



General Assembly 2016 21/06, Villarceaux France Activity Report

Solidarity Economy Europe is the European branch of RIPESS - the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social and Solidarity Economy. It was born at the 4th Globalisation of Solidarity meeting in Luxemburg, and the founding meeting took place in Barcelona in 2011. There are now 30 members in 14 EU countries.

RIPESS Europe includes European regional, inter-regional, national and sectorial solidarity economy organisations. ECOSOL/Socioeco.org was integrated into RIPESS activities to improve the network's visibility on the solidarity resource site www.socioeco.org. A Consultative Council of researchers contributes to building the historical and theoretical material of the network.

Strategic Orientation

In 2015, RIPESS drew up a **3-year strategic work plan for the 2016-2018 period**. This work was carried out in a dedicated work group. Members were then consulted. The document aims to provide the basis for jointly planning activities and priority alliances. This document aims to strengthen, promote and share RIPESS' political message through the dual objectives of:

- **Be a transformative movement, committed to systemic change** of the current socio-economic models, and to greater democracy and solidarity.
- **Lead a movement of convergence: demonstrate our determination to bring together the forces for change** and energies represented by the many the social movements in our fragmented landscape. These forces are very active locally, but much of their energy is currently lost.

Enlarge the network, build on the synergies of the grassroots movements

The meetings the RIPESS CoCo and the working groups took place in different countries. This allowed us to meet with the local actors and connect the European vision more closely to the reflections of territorial and national networks in terms of both structure and development.

Solikon 2015

The European Congress of Solidarity Economy – Solikon 2015 – was jointly organised by the German network Forum Solidarische Ökonomie, the Technical University of Berlin and RIPESS Europe, together with several partners. It brought together over 1400 participants from all over Europe and beyond (Brazil, USA, Canada, Cuba, Korea, Japan and other countries). Over 100 workshops were held at the Technical University of Berlin, as well as Forums and Round Tables. The "Transition Week" that took place just before the Congress (5-9 September) enabled over 500 people to visit solidarity economy field projects in Berlin and the Brandenburg regions. **RIPESS Europe organised many international activities** including a convergence forum that brought several movement that all work for economic alternatives together, as well as a Food Sovereignty Forum, jointly organised with the Via Campesina.. (see here for the events that were organised and promoted by RIPESS Europe). **Over 200 speakers for more than 20 countries presented their ideas and proposals..**

New members

RIPESS Europe also held its **General Assembly during the Solikon meeting, and was happy to welcome 7 new members**: Solidarity 4 all, (Greece), Ensie (Belgium), Platform for the Good Economy (Croatia), Ecosol (France),

Autre Terre (Belgium), and the Institute for Solidarity Economics (UK) as well as Spread-i (UK). In the last two years we have established many new contacts. Other potential members who were present in Berlin expressed their interest in becoming members in the future.

Panorama of Solidarity Economy in Europe

During the Congress, a workshop allowed the general objectives of the Panorama of SSE in Europe to be shared. Several countries have been part of this project since the beginning. In other countries, contacts have been made with research activities, and methodologies are presently being shared. **Several mapping projects** could be complementary to Panorama; the Transformap (mainly in Austria and Germany) and the evolution of **interoperability standards of ESSGlobal** with web semantics technologies. Socioeco.org collects, **analyses and organises documents on ESS and has built a map of ESS solutions. Finally, a European project, SSEDAS** is carrying out research in 46 European territories on initiatives that best represent SSE where the Panorama questionnaire has been used.

A work session was organised in Florence from 4th – 6th March. It brought together the French, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Catalan, Spanish, British and Swiss members. The meeting focused on sharing tools and approaches and reflecting on strategies for scaling up the work. The most important conclusions were on the expectations and needs of the different networks were: the **develop a shared definition of SSE**, fine-tuned thanks to the networks, **a shared calendar** of events organised in Europe, especially by members, **provide feedback to the Panorama contributors** on the outcomes, **define inter-operability criteria** to enable mapping synthesis, create an adapted format for communicating results, **share communication techniques**, **provide a description of members of the network and a liaison platform.**

The working groups

The working groups devoted much time to the **common strategy orientation**, the Panorama of SSE in Europe (especially concerning public policies, legislative framework, systems of social audit and impacts of SSE), mapping with SSEGlobal and its connection to other initiatives. Thanks to the participation in the

People's Expo in Milan, a lot of work was also done on food sovereignty and the connection between **solidarity economy and agroecology.**

