in order to confer visibility to their products or services? Can they manage the issue by themselves or do they need some external intervention?

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2. Challenges and needs of social enterprises in EU Review of available relevant research carried out by the EU institutions in the three identified areas (*minimum 3 per each area)*

2.1 Staff recruitment, retention and internal training of SEs' personnel promoting inclusive educational approaches and mainstream practices

In many EU Member States, a propensity for civic engagement has grown amongst the population. In Germany, for instance, such engagement has grown by 10% overall in the last 15 years. Interestingly, this revamped wave of volunteering is nourishing the creation of new social enterprises in many EU countries. Growing ecological awareness and idealistic interest in achieving social goals has particularly increased among youth (in Austria, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Turkey and United Kingdom). According to the "Social Enterprises and their Ecosystem in Europe" report, "youth values tend to differ from those of previous generations: youth are more oriented towards the general public benefit, seek jobs that are meaningful, think more about how to exploit resources efficiently (including new available technologies), and are often ready to work towards social goals at lower remuneration" (Borzaga et al., 2020, p.49). New generations are reinventing ways of working in the social, cultural and environmental sectors, thirst for innovative and creative solutions and seek jobs that are congruent with the ethics, values and contribution of social enterprise. Two recent crises have acted as drivers for reviewing civic and solidarity values: the 2008 economic and financial crisis and the 2015 refugee crisis. Some individuals significantly changed their values system after the economic crisis of 2008 and increasingly understood the importance of cooperation in creating better conditions for the environment and society. In Greece, Portugal and Slovenia, the economic crisis has contributed to the emergence of movements advocating new ways of organising the economy, which have paved the way for the experimentation of alternative forms of social and economic organisation. At the same time, austerity and difficulties in financing public services have contributed to triggering creativity around more cost-effective ways to offer support that rely significantly on the contributions of volunteers and the community (e.g., Italy, United Kingdom). Moreover, the outsourcing of public services in response to the need to reduce public expenses and make the supply more flexible, while attracting big corporations that see outsourcing as a business opportunity, has also pushed social enterprises to group together to form new advocacy structures to defend their interests in the provision of social services (e.g., Austria, France, Italy, Spain). A recent example of community mobilisation is provided by the refugee crisis: without the many social enterprises that reacted actively, shelter and food would not have been delivered to the many people seeking asylum in Europe in 2015-2016 and innovative social and integration paths would not have been experimented with. Integrating migrants presents both a challenge and an opportunity in many EU member states. Indeed, besides creating new needs, immigration also contributes to a trend of creation of new social enterprises that are inclined to experiment with new housing patterns and integration pathways and are struggling to change the mind-set of local populations. The capacity of social enterprises to self-organise and set up networks has proved crucial for social enterprise expansion and the success of both nascent and existing social enterprises. Growth in organisations designed to enhance cooperation has been registered in several countries, including Austria, Croatia, Estonia,

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Greece, and Latvia, where new incubators and accelerators have been created to support social enterprise development and enhance their visibility. Thanks to the rediscovery of the values of cooperation, cooperatives have become aware of their capacity to solve social problems and are now being revitalised with a stronger solidarity connotation in countries in which they had been neglected for a long time (Borzaga et al., 2020, p.141) (e.g., Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, North Macedonia, Serbia). Networks have also played a role in safeguarding the social enterprise against opportunistic organisations that may be attracted by the popularity of the concept. This is the case, for instance, in the Netherlands, where Social Enterprise NL is currently testing the feasibility of a code of governance for social enterprises that is meant to present valuable signals to stakeholders regarding whether an enterprise can be considered a social enterprise. The capacity of citizens to self-organise is, however, still far from being fully harnessed in more than a few countries. Lack of cooperation and networking between social enterprises are regarded by many stakeholders consulted for this study as important obstacles to social enterprise development. Networks are described as weak in Slovenia and Romania owing to lower levels of cooperation among social enterprises and the insufficient availability of training incubators, coaching and consulting. Similarly, in Cyprus, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, there are poor intermediary structures and very few or no regional networks are operative. Nevertheless, there is a shared view among stakeholders that new opportunities can result from cooperation among different types of organisations. Several existing good practices of regional centres and clusters facilitating the development of social enterprises (e.g., SINEC in the Moravian-Silesian region of the Czech Republic) and multi-sector second-level organisations (Austria) call for more systemic support of regional activities and cooperation among social enterprises, which would contribute significantly to social enterprise growth at the local level because of familiarity with particular contexts and the possibility of sharing experience informally.

