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REPORT- 5TH CEFEC ACADEMY

The poster features a vertical bar on the left with colored segments (blue, red, yellow, orange, green, light blue, dark green). It includes the European Union logo and 'Co-funded by the European Union' text. The 'Green Leaders' logo is in the top right. The main title is 'EMPOWER THE FUTURE: INTERNATIONAL TRAINING FOR YOUNG GREEN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS' in a blue box. Below it, the dates '28 June - 2 July 2025' and location 'Mainz (Germany)' are listed. A 'REGISTER NOW!' button is in an orange circle. A QR code is in a blue circle labeled 'Green and social impact'. Other labels include 'Green entrepreneurship', 'Support for your community', 'Circular economy', and 'Resource efficiency'. The website 'www.cefecannualconference.eu/cefec_academy' is at the bottom. Logos for gpe, CEFEC, Asociația Consultanților în Dezvoltare Comunitară, DUEMILAUNO, and Social Firms Europe are at the bottom.



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CONTENT

- 1. About The Conceptpg. 3-4
- 2. The 2023-2024 CEFEC President.....pg. 5
- 3. The Five Working Dayspg. 6-19
- 4. Evaluation & Feedback.....pg. 20-22



1. About the Concept

We kindly invite you to explore this report and discover how our youngsters spent their days in Mainz, Germany, participating in a dynamic program focused on social entrepreneurship and sustainability.

“Leaders for Green Social Economy” is an Erasmus+ project and an innovative initiative designed to empower communities across Europe with the skills and knowledge needed for sustainable development and green social entrepreneurship. The project is a joint effort by SFE CE FEC, GPE Mainz (Germany), ACDC (Romania), and CPU (Slovenia), bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise to inspire and equip young people for a more sustainable future.

In coordination with GPE Mainz, the participants engaged in a variety of interactive workshops, hands-on activities, and thoughtful discussions. These experiences encouraged them to explore innovative solutions for building more sustainable communities and to develop entrepreneurial ideas that can contribute to positive change in their local contexts.

This report offers an inspiring overview of their journey-highlighting the knowledge they gained, the experiences they shared, and the lasting memories they created during their time in Mainz.





Meet the Future of Social Enterprises!





2. THE 2024-2025 CEFEC PRESIDENT



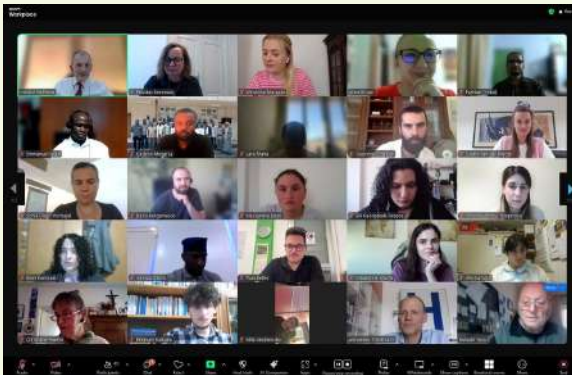
Alexander, 54 years old and originally from Hanover in the northern part of Germany, trained as a hotel manager in Hamburg. He has been the Hotel Manager of INNdependence Mainz, an inclusion hotel, since 2000. Since 2015, he has also been the head of the gastronomy division of inclusion enterprises at gpe, the organization that hosted this year's academy for youngsters.

He was repeatedly elected as Deputy Chairman of the Embrace Hotels Association since 2015 and since 2023 he is the Chairman of the Embrace Hotels Association. Since 2015, he is additionally the head of the gastronomy division of inclusion enterprises at gpe. Since 2017, Alexander Tränkmann is one of three spokespersons for the State Working Group for Inclusion Enterprises in Rhineland-Palatinate.



