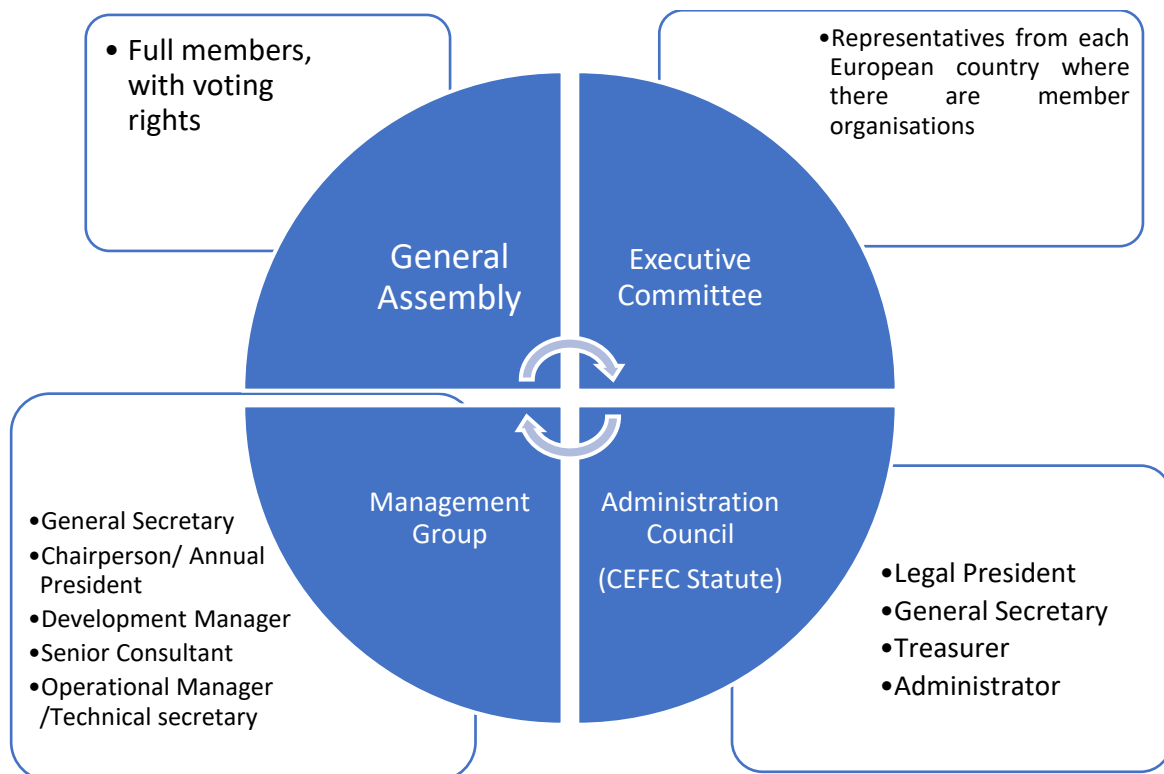


## Social Firms Europe CEFEC Management Report July 2021 – May 2022

### Orientations and Objectives concerning the organization and internal activity of CEFEC

During the period between July 2021 and the upcoming Executive meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2022, the management group that takes care of the daily continuity of the CEFEC's activities, composed by Alina Birsan (Technical Secretary), Vasi Gafiuc (Development Manager), Christiane Haerlin (Senior Consultant) and Felicitas Kresimon (General Secretary), in cooperation with all our members involved in initiatives, working groups and in general activities of development and exchange, could consolidate the work aimed to increase the number and the involvement of our members and the activities of our network. A special thank to **Vasile Gafiuc** for the enormous and wonderful work done during 10 years of General Secretary! During the annual assembly 2021 the role has been taken by Felicitas Kresimon. However, thanks to the work of the management team, we are guaranteeing continuity of our work and cooperation.

We took the chance to work on the update of our *internal Manual*, a guide not only for newcomers to our organization and function. The following graphics included in the manual, will give you an overview of our organizational structure.



→ *The updated manual will be sent by the secretary*

During the last period, after 2 years of mostly online meetings, cooperation and communication, it has been possible to resume some activity in presence. The most important and successful event in this sense, has been the realization of our **first CEFEC Academy edition** in Romania in October 2021.

