

Annual Report 2021

Social Services Europe

Internal meetings

- The General Assembly 2021 was held on 25 May 2021. An Extraordinary General Assembly was organised on 26 November 2021, i.a., to endorse amendments to the SSE Statutes.
- In 2021, the SSE Board met 9 times (23 February, 23 March, 27 April, 25 May, 29 June, 26 August, 6 October, 26 November, 21 December).
- The General Working Group (GWG) came together 8 times (25 January, 5 March, 7 April, 21 May, 6 July, 1 September, 26 October, 3 December).
- There were also meetings and activities of five Taskforces: 1) Ageing and Long-term Care; 2) European Social Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan; 3) EU Funding and Social Investment; 4) Public Procurement; and 5) Social Economy.
- The Work Programme 2022 was elaborated with written and oral feedback received to draft versions prepared by the Coordinator from three meetings of the Board and of the GWG respectively.
- The Treasurer prepared the SSE Budget for 2022 – adopted at the General Assembly on 26 November 2021 – as well as the SSE Budget Forecast for the years 2022 to 2024.
- A “Strategic Orientation Paper” was elaborated and approved at the Extraordinary General Assembly on 26 November.

SSE Statutes

- Amendments to the SSE Statutes concerning Articles 13 (Executive Board Composition) and 14 (Chairing of the Executive Board) were discussed between May and November and approved at the Extraordinary General Assembly on 26 November.

Membership

- SOLIDAR has been one of the founding members of SSE. On demand of SOLIDAR, its membership ended on 31 December 2020.
- SSE could welcome the European Ageing Network (E.A.N.) as its eighth member. E.A.N.’s membership request, submitted for the Board meeting on 23 February, was unanimously approved at the Board meeting on 27 April. E.A.N.’s membership became effective as of 1 July 2021. As of then E.A.N. has been represented in the

Board (by Jiří Horecký, President of SSE) and the GWG (by Marcel Smeets, EU Counsel/Lobbyist).

Networking and (strategic) partnerships (cf. also above under “Membership”)

- SSE is member of the Liaison Group Civil Society Organisations (LG CSO) of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) – in 2021 represented by Luk Zelderloo (until April 2021) and Mathias Maucher – and of the European Commission’s Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship (GECES) – in 2021 represented by Luk Zelderloo (until September 2021) and Mathias Maucher.
- The contacts and exchanges with ESN and its Director Afonso Lara-Montero were continued from 2020 (done back then by Maria Nyman), in 2021 mainly led by Luk Zelderloo, mainly in relation to joint work on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also in the preparatory phase of the project application for a “Social Services Helpdesk”.
- On 22 September, a SSE delegation made up of Mette Petersen, Luk Zelderloo, Maria Nyman and Mathias Maucher met Alva Finn, Director of the Social Platform.

Policy and advocacy work

- The [“SSE Contribution to the EC Consultation on the Green Paper on Ageing”](#) was elaborated by the Taskforce “Long-Term Care”. It was submitted to the EC consultation on 21 April.
- The [“SSE Contribution to the EC Consultation on the Roadmap for a European Action Plan for Social Economy”](#) was elaborated by the Taskforce “Social Economy”. It was submitted to the EC consultation on 23 April (together with a summary version). On 15 December SSE’s [Statement on the Social Economy Action Plan](#) was published.
- The Taskforce “Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights” elaborated SSE’s [Statement on European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#), issued on 4 May. On 6 May, SSE published the [Statement on the Porto Social Summit](#).
- The Taskforce “Public Procurement” between August and November elaborated [SSE’s Statement on EC Guide “Buying Social”](#) which was published on 6 December.
- EASPD worked on 4 one-page “Information Sheets” on EU funding programmes and social investment. The programmes covered are: 1) ESF+, 2) ERDF, 3) EU4Health, and 4) RRF. The first drafts were discussed in May and June. The final versions, taking up comments from the GWG, were ready in December.