While under-researched for quite some time, social enterprise has attracted the interest of a large number of researchers. Several universities now offer courses on social enterprise, social entrepreneurship and social innovation, and various EU-funded investigations have been carried out. Nevertheless, systematic data collection on social enterprises is still lacking at both member state and EU levels (Trends, opportunities and challenges | 147 Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe | Comparative synthesis report). The lack of data makes it more difficult for policymakers and other stakeholders to make decisions aimed at contributing to societal challenges via supporting social entrepreneurship. All country analysis reports a lack of internal capacities as one of the main barriers to social enterprise development. While social enterprises that developed from community groups tend to lack business and investment skills and have poor capacities for developing financial plans or promoting their products and services on the market, on the other end of the spectrum, social enterprises coming from the business sector tend to neglect social aspects. Stakeholders are, however, divided in their perceptions on the lack of skills of social entrepreneurs. Some believe that social enterprises should be formed and based on the principles of social economy, with a clear distinction from the business sector. Others believe that the origin of many social enterprises, coming from the associative sector, poses a challenge for their sustainability and successful development due to their lack of entrepreneurial orientation. In both cases, the poor or incipient skills of social entrepreneurs can adversely affect their competitiveness and capacity to generate beneficial impacts. Gaps in knowledge have accelerated the development of new kinds of ad hoc collaborations between social enterprises and private sector circles (e.g., Denmark). However, rather than pushing social enterprises to mimic regular companies, the key challenge seems to be to strengthen new entrepreneurial thinking, building on balanced competencies across a range of functions, from business skills to a broader awareness of the organisation's social purpose and inclusive

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governance. Against this background, tailored programmes, coaching and mentoring are needed that develop greater competencies in business development and strategy, methodology development, impact assessment and management of a diverse array of stakeholders, including customers, workers and volunteers (e.g., Ireland, Sweden). Furthermore, while professionalisation is rising in some countries (e.g., Austria), capacities need to be built on how to stimulate bottom-up development processes drawing on local communities that can lead to the creation of new social enterprises both in urban and remote areas (e.g., Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia). There is also an urgent need for capacity building and knowledge sharing among civil servants and bank officials, who may not always understand the unique characteristics and needs of social enterprises, leading to inappropriate decisions and onerous collateral requirements. Improving knowledge in the public sector and educating public officials, especially on how laws should be implemented, could allow for a better understanding of social enterprises' potential as well as their limitations, especially concerning the management of public tenders (e.g. Cyprus, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden, United Kingdom). Indeed, there is a general tendency amongst national and local authorities to interpret transposed EU rules (i.e. Directive on public procurement) in a very restrictive way, which ends up penalising social enterprises.

2.1.1. Securing of training facilities and expert knowledge on communication of SEs' impact and community importance

Absence of common mechanisms for measuring and demonstrating social impact was mentioned as a major issue by stakeholders, particularly investors and programme managers across several European countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Croatia, Portugal, Switzerland to name a few). Interviewees indicated that a small minority of social enterprises have systems in place for monitoring social impact. According to them, the lack of transparency and information on the impact that social enterprises are having is a key factor affecting visibility and public opinion of social enterprise (Borzaga et al., 2020, p.69). Measurement of social impact is not yet established and while recent initiatives have made inroads in raising awareness on the importance of reporting on impact and some coaching and training schemes have successfully brought some social enterprises to improve in the area, a lot remains to be done in almost all countries of study.

In addition to a public recognition system for social enterprises, some countries also employ a system of private marks, labels and certifications. These schemes are progressively achieving wider adoption in Austria, Finland, Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom. One reason behind the creation of private certification schemes is the willingness of the concerned enterprises to signal their specificity, given the lack of ad hoc laws and strategies designed for social enterprises or concrete incentives pushing social enterprises to register as such.