Nevertheless, in order to maintain the contact with all our members, we continued with a large activity of online meetings. Between July 2021 and May 2022 we could realize nearly 80 meetings, followed each one by intensive email exchanges, minutes and other follow up communications:

- 19 meetings between the management group members, in between a 4 days meeting in Suceava in July 2021 and 3 meetings dedicated exclusively to the preparation of our 36<sup>th</sup> annual conference
- 4 meetings linked to the *SFE CEFEC Academy* which took place In Suceava/Romania from 18 to 20 October 2021
- 4 meetings in preparation and for the realization of the WEBINAR “*SOCIAL ENTERPRISES ABROAD - examples of successful social enterprises*” with our member Fokus Praha, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021
- 8 meetings in preparation and for the realization of the follow up WEBINAR “*Strengthening cooperation between Nordic and Baltic countries – New opportunities through common actions and projects*”, 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2022
- 8 meetings in preparation of our training activity in Tanzania, November 2021
- 19 meetings between the participants of CEFEC Working groups: Green Economy, International Cooperation, Migration, EDF, Heritage, Linz Appeal and Award
- 1 Executive Committee meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2021
- 8 meetings with single and new members and for strengthening the EC
- 6 meetings and participations in events with other networks: SEE Europe, ENSIE, Pubblicit Hearings, Rreuse, Migration Forum

## 1. Strengthening the Executive Committee and CEFEC Membership

One of our important and fruitful activity, started already in October 2019, has been the commitment of strengthening the Executive Committee, with the aim to ensure continuity in the presence and representation of each partner country, creating stronger synergies and complementarity.

Nowadays we can welcome 31 members on our board, on behalf of 16 countries, most of them represented by 2 Executive Committee Members. And we will propose to include a 17<sup>th</sup> country, *Slovenia*, already present through 2 new and active member organizations in our Network, UPI and CPU.

Furthermore, we can welcome 5 new CEFEC Members, maintaining a balanced number of 62 members between, individuals, organizations and umbrella organizations.

→ *The updated lists will be sent by the secretary*

## 2. Working Groups

One important tool for the active participation of our members is concerned to the involvement in our currently **7 Working Groups**: **4** of them more structured and characterized by regular assignments (Heritage, Linz Appeal, Award and EDF

collaboration), the other **3** treating topics referred to main challenges for our European communities and priorities for our Network activity.

International cooperation, migration and green economy, are the three topics we want to develop further.

Specially during the last year and a half, the **Green Economy working group (WG 7)** led by our members Peggy Liekens and Christiane Haerlin, could consolidate its important collaboration and exchange of knowledge. We could appreciate the results during the first Webinar on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2021, part of our annual online conference. Furthermore, during the first Edition of our October **CEFEC ACADEMY**, focused on innovation and start up of social enterprise in the green economy sector, the content has been explored with the participants by the trainers, active part of the *working group Green Economy*.

Recently, we started to discuss inside this group about the possibility to develop an and apply for a transversal and innovative project idea.

Following the CEFEC Statute changes in 2020, our **International Cooperation (WG 1)** promoted by our member Umberto Carrescia CIRCLE and Città Azzurra (Merano/Italy), could realize a first important activity. From 24 to 26 November 2021, a group of CEFEC Members, had the chance to realize a training in Tanzania, within the project "*Start-up and development of a vocational training and first literacy school with integrated revolving micro-credit programme for 45 widows of the village of Moshono - Arusha – Tanzania*". A rich and intensive experience which should lead to new projects of cooperation.

→ *The report will be sent by the secretary.*

Several meetings between the participants inside the working group **Migration (WG 4)**, brought to the involvement of new participants and moments of online exchange and knowledge between its members. We are looking forward to welcome new active members!! The situation created by the war in Ukraine, has been stimulating, also between CEFEC members, a vast range of welcome and support activities in favor of the people suffering the consequences.

The activities inside our **regular assignment working groups** Heritage, Linz Appeal, Award and EDF collaboration, continued in a profitable way.

Regarding the **Linz Appeal**, Ulla Carin has been involved in deepening and comparing research aspects with also the aim to update a common language inside a continuously changing and diversified landscape of terms and practices used around Europe.