3. THE FIVE WORKING DAYS

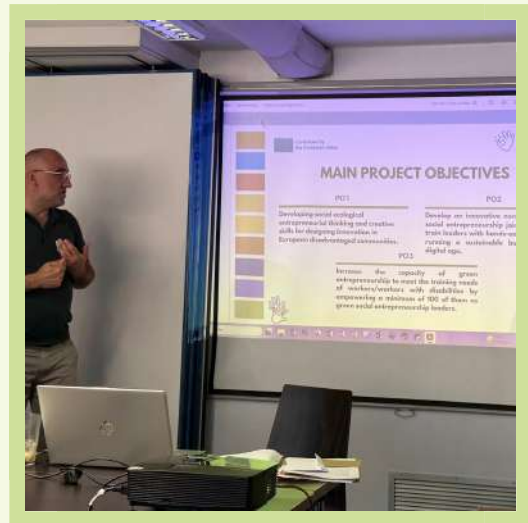
The Academy Training brought together 18 selected participants from Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Romania, Macedonia, Georgia, and Greece who had taken part in four online preparatory sessions. These online meetings laid the foundation for the program, introducing key concepts and helping participants begin shaping their project ideas. Based on their engagement, creativity, and commitment, the most dedicated and promising participants were chosen to continue the journey in Mainz.



DAY 1



The first official day of the 5th SFE CE FEC Academy in Mainz began with energy and excitement. After breakfast, participants made their way to Hotel INNdependence, where they were welcomed by the coordinators and partner representatives. The opening session included introductions from the host team - Alexander Tränkmann, (the 2024-2025 CE FEC President), a presentation of the Leaders for Green Social Economy Erasmus+ project - Petru Vasile Gafiuc, SFE CE FEC Development Manager , and an overview of the Academy's structure and goals.





Participants were also introduced to Social Firms Europe CE FEC network by Felicitas Kresimon (General Secretary of SFE CE FEC), providing context for their work within a broader European movement.

Later, the youngsters started working with Richard Mehmed, who guided them through the stages of developing their business ideas. They recapped the objectives of the prior online trainings and began exploring business concepts.



To end the day, the group visited Organic Supermarkt natürlich, a local green social enterprise in Mainz. The visit showed real-world sustainable business practices- followed by a shared dinner that sparked more discussion and inspiration.



DAY 2



A key highlight of the day was the workshop on “Work and its Dimensions – a practical tool to evaluate your business work,” presented by Christiane Haerlin.



The model presented how planning a social enterprise goes beyond finances and operations-it also involves understanding the human and social dimensions of work.

By looking at important aspects like skills, values, challenges, and the overall purpose of the enterprise, the tool helped participants think more clearly about the ideas and structure behind their projects, but also have a great understanding of their own feelings and values.





Oeko Service

Mid-afternoon, participants attended an important presentation by Raymo Bucher from Oeko Service Switzerland, focusing on Green Social Enterprise and CO2 Impact. He shared valuable perspectives on sustainable business practices, highlighting innovative approaches to environmental responsibility and social entrepreneurship.



Later in the day, the participants engaged in a session on Leadership and Personal Presentation, facilitated by Richard Mehmed. This training focused on improving public speaking and self-presentation skills-essential tools for any aspiring leader in the social enterprise sector.



DAY 3

“Nähwerk” (Department of GPE, Mainz)



During the third day visit, participants explored the innovative textile workshop “Nähwerk,” operated by the GPE department in Mainz. This unique initiative focuses on sustainable upcycling by transforming old police and sanitation worker uniforms, as well as used transparent plastic bags, into durable and stylish new bags. The project not only promotes environmental responsibility through material reuse but also serves as a social enterprise, offering meaningful employment opportunities to individuals facing challenges in the labor market.





The visit provided valuable insights into the intersection of circular economy practices, social integration, and creative craftsmanship.



Following the visit to “Nähwerk,” participants gathered for a presentation by Marin Zver, the incoming President for 2025-2026, representing Slovenia. His presentation focused on CPU Slovenia, a great example of a circular economy initiative that integrates social and environmental goals. CPU is also the hosting organization for the SFE CEFEC Conference in 2026. Marin shared practical insights into how CPU Slovenia repurposes discarded items, creates job opportunities for vulnerable groups, and promotes sustainable development at the community level. After the presentation, participants had a final opportunity to refine and finalize their business ideas in preparation for the pitching session. This was their last moment to bring together the insights and knowledge gained throughout the academy into concrete, actionable concepts.