A visit to London also enabled us to connect with an **education and training project on “new economies”** with an **on-line platform (Synergia)** and to connect with universities, Think Tank, P2P Foundation and others, as well as mobilising potential members. One group worked on communication and another on the **preparation for the Berlin Congress.** The members also showed their interest in creating or reactivating projects in **social innovation/solutions** (based on case-studies as well as exchange of practice); **economic inter-co-operation** between members; the role and **involvement of youth in SSE** (linked to Economistas sin Fronteras and the “Challenging the Crisis” project) as well as **Solidarity Finance** (linked to the Portuguese Forum for solidarity finance, FEBEA, Banca Etica and other territorial initiatives. There was also interest in **cooperative and alternative media.**

Towards a shared strategy

The work of strengthening strategy was highly participatory, and the outcome document is the beginning of a process of consultation of RIPESS members on their expectations and priorities for the European network. We believe that there are **two approaches** to this: advocacy / “transformation” (**paradigm change**), and **inter-cooperation between members. These approaches are complementary** in a framework and dynamics of participation.

A representative European dimension of solidarity economy

Compared with the previous year (2014), RIPESS EU has been more proactive and present in various bodies at European level, as well as more connected with different European networks (fair trade, solidarity finance, the Commons, Degrowth and transition etc). The network **strengthened its institutional lobbying**, especially with the **European Parliament Inter-Group on Social Economy.**

RIPESS Europe, together with two other organisations was present at the opening of the **European SSE Forum** on 28th January 2016 at the European Parliament in Brussels, at the invitation of the GUE/NGL (European United Left, Nordic Green Left) that was co-ordinated by Podemos. **RIPESS Europe played an important role in influencing the programme through their participation in the conference.**

Following the Berlin meeting, the Consultative Council drafted a document on **Social Innovation and SSE** that was well received by most of the RIPESS EU members and was shared in Brussels.

We have facilitated relations between members **and networks of Local Authorities**: Barcelona (“Trobada de municipalsisme”) between RTESS and the new Catalan network; Berlin, between the Parliament and the GSEF (Global Social Economy Forum) and their representative, the association Spread-i. **In Paris, organised by RTESS**. Two other round tables in Berlin were dedicated to **relations with the institutions and actors** (a representative of the Barcelona Town Hall, a parliamentary attaché from Podemos and a German Green member of Parliament).

Mediterranean

RIPESS Europe – as far as possible – is committed to facilitating **exchange in the Mediterranean Basin**. At the WSF in Tunis, there was a meeting with the African actors and the South shore of the Mediterranean. In October and November, Eric Lavillunière, who was invited by REMESS intervened on behalf of RIPESS Europe in the day dedicated to public policy at the **National Forum on Social and Solidarity Economy in Casablanca and the Assizes of Social and Solidarity Economy (Skhira Rabat)**.

Organising convergence

From the outset, **RIPESS Europe has worked closely with those actors who are close to solidarity economy** to play the card of convergence and improve efficiency in terms of their respective actions that have shared goals: scaling up. This applies to those actors involved in transition, fair trade, ethical and solidarity finance, Degrowth, the Commons and social movements... these efforts have been on-going and have increased.

RIPESS Europe has invited the actors that represent the different movements and networks to define the shared issues and reach beyond their specificities; to exchange on their practice; build policies together, map initiatives; join in shared meetings. Further discussions have been held with the FPH to examine how to organise formal moments of working together and **jointly define a roadmap to build further convergence** and multiply the impacts of actions of these different networks and structures.

In the context of the “Deep Dive” meetings organised by the Commons Strategy Group (David Bollier, Michel Bauwens, Silke Helfrich) and the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Jason Nardi contributed to the work on finance and the Commons. The result is a report that was published in January 2016: “Democratic Money and Capital for the Commons”. The previous years’ report was also published again under the title “Towards an open solidarity economy”.

Deep Dive on Finance the Commons

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Develop a joint communication strategy with Socioeco (Ecosol)

The contract that was signed between Ecosol and RIPESS in 2015 strengthened the partnership between the two organisations and has helped to promote and develop **Socioeco.org**. Françoise Wautiez participated in drafting part of the communication strategy for RIPESS Europe and could also play a **support role in education and training on SSE**, in the **Synergia project**, for example or in the education commission within RIPESS Intercontinental.

During Solikon 2015 in Berlin, a meeting took place between **RIPESS Euopre and the independent media** that promote alternative economy on how to share their information. Socio-eco has been **mapping the identified media in different independent media in European countries**. This should enable their articles on the specific solutions introduced by SSE to be shared.

Since the end of 2015, the communication group defined all the communication tools and has produced

- **New RIPESS Europe and Socio-eco flyers** in both French and English (soon to be printed in other languages as well.)
- The reorganisation of RIPESS Europe’s presence in on-line **social networks**
- **The redesign of the Newsletter and more frequent publishing (including Spanish)**
- **Improved RIPESS Europe website** to increase visibility, ease of use and interactivity, especially for Work Groups. In 2016 the contents will be progressively restructured to improve how Socio-eco is integrated.