Athina Fragkouli and Klaus Meyer zu Brickwedde are intensively networking with the **European Disability Forum (EDF)** and they are preparing the handover of Athina's representation to Klaus on the board of directors of EDF. By the way, Athina Fragkouli was selected among the top 100 women in social enterprises 2022 on the occasion of the International Women's Day.

Finally, through the traditional **Award** call, we could select 4 candidates, and choose the most voted between best start-up social enterprise and best practices social enterprise. They will be announced during the annual award ceremony.

About all this, as well as the important work of our member Meto Salijevic regarding also the digitalization of the CEFEC **Heritage**, we will have specific insights.

The overall wish and goal of our working groups, is to create opportunities to be active on our common issues, share expertise and experience in order to make the WGs more

effective, using also the tools and opportunities like online cooperation, successfully experienced during the last 2 years.

→ *The updated Working group members, will be sent by the secretary.*

### 3. Projects

Contribute to the large participation on Projects, has been another of our important activities. This aspect is considered essential for at least two main objectives:

- the connecting and networking between CEFEC members and other actors, active in common project fields
- the creation of a "holistic added value" through the realization - and therefore the "translation" of our values and our mission - into concrete activities and best-practices.

By connecting members with common activities, CEFEC supported several new applications, mostly referred to the currently EU challenges: inclusion linked to digitalization. A third priority focused by EU funding is the challenge of sustainability and green economy, an opportunity also to further enhance our work on this important priority.

Finally, the before mentioned situation of war emergency, has been another topic for the presentation of new project proposals, trying to look beyond the situation of emergency

→ *The updated projects report is presented by the secretary.*

### 4. Annual Conference

Thanks to our members VSI ZISP, we are realizing right now the **36<sup>th</sup> annual conference 2022**, "**GREEN SOCIAL ECONOMY A PILLAR FOR INCLUSIVE EUROPE - SHARING EXPERTISE, NETWORKING AND POLICY**" in Siauliai.

A vast program of keynotes, discussions and workshop with the involvement of local social economy actors is giving us the chance to exchange and know better the reality of our Lithuanian members.

→ *the program and further details are published on the conference Website*

<https://cefec36conference.com/home>

### 5. CEFEC Academy

In October 2021 we could realize the first edition of our "**CEFEC ACADEMY**", aimed to be a resource for multi-stakeholder collaboration and for the sharing and dissemination of ideas, knowledge and practical solutions. It has been a space for sharing both practical experience and theoretical knowledge and will encourage participants to innovate and evolve working practices throughout the field of social enterprise.

This 1st edition took place between 18-20 October 2021, at Best Western Hotel in Gura Humorului city, Suceava county/Romania, with more than 30 participants from 9 countries and a rich program of activities supported by our Green Economy group members.

→ *The full report will be sent by the secretary*

### 6. Ukraine emergency

At the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the management group decides to share a message with all its members, also giving the availability to publish the relative activities of the members gradually reported, on the CEFEC web page.

We want to confirm our message of total distancing and strong disagreement with the situation of the war and human suffering caused by the war in Ukraine. CEFECs mission

and activities are addressed to create inclusion, the valuing of each human being, a more just access to resources for all and therefore a situation of PEACE!

→ *The list of initiatives is published on the CEFEC Website*  
<https://socialfirmseurope.eu/supporting-ukraine/>

## **Orientations and Objectives concerning communication and networking activities of CEFEC**

Despite the difficult situation which forced us to significantly reduce the activities of presence meetings, we continued with a large networking and communication activity. Both, with the aim to enhance our internal connecting activity, as well as the one centered on increasing our voice on European level, through the cooperation on our topics and mission with other European actors.

### **1. Networking, inside and out**

As you know, CEFEC presented a proper Position Paper on the ***European Action Plan for the Social Economy (SEAP)***, a leverage for the Economic and Social Recovery of Europe, presented by Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis, and Commissioners Nicholas Schmit and Thierry Breton. The plan has been approved the 9th of December 2021 by the European Commission. It represents a public policy that, in Social Economy Europe's opinion has the potential to be a game changer for the European social economy, but also to build a more resilient and sustainable EU economy that works for people and the planet. The main aims are:

- Develop social economy framework conditions
- Support the consolidation of social economy networks: SE networks and support structures at EU, global, national, and regional/local level
- Mobilize investments and support the social economy community to absorb them
- Recognize the social economy as an employer
- Increase social economy's visibility and talent attraction
- Implementation of Cooperatives

SFE CEFEC has been present in the important conference SOCIAL ECONOMY, THE FUTURE OF EUROPE in Strasbourg, 5 and 6 May 2022 during 2 intensive days of discussions, inputs and networking along a rich program off workshops, panels, plenary sessions, cooperation spaces. <https://live.eventtia.com/en/economiesocialefutureen>

It has been furthermore an opportunity to confirm, that one off our biggest needs is to communicate and co-construct peaceful and inclusive solutions and perspectives for the future, being connected with other realities and Networks on EU Level, working in the same direction.

