

Annex to SEE Open Letter

“Overcoming COVID-19- Time for solidarity: An unprecedented crisis that requires unprecedented investments to leave no one behind”

A strong mobilisation of SEE members

AIM- The International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies

AIM is the international Association of Mutual Benefit Health insurers and health funds. AIM's members are solidarity-based, not-for profit organisations that function on the basis of a democratic governance. They are social actors providing health, sickness and other social benefits while promoting among others the respect, the inclusion and the protection of vulnerable groups.

AIM issued the [statement](#) “***Time for pandemic solidarity!***” calling for:

- all citizens to act responsibly following the measures and preventive actions that the EU has recommended, to slow down and contain the spread of the virus;
- the healthcare industries to put effective health technologies on the market at an affordable price, in order to ensure accessibility and affordability for health systems, healthcare professionals and for patients;
- European national governments to show solidarity among European Member States and act together to fight this virus;
- EU countries to act in a coordinated manner, showing the meaning of solidarity through concrete actions;
- Beyond the crisis and in a far-sighted approach, we call for a stronger role of the EU concerning public health including the fight against pandemics;
- European solidarity must also be offered to help mitigate the crisis and to extend social protection schemes around the world;
- the need for an appropriate European legal framework for social economy enterprises and the same financial support as any other entities.

CASES- Cooperativa António Sergio para a Economia Social (Portugal)

CASES reports that to face the effects caused by Covid-19, the Portuguese Government has taken exceptional measures for enterprises and other entities by providing guarantees, incentives to European programmes, special conditions for training programmes for workers and also by deferring legal obligations, contributions to Social Security, taxation, etc., that in some cases apply to social economy entities.

CASES has synthesised some important that are accessible for social economy enterprises and organisations [here](#).

Furthermore, CASES has taken its own initiative to help collect voluntary initiatives to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. [CASES's Online Platform for Volunteering Activities](#) which, within

the scope of its competencies in the area of volunteering, created an online platform that makes voluntary initiatives from all over the country available, including movements and platforms created to respond to people who need more support. This online area will allow those who want to volunteer to identify the initiatives that best suit their profile and availability. The information will be permanently updated, in order to monitor and complement all voluntary actions that are being promoted and implemented at national level. It is also possible to consult the Portugal Voluntary Platform, through the link www.portugalvoluntario.pt

CEPES- Spanish Confederation of Social Economy Enterprises (Spain):

EFC- The European Foundation Centre:

In a [joint statement](#), the European Foundation Centre (EFC) and Dafne (the Donors and Foundation Networks in Europe), announce that if communities, services or organisations are affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, and receive grant funding from the EFC and/or Dafne, they commit to:

- **Adapting activities** – recognising that some may be experiencing difficulties in achieving some of the outputs or outcomes agreed for the grant during the outbreak, the EFC and Dafne would like to be able to maintain the grant payments at the originally-agreed levels during this period and invite those affected to have a conversation.
- **Discussing dates** – In order not to add pressure if struggling to meet a reporting deadline, the EFC and Dafne ask to get in touch to agree on a more realistic and convenient time.
- **Financial flexibility** – Funding might be needed to help cover sickness, purchase equipment, or deliver services differently, the EFC and Dafne state they will be reasonable if you need to move money between budget headings (where possible) to ensure your work can continue.
- **Listening** – the EFC and Dafne offer the possibility of getting in touch with them at any time to talk about the situation an organisation is facing.

ENSIE- The European Network of Social Integration Enterprises:

ENSIE has issued [a joint statement](#) together with Social Firms Europe – CEFEC, RREUSE and CEC calling on the following actions to be taken into consideration:

- Ensure that Member States give **special attention to WISEs and their workers** by supporting them and monitor this attention.
- Ensure that **the most vulnerable are directly concerned** by the European Commission proposal for the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative to facilitate the deployment of “the European Social Fund to temporarily support national short time working schemes which help cushion the impact of the shock”.

- **Develop a State Aid Framework Flexibility:** allowing higher thresholds for the 'disadvantaged workers and severely disadvantaged workers' aids for employment and for the 'de minimis'.
- **Develop a Fiscal Framework Flexibility** for the suspension of payments of corporate and value added taxes and social contributions.

The joint statement recommends that all States take the following considerations as soon as possible:

- **Support for work and wages** should concern **all workers** and especially the most disadvantaged ones.
- **Ensure that funds already allocated to finance social enterprises should continue and be respected**, on time without further obligations, even if the activities are suspended or closed down.
- These economic actors participate to the delivery of SGEI (Services of General Economic Interest), which are more crucial than ever in this period of crisis and they **should be prioritised in every measure adopted**.
- Accept, for a time, **more flexibility in the regulation concerning WISEs**, so they do not lose their qualification. For example, accept more flexibility in the proportion of disadvantaged workers in the whole workforce.
- Ensure that **all national funding and business support schemes** to alleviate financial losses due to the Coronavirus pandemic are **also open and accessible to WISEs, Not-for-Profits and other social economy enterprises**.
- **Ensure counselling and support for WISEs and vulnerable groups** during this difficult time, e.g. by increasing accessibility to online platforms/tools for social enterprises providing counselling.

ESS-FRANCE – French Chamber of the Social and Solidarity Economy (France):

ESS-France is working to ensure that all social economy actors, including associations, can access to the French government's measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis, particularly:

- State guarantees for bank loans to enterprises and organisations
- Ensure that all social economy enterprises and organisations can access the French Government measures to support employment and save jobs throughout the economic slowdown (short-term unemployment schemes);
- ESS-France is also actively promoting through its network the active participation in the government's platform **Réserve Civique**, aimed at collecting solidarity initiatives carried out by associations or public entities and mobilising volunteers.

A synthesis of measures adopted by the French government can be found [here](#).

FEBEA – the European Federation of Ethical and Alternative Banks and Financiers:

FEBEA's members are mobilising to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak's consequences at local and national level. **Their various initiatives available [here](#)**, carried out while ensuring protection for employees and clients, aim to:

- propose immediate measures for individuals, enterprises and organisations with open loans/ mortgages and with liquidity problems;
- mitigate the effects of the crisis on the population most at risk, via the collaboration with social economy organisations;
- contribute to fund-raising campaigns to help hospitals and local communities facing the crisis;
- offer services, contents and online activities during the confinement period;
- prepare the post-crisis period, to foster the re-activation of economic activities.