

Develop the Social Solidarity Economy

Developing the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) is a key element of the social change we are striving for. The SSE opens the way to an economic and social model serving citizens at a local level. It seeks to produce and distribute wealth more fairly, and to develop economic projects respectful of the people, the environment and the territories. It is the kind of economy that brings people together, one which has already proved its effectiveness and which can be developed in all domains.

Today the Social Solidarity Economy already represents more than 10% of all employees, as much as 14% in the private sector, for a total of over 2.3 million people working in more than 210,000 organizations. In addition, 19 million French citizens carry mutualised health insurance; more than 20 million hold shares in a cooperative bank; 20.7 million belong to a mutual insurance program; between 11 and 14 million offer their time as volunteers, and more than one French citizen out of 4 belongs to at least one association.

To make the SSE a key actor in the new model we hope to create, we must provide it with the necessary means. This implies 4 main lines of action:

1. A planning act for the 2013-2017 period, designed in collaboration with the SSE actors, which will define the basic rules of the SSE and its main investment and development objectives. It will ensure fair representation of the SSE at all economic orientation and decision levels, and particularly that of its employers in joint administration bodies and wherever collective negotiations in their sector of activity are undertaken. It will create an interdepartmental ministerial commission linked to the Ministry of Finance.

2. A contractual policy between the State, local authorities and all SSE actors. The regions, according to the decided upon master plan, will conclude regional planning contracts with the State to answer the needs for quality employment, to provide full access to housing and to seek out adequate responses to the health care needs of all.

The regions will support projects for clusters of cooperation, helping bring together all the actors involved in sustainable development. This policy will rely on collegially elaborated indicators which factor in sustainable development and quality of life. Regional authorities will be responsible for controlling these indicators for coherence with the principles laid down in the planning act.

The use of social clauses in public procurement markets will need to be seriously developed. Such a contractual policy should help associations to fully play their role in providing services without experiencing undue market pressure.

3. A more democratic sharing of power at all levels through participation of all concerned parties in the decision-making process (especially employee participation in company governance), transparency regarding salaries, reduction of salary discrepancies, and pursuit of the battle against exclusion and discrimination.

4. Funding commensurate with the challenge and provided by a public bank of investment dedicating a quarter of its credits to the SSE structures. But solidarity-based financing tools (ethical banks and insurance companies, mutual funds and cooperatives, investment funds, guarantee funds) must also be strengthened.

A public bank and financial tools such as these, applied at every level, will allow for a differently oriented industrial and commercial policy and hence the financing of the SSE in accordance with these priorities. Such an economy will also necessarily benefit from the dynamism of solidarity-based savings.

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