2.1.2. Distribution of SEs' goods in a sustainable way visible for the community.

The report on ecosystems of social enterprises provides some interesting clue on the sector positioning of social enterprises. SEs arise where there are spaces left empty by the public welfare. SEs in Europe are in strict symbiosis with public services, or to better say, they are

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complementary to the amount and the quality offered by public services. In countries with a traditionally low supply of social services from public providers and strong traditions of civic engagement, social enterprises initially emerged to fill gaps in the provision of social services. In these countries (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain), public authorities have subsequently decided to ensure the provision of services of general interest by funding and supporting social enterprises. In those member states (Denmark, Finland, Sweden) where the provision of social services has traditionally been public, the emergence of social enterprises has typically been intertwined with the transformation of welfare systems. The main areas of intervention are those where service provision has been outsourced (Borzaga et al., 2020, p.129). In countries where welfare systems are being reformed, social enterprises have emerged in a diverse spectrum of areas with a strong attitude towards meeting the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised groups. This applies to a significant number of countries outside the Union. Countries with extensive non-profit welfare structures already supported by public resources and covering most of the needs of the population have seen a shift towards stronger entrepreneurial positions (Austria, Germany and the Netherlands). There are also some countries where social enterprises tend to be disconnected from public policies (Albania, Malta, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey).

Overall, social enterprises are currently widely diversified in terms of the types of services they provide and the target groups they serve. These different fields of activity can, however, be reduced to three main areas of intervention:

- Health and social services;
- Labour integration of disadvantaged people;
- Other social challenges.

2.2. Conclusions on the needs and challenges in the three identified areas

The great milestone about these three key areas is represented by the EU last year's report. The report highlights a generational switch in personal values that could positively affect the world of social enterprise. Probably due to the different crises we are facing or due to a change in the paradigm of job aspirations, more and more youngsters are dedicating their effort to volunteerism. On the area of communication, the main concerns are connected to the always persisting difficulty of finding an exhaustive method for social impact assessment. The last chapter offers a good insight about how SEs position themselves in the market, according to the State where they grow. There is always a position of complementarity towards public services and social enterprises tend to occupy the empty space left by the public sector.

In synthesis, these are the challenges that SEs have to face in the next future:

- Lack of HR management skills applied to the Third Sector;
- Scarcity of spaces suitable to create a co-working space;
- Lack of comprehensive strategy and agreement on the role and desired impact of the SE hub, including sales, marketing, community management and operational skills and capacity;
- Need of financial resources from external sources (public and private).

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3. Main conclusions and recommendations for the SEHUBS vision for SE co-creation hubs as an innovative model

According to the needs emerged in this preliminary desk research, there are four aspects on which it is necessary to work:

- Creating a protocol defining standard for the creation and assignments of label/certification: some countries already have this protocol in different forms. Austrian certificate serves the purpose of identifying given criteria. In Finland, it works as a promotional tool raising awareness on SEs business model. In Germany there is a way to differentiate particular social business models that deserve the attention of social impact investors. In the Netherlands it is under development and aims to create a common model of governance for SEs in which all entities recognising themselves under these principles can join it. In Poland it is just a label awarded to finalists in a special contest dedicated to SEs (the best social enterprise of the year). One of the most interesting cases is the UK one, where a certificate provides a guarantee that an organisation has reached given criteria and operates as a SE committed to creating benefits for people and the planet. The protocol could be adapted to the specific national needs and be promoted in specific networks to sensitize the public opinion and the national legislator;
- Creating a code of governance for SEs, containing guidelines mostly on the aspect of human resources management, including staff retention, internal organisation and definitions of the power relationships among staff;
- Create a transnational network/consortium of SEs, accessible to all organisations in EU countries recognising themselves under common principles. The network could be a sharing space for projects, ideas, promotion, best practices and visions.
- From our research and previous experience, it would be preferable to implement a combination of online and offline instruments to support the distribution of SEs' goods and services as the identified good practices are all physical spaces and communities of "real" people and organisations working closely on a daily basis exchanging spaces, ideas, projects and vision. So, in Italy the co-working and physical hub experience is the best one. At the same time, a combination of physical and online spaces can be considered if the COVID-19 pandemic will last longer than 2021. In Italy all experts and the scientific committee forecast the end of the pandemic in 2021 with mass vaccination, therefore from January 2022 a SEHUB co-working space could be set up and operate in a physical space in Sicily.

In synthesis, these are the recommendations for the SEHUBS vision:

- A group of local well-known people that act as a support network around the SE Hub model and promote its impact and benefit (importance of social capital to build and expand SE hubs activities);
- Effective HR management applied to the Third Sector;
- A mechanism that combines collaboration and B2B services;
- Networking approaches and tools for building up and managing communities;

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- A combination of online and offline instruments that support the distribution of SEs' goods and services;
- Business model that has the potential to bring financial sustainability of the model.

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