Organisational improvements, a work in progress

RIPESS EU is **experimenting with a new way of working, shared between current and future members**. The aim is to move from the classic situation of voluntary governance to paid executive coordination and mobilise existing skills within the network for **clearly identified paid tasks** on a contractual basis. This can be linked to a paid salaried job.

The following **contracts between RIPESS EU and members** have been signed:

- As it was not possible to sign a new contract with **Adepes** for the management and hosting of a trainee for a 6-month period with the support of **Novetat**, these tasks were delegated to some of the members.
- **Ecosol** for the management of socioeco.org as well as the communication and documentation activities.
- **Solidarius Italia** for the operational secretariat.
- **Forum Solidarische Oekonomie** for the joint organisation of the Congress and the logistics of the last AGM.

RIPESS Europe participated in the submission of 6 European projects in various programmes, with different partners, including members and other organisations. These projects were not accepted, but the cooperation enabled closer links to be developed with new organisations and platforms in different European countries, and open the door to working together in the future.

RIPESS Europe: the international dimensions

RIPESS Europe is represented in the Board of Directors of RIPESS Intercontinental by 2 members, elected at the General Assembly of Lille in June 2013.

RIPESS EU (thanks to Judith Hitchman and Jason Nardi) is also active in the work of the **UNTFSSSE (United Nations Task Force on Social and Solidarity economy)**, on the SDGs and other aspects. Yvon Poirier of RIPESS Intercontinental is the reference person for this work. (c.f. the report made by RIPESS Intercontinental). Urgenci is working closely within the Committee on World Food Security in the Civil Society Mechanism in Rome; and is continuing to build bridges between food sovereignty and solidarity economy at all levels. The challenge is to ensure that SSE is mentioned in policy documents and it is hoped that some proposals will be included in the policy documents next October in CFS43. Other important aspect linked to the CFS are in the Urgenci report to the FPH. There is also a UN interface on the GSEF (Global Social Economy Forum) as well as on the working groups on education.

RIPESS Europe was also invited to participate in the Rencontres Mont Blanc at the end of last November. Urgenci presented the inter-connections between climate change, food sovereignty and SSE. Judith Hitchman, as RIPESS Europe representative also participated on the preparatory meetings for Habitat III, in a Round Table in the Mexico consultation as well as in Barcelona, together with HIC, XES, DESC, FIAN and other Urgenci members.

ESS GLOBAL

Progress has been made on establishing the standards for inter-operability on a global mapping of SSE, especially in the field of linked data and semantic Web. However the European project of creating a shared tool (with universities and research centre was not approved. We are continuing to cooperate with other initiatives, such as Shareable and Transformaps.

AGENDA 2015-2016

Develop the network, European recognition and represent the European dimension of solidarity economy in different regions and contexts.

At the Berlin General Assembly in 2015, the CoCo was renewed, with two out-going members and two new ones: the representatives of the Forum Solidarische Ökonomie (the Solikon organisers) and the UFISC (Fédération d'entreprises culturelles française).

The Co-ordination Committees meeting are highlighted in blue

Date	Place/event	Objective
10-11 January 2015	Eine (France) – CoCo	Strategy, planning and activity report
16 January 2015	Paris (France) – RTES meeting	Participation in the “Collectivités territoriales, ESS et Europe” event organised by RTES and REVES
16-18 January 2015	Porto (Portugal) – Solidarity Finance Forum	Meeting with different networks and initiatives in ethical and solidarity finance in Portugal. 300 participants