Participants divided into three groups, each working intensively on a unique and impactful social enterprise idea. Each group presented their ideas to the SFE CEFEC Executive Committee, showcasing creativity, commitment, and a clear understanding of the principles of green and social entrepreneurship. The presentations reflected a high level of teamwork and innovation, and the participants truly did a great job in bringing their concepts to life with passion and purpose.



The first business idea presented was an inclusive coffee shop, envisioned as a warm, accessible community space that offers employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities and others facing challenges in the labor market. The concept emphasized both social inclusion and environmental responsibility, featuring locally sourced products and sustainable operational practices. This inspiring idea was presented by Emanuel Butnariu, Jure Capl, Mila Veselinoska, Rudi Bettin, Radu Alexa, and Lusine Dostibergian.



The second business idea focused on a furniture restoration and reuse store, built around the principles of circular economy and environmental sustainability. The team proposed collecting discarded or unwanted furniture items, renovating them with care and creativity, and then offering them for resale at affordable prices. This initiative aimed not only to reduce waste but also to provide training and employment opportunities for individuals in vulnerable situations, merging environmental impact with social inclusion.



The concept was presented by Alessia Wolf, Marco Nachtsheim, Chibuzor Emmanuel, Tsarosis Konstantinos, and Șerban Raia. Their idea demonstrated a clear understanding of sustainability challenges and showcased a practical, scalable solution with strong community value.



The third business idea, titled “Second Life,” was a secondhand shop developed as a social cooperative with a strong focus on inclusion and sustainability. The concept centered on collecting, sorting, and reselling donated clothing, accessories, and household items, giving them a second life while promoting conscious consumption. In addition to its retail activities, the store also runs workshops on sewing and upcycling, helping community members learn practical skills and reduce waste. The cooperative model aimed to create meaningful job opportunities for marginalized individuals, encouraging both economic empowerment and community engagement.

The idea was presented by Maj Kotnik, Emanuela Popovici, Irene Leizer, and Ela Petra Kiric. Their proposal reflected a deep commitment to social values and environmental responsibility, offering a realistic and inspiring path to sustainable entrepreneurship.



Following the presentations, all participants were rewarded with a special gift - art pieces created by Mihai Pânzaru, a well-known artist from Romania.





However, this was not the end of the journey. After three days of intensive work and creative effort developing their business ideas, participants moved on to the next stage: attending the SFE CEFEC Conference 2025.





On the first day of the conference, they actively took part in working group workshops, where they engaged in in-depth discussions, exchanged ideas, and collaborated with professionals and practitioners from across Europe.





On the second day of the SFE CEFEC conference, the young entrepreneurs were officially acknowledged for their efforts and contributions during the academy. Petru Vasile Gafiuc, SFE CEFEC Development Manager took the stage to introduce the participants to the wider community, highlighting their creativity, dedication, and the innovative business ideas they had developed. Each participant was then invited to the stage to receive their medals and certificates, this time in front of an international audience of professionals and experts.



The recognition made a proud and emotional moment for the young entrepreneurs and reinforced the value of their journey within the larger social economy movement.



As the conference drew to a close, it was time to say goodbye - but not really goodbye. It was “see you later.” Over the course of the academy and conference, the participants had formed strong bonds-not only with each other, but also with their mentor and leader, Richard Mehmed. Richard played a crucial role in guiding the group, offering support, encouragement, and concrete examples of successful social business models. His energy, experience, and belief in their potential deeply inspired the young entrepreneurs and helped shape their ideas into well-rounded projects. The connections built during these days - through shared challenges, creativity, and collaboration - will continue to grow.



With new friendships, a powerful network, and lasting inspiration, the participants left not with an ending, but with the beginning of a meaningful journey still ahead.