### **2. Webinars**

***“SFE CEFEC - strengthening cooperation between Nordic and Baltic countries - New opportunities through common actions and projects”***

Picking up the former topic, on 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2022 took place successfully the second Webinar "*SFE CEFEC - strengthening cooperation between Nordic and Baltic countries - New opportunities through common actions and projects*".

The webinar was moderated by our EC member **Jukka Lindberg** from Vates Foundation, Finland, and involved important speakers as:

Mrs Miia Rossi-Gray, Policy Officer on Social Economy in DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission, facing the topic "Social economy action plan and ESF funding: opportunities for cooperation"

Mr. Dainius Čiurinkas, Expert in European Social Fund Agency (LT), "ESF funding's. The example of Lithuania"

Mr. Luigi Martignetti, General Secretary REVES European Network of Cities & Regions for the Social Economy "Public procurement strategies: a resource for developing social enterprises?"

An important moment of exchange which will be deepened during a workshop inside the 36th annual conference.

### ***"SOCIAL ENTERPRISES ABROAD - examples of successful social enterprises"* with our member Fokus Praha, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

On a more local level, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, thanks to our member Hana Hanibalová, FOKUS PRAHA, in collaboration with Association of Community Services and TESSEA, CEFEC had the opportunity to participate at the very interesting WEBINAR on the topic "*SOCIAL ENTERPRISES ABROAD - examples of successful social enterprise*".

The webinar followed up on a number of webinars of the social enterprise platform, focused on a specific areas of business with the wish to stimulate a discussion and to share practical experience with social enterprises from abroad on the topic: employment of people with mental health problems, business areas, support and development of social business from the public sphere.

### **3. Communication activity**

#### ***Daily communication activity***

A large communication and information activity have been guaranteed continuously by our secretary. Among this:

- website updating
- editing of our newsletters
- promotion on Facebook profile

### **Development objectives 2022 and Conclusions**

Finally, find the updated ***development objectives***, we fixed for 2022:

1. enlarge our network including other countries with quality members: minimum 3 new countries and 6 members
2. increase the direct communication with EU bodies and get recognition of our work: maintain and increase networking with other EU Networks and organization of 1 CEFEC Seminar at Brussels and stabilize the availability of a shared office at Brussels
3. participation at the development of important EU Goals as the dissemination and putting in practice of the Action plan for Social Economy

3. increase international cooperation by facilitating projects and partnerships: involvement in at least 6 projects
4. enhance the support of CEFEC members in their local strategical activity: minimum 3 Study Visits in our partner countries
5. acquire resources to support the CEFEC Secretary work
6. continue the focus on creating inclusive jobs inside the green economy sector: "CEFEC has concentrated on special best practice material for seminars and supporting Social Enterprise and firms in creating more jobs by means of green energy structures"

During the 36 years from its constitution, SFE CEFEC has gone through several stages of development, implementing step by step its activities. Our common and current challenge is to enhance and support our members and context to develop continuously in the direction of a society which supports inclusion, solidarity, social cohesion and therefore the bases for peaceful coexistence. Freedom, social justice, put the persons at the center and peace are concepts we can not take for granted. We need to continually work to keep them aware and translate them into daily practice!

This while maintaining an approach, capable of connecting engagement in our communities with the contexts of political decisions at local, national and EU level.

Let us finally highlight once more, the high level of motivation we found in all our members involved in specific activities, but also in the considerable commitment to face this unusual and complex period. Not only a personal challenge, but also challenging for our organizations but, nevertheless, also a significant driver for all the energy contributed to continuously develop our common network activity.

**Thank you for all this and we wish a peaceful and good summertime to all of us!**

Felicitas Kresimon, Vasile Gafiuc, Alina Birsan and Christiane Haerlin