19 January 2015	Berlin (Germany) –Solikon preparatory meeting	Meeting with the organising committee of Solikon, European SSE congress to determine forms of cooperation
26 February 2015	Brussels (Belgium), European Parliament	First meeting promoted by GUE/NGL on SSE in the European Parliament. RIPESS EU was invited to participate as a network with several members. 80 participants, including MEPs.
3 - 4 March 2015	Berlin (Germany) – CoCo	Planning and agreement with the Solikon organising committee + public meeting to present RIPESS EU (50 participants)
5 March 2015	Brussels (Belgium), executive committee meeting of Expo dei Popoli	Meeting of the executive committee responsible for preparing the international presence and structure of the Expo dei Popoli (Milan)
19-21 March 2015	Croatia, Good Economy Platform	Big public meeting. Good Economy Platform subsequently became members of RIPESS EU
24-30 March 2015	Tunis, World Social Forum	Active participation and organisation of workshops and Convergence Plenary on the UN Post 2015 Objectives and Reclaim the City, Reclaim our Food system jointly organised by RIPESS, Urgenci, HIC, MST-LVC and MIJARC. 200 participants in the activities specifically promoted by RIPESS
22 April 2015	Brussels, Social Economy Intergroup at European Parliament	First meeting of the reconstituted Social Economy Intergroup
25-27 April 2015	London (UK), Synergia and other meetings	1st meeting of the Synergia MOOC group ; Meeting with Cooperatives UK to present RIPESS in Locality 15+20 participants
30 April – 3 May 2015	Cordoba (Spain), Idearia	The best-known and most historic event on SSE in Spain 500 participants
7 May 2015	Milan (Italy), Executive Committee meeting, Expo dei Popoli	Meeting of the executive committee responsible for planning international presence at Expo dei Popoli (Milan)
13 - 15 May 2015	Barcelona (Spain) - CoCo	Meeting with the XES network (30 participants)
28 May – 1 June 2015	Milan (Italy), World Fair Trade Week	1000 participants
2 – 5 June 2015	Milan, Expo dei Popoli	600 participants
8 June 2015	Brussels, Boosting Social Enterprises in Europe	Promoted by the Luxemburg government
12-13 June 2015	Toulouse (France), MES congress	Congress of the French Solidarity economy movement
18-21 June 2015	Trieste, Italy – INES meeting	Presentation of RIPESS and Panorama at the Annual National meeting of SSE networks in Italy (Trieste)
25 June 2015	Brussels (Belgium), Social Economy Intergroup Meeting, European Parliament	Public Hearing on finance for Social Economy Enterprises
1 et 2 July 2015	Escorial (Spain) – Complutense summer university (Madrid)	Intervention by Kenneth Quiguer: Presentation of public policies on SSE in France (focus on Nord-Pas de Calais)
9 July 2015	Brussels, Boosting Social Enterprises in Europe	On the occasion of the beginning of the Presidency of the Council of Europe by Luxemburg, the Minister for Labour, Employment and Social and Solidarity Economy signed “EU for citizens”
13-18 July 2015	Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), UN Summit Finance for development	Participation in consultation with civil society, conference and Jason Nardi + Madani Koumaré for RAESS.
5-7 September 2015	Berlin (Germany), Deep Dive meeting	Meeting on “Finance and the Commons” with the representatives of several movements, subsequently invited to Solikon 30 participants

8 September 2015	Berlin (Germany) - CoCo	Also included a meeting with the Board members of RIPESS Intercontinental
7-9 September 2015	Berlin, Solikon 2015	European Conference on Social and Solidarity Economy - 1600 participants
8 October 2015	Bologna, (Italy) presentation of the SSEDAS project	Presentation of RIPESS Europe at the Italian EU project SSEDAS on SSE + meeting with the Tuscany Region (in Florence) 70 participants
22-23 October 2015	Barcelona (Spain) Trobada internacional de municipalismo y ESS	Meeting on the relationship between Local Authorities and SSE. Over 30 Local Authorities present 200 participants
26-28 October 2015	Rennes, (France)"Un autre monde se construit – Théories et Pratiques"	Symposium with over 40 researchers on building alternatives. Contribution by J. Combes on behalf MES/RIPESS. 200 participants
7 – 8 November 2015	Elné (France) - CoCo	Evaluation, restructuring and planning
16-22 November 2015	Beijing (China), – International CSA Symposium	Urgenci invited RIPESS to participate in one of the key sessions on alliances. Plus de 600 participants.
28 November 2015	Chamonix (France), Rencontres du Mont Blanc	A very important contribution on themes linked to Climate change, food sovereignty and finance for development
20 November 2015	Paris, Forum « ESS + Europe ! »	Organised by RTES and UFISC, RIPESS was invited and participated 200 participants
5-10 December 2015	Paris, COP21	RIPESS EU members participated in various events
2016		
28 January 2016	Brussels (Belgium) European Parliament Inter-parliamentary group GUE/NGL Forum on SSE	European Forum on Social and solidarity economy
29 January 2016	Brussels (Belgium)CoCo	Orientations and work plan for 2016
4-5 March 2016	Florence (Italy) Panorama working group	Renewal of the data gathering process and extending the group
9-11 March 2016	Mexico City (Mexico) Habitat III Consultation	Participation in round table for RIPESS and Urgenci
2-4 April 2016	Barcelona (Spain) Right to the City and Habitat III Consultation	Participation for RIPESS Europe in Right to the City meeting and Habitat III consultations
28-29 April 2016	Prague (Czech Republic) SUZY conference	Social and Solidarity Conference organised by SUZY
11-12 May 2016	Timisoara (Roumania) First Roumanian Forum on SSE	First Roumanian SSE Forum
18 May 2016	Paris (France) CoCo	Organisation of the 2016 General Assembly