- SSE worked with the EP and with other partner organisations (Civil Society Europe; Philea) to provide written input into the [legislative own-initiative report \(INL\) on a Statute for European cross-border associations and non-profit organisations](#) (Rapporteur: Sergey Lagodinsky, Greens/EFA, Germany), led by EP's Committee for Legal Affairs. Several internal briefing and coordination meetings (with Caritas Europa, CEDAG, Eurodiaconia and the Red Cross EU Office) were organised to identify SSE's key points, red lines, concrete amendments to draft reports, etc. The EP Report "A Statute for European Cross-Border Associations and Non-Profit Organisations" comprising a Draft Regulation on a Statute for a European Association and a Draft Directive on common minimum standards for non-profit organisations in the EU", taking up quite some proposals and requests from SSE and CEDAG was voted on 9 December by a large majority in the EP Committee for Legal Affairs.
- SSE provided inputs into the EESC Liaison Group Civil Society Organisations' (LG CSO) Contribution "Reflections from the LG CSOs about reforming of the European Semester process". It was presented and discussed at the EESC European Semester Conference "Building a resilient Europe – civil society and the NRRPs" on 31 May in which, however, SSE could not participate.
- Two public events involving SSE were organised in 2021: On 16 November, the Eurodiaconia-SSE Online Round Table "Employment challenges and opportunities in the social care sector – The case of long-term care" (cf. [Report](#)) and on 10 December the EASPD-EPR-SSE Webinar "Public Procurement and Alternatives". For both events the co-organisers were happy with the quality of inputs and discussion and the possibility to engage with the EC and other relevant stakeholders, but disappointed about the rather low turnout (20 to 25 participants respectively).

Meetings with European institutions, partner organisations and other stakeholders

- Freek Spinnewijn represented SSE at the [Social Summit](#) on 7 and 8 May in Porto. He also participated and intervened in the Workshop of "Welfare State and Social Protection". SSE had prepared a [Statement](#), building on [SSE's Statement on European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#). In the Board meeting of 25 May he shared his assessment of the Declaration of the Leaders and of the [Commitment of the Stakeholders](#) (i.a., co-signed by the Social Platform) and exchanged he had with DG EMPL staff (including Joost Korte, Katarina Ivanković-Knežević) and Ana Carla Perreira, Member of the Cabinet of Commissioner Schmit) for them to further engage with SSE and to cooperate in the search of concrete solutions and as partners in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

- On 16 June, a SSE delegation (Luk Zelderloo, Maria Nyman, Mette Petersen, Lucy Anns, Thomas Bignal, Mathias Maucher) virtually met with representatives of DG EMPL and DG GROW to exchange on the EC Social Economy Action Plan and SSE's priorities, proposals and demands. It built on the ["SSE Contribution to the EC Consultation on the Roadmap for a European Action Plan for Social Economy"](#) Following up to the meeting, Mathias Maucher shared the 2-page "speaking notes" of the SSE delegation members.
- Reacting to a SSE Letter on the Use of Consultancies, DG EMPL – represented by Katarina Ivanković-Knežević, Ruth Paserman and other colleagues: Lucie Davoine, Plamen Kolev; Andrea Leruste; Lorena Anastasia Petsi – organised a meeting. It was held virtually on 8 July. In a follow-up mail, SSE shared a bullet list of concerns and also several proposals to explain how – in SSE's view – DG EMPL could better address our concerns.
- SSE aimed at organising a meeting/exchange with the Director of Cabinet of Clément Beaune, Minister of State for European Affairs, or with the Minister himself to present and discuss SSE's priorities and proposals for the French EU Council Presidency in the 2nd half of 2021. As a meeting in Paris could not be organised (not least due to the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic), Mathias Maucher met on 22 October with Alexis Ridde, Social Attaché, Permanent Representation of France to the EU, Brussels. He presented SSE's priorities and demands. Mathias Maucher reported back to the Board and the GWG which main topics and activities in the social, health and employment policy field are planned by the French EU Council Presidency.

Projects

- SSE became one of the 16 partners of a consortium led by EASPD which elaborated (again led by EASPD) and submitted on 13 August the project proposal "Social Services Helpdesk". All other SSE members except for the Red Cross EU Office are also project partners¹.

Communication and dissemination

¹ The Social Services Helpdesk is a two-years project which is co-funded by DG EMPL from ESF+ money. It has three main objectives: 1) Raise awareness and understanding about ESF+ and React-EU and other relevant EU funds; 2) Facilitate the use of and access to EU funds for social services; and 3) Facilitate exchange and co-operation between Managing Authorities, social services, and the European Commission. By doing so, it will help Managing Authorities to use ESF+, React EU and other EU funds for quality interventions in the field of social services - in line with European social, employment and health policy objectives and to support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan – and to support social service providers in accessing and using such funds. End of 2021 the decision of the EC to fund the project was still pending.

- All SSE publications have been uploaded to the [SSE webpage](#), under the heading “Publications”.
 - 21 April 2021: [Social Services Europe's contribution to the EC consultation on the Green Paper Ageing](#)
 - 23 April 2021: [Social Services Europe's contribution to the EC consultation on the Roadmap for the Social Economy Action Plan](#)
 - 4 May 2021: [Social Services Europe issues Statement on European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)
 - 6 May 2021: [Social Services Europe issues Statement on the Porto Social Summit](#)
 - 6 December 2021: [Social Services Europe Statement on EC Guide "Buying Social"](#)
 - 15 December 2021: [Social Services Europe Statement on the Social Economy Action Plan](#)