

Ljubljana declaration – Scaling up social economy enterprises in SSE – towards stronger and structured cooperation between EU and South East Europe

In the continuity of previous Conferences and in the framework of the Conference SSE2: Scaling up social economy enterprises in South – East Europe, held in Ljubljana on 24th and 25th of April 2017, the representatives of Governments of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania and Luxembourg adopt the following declaration:

WE observe that social economy is realizing the increasing recognition in EU and internationally but that social economy enterprises are still missing the appropriate recognition in certain EU member states and countries from the region of South East Europe. Therefore we strongly recommend the European Union to commit itself to strongly support social economy on European level and level of South East region of Europe. We recognize the actions presented by the European Commission to promote the development of social economy enterprises in Europe referring the recommendations of GECES Report 2016.

WE acknowledge that social economy enterprises are commonly accepted term for variety of organizations in the field of social economy. But we realize that there are differences in the field of definition of social sector. Therefore we believe that the definition of social economy sector shall be based on mutual recognition of various types and forms of organization acting as social economy organization in different EU and South East Europe countries.

WE admit that social economy can act as a driver for economic growth if supported by appropriate programmes, projects and financing. But there are still differences between EU member states and countries from South East Europe arising from different conditions in case of access to finance, provided by EU institutions. Countries of South East Europe would therefore support the creation of network of social economy organizations on the level of the region of South East Europe as a whole.

Meeting in Ljubljana on 24th and 25th April 2017 we decided to adopt the following declaration:

- The European Union and the countries of South East Europe shall put substantial effort to increase visibility and the acknowledgement of social economy and social economy enterprises on the European level, South East Europe regional level and internationally.
- Following the Luxembourg declaration, European union and the countries from South East Europe shall acknowledge a common understanding of the scope of social economy and with respecting the diversity of organizations regarding their types and legal forms take steps to mutual recognition of social economy organizations on European level and on the level of South East Europe countries.
- The European Union and the countries of South East Europe shall take appropriate actions to create an ecosystem for social economy enterprises in the process of tackling the emerging challenges concerning migrants and refugees.
- The European support for social economy enterprises shall be strengthened and balanced for EU Member states and for South East Europe countries. Harmonization of access to to programmes and instruments shall be strengthened as a convergency is needed for al European Member states and South East Europe countries.
- Social economy organizations are encouraged to create a strong regional network on the level of the region of South East Europe.
- South East Europe countries are encouraged to join Monitoring Committee of EU Member states on social economy and participation on regular High – level meetings of high political representatives in charge for social economy.