



Newsletter #5

July 2025

Advancing Social Economy in European Regions

SECON project seeks to boost social economy in EU regions by promoting policy improvement and facilitating best practice exchange.

Read on for all the latest updates and upcoming opportunities!

5th Interregional Exchange Workshop & Steering Committee in Leuven, hosted by the Province of Flemish Brabant, Belgium

April 2nd to 3rd April 2025



The Province of Flemish Brabant hosted the 5th Interregional Meeting and Steering Committee of the SECON project in the city of Leuven. Over 30 participants joined the two-day event to exchange knowledge, strengthen interregional collaboration, and explore ways to improve the financial and taxation framework for social economy enterprises.

The workshop tackled structural and regulatory barriers that limit social enterprises' access to finance and favourable tax regimes. Participants explored shared challenges such as **limited access to capital**, the **lack of tailored tax systems** (e.g., VAT reductions), and **inadequate international banking regulation for cooperative banks**. The goal was to surface common solutions, grounded in regional experience, to help create enabling frameworks for social economy actors.

Key Presentations

- ✓ **Trividend** shared insights into Flanders' funding models and emerging financing avenues to support the scaling of social enterprises.
- ✓ **Social Services Europe** explored the EU State Aid framework, emphasising the need for better policy alignment with the specific characteristics of social enterprises.
- ✓ **Impact Lawyers** addressed taxation and VAT challenges, proposing legal reforms to ensure a more equitable environment for social businesses.

Field Visits: Learning from Local Initiatives

Participants explored exemplary social economy enterprises:

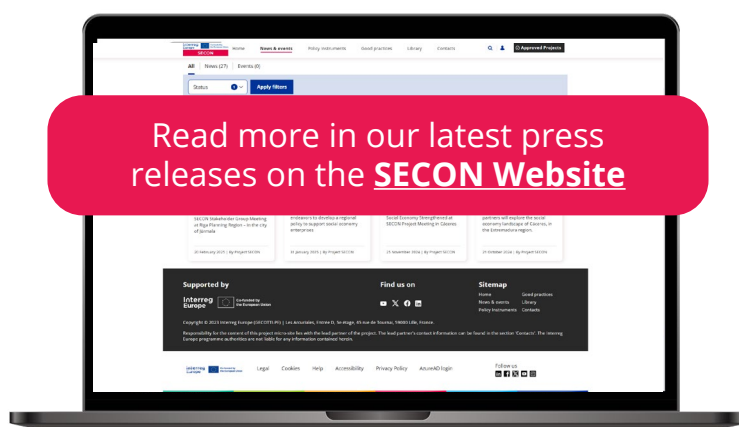
- ✓ **ViTeS and Wonen en Werken (Leuven):**
Promoting circular practices and inclusive employment.
- ✓ **De Vlaspit (Scherpenheuvel-Zichem):** Leading in creative reuse and local engagement.
- ✓ **Entiris (Diest):** A regional hub employing people with disabilities in packaging and medical production.

These visits reinforced how **targeted financial and tax policy** can directly impact the sustainability and reach of social economy enterprises.

Read more about the meeting:
SECON Project Website

Regional Stakeholder Meetings: Driving Local Impact

Regional Stakeholder Group Meetings gathered key social economy actors to share regional experiences and discuss project progress. These sessions support knowledge exchange and help shape better public policies, especially for rural areas.



What's Next?

Partners will continue to enhance regional stakeholder engagement and interregional policy learning.

Interregional meeting & Study Visit
to Poland: Social Economy Enterprises
Serving Disadvantaged Groups



Organised by Mazowieckie Voivodeship, the study visit will be held on the 15th and 16th of October and will spotlight organisations employing people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Participants will:

- ✓ **Engage** with practitioners and stakeholders
- ✓ **Examine** the policy environment enabling such models
- ✓ **Identify** organisations' support needs such as training, visibility, and taxation policy

Interregional cooperation
on monitoring and evaluating the
impact of social economy policies.

Partners will collaborate to develop frameworks for measuring the impact of social economy policies. This will include defining indicators, assessing public visibility, and exchanging evaluation methods—crucial steps toward enabling evidence-based policymaking.

Joint Review of Policy Instruments

KMOP will lead a joint review that brings together insights from previous interregional activities. A digital report will be produced to present common challenges, adaptable policy models, and best practices to support wider policy improvement.



Interested in the future of social economy policies in Europe?

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www.interregeurope.eu/secon



Thank you for being a part of the SECON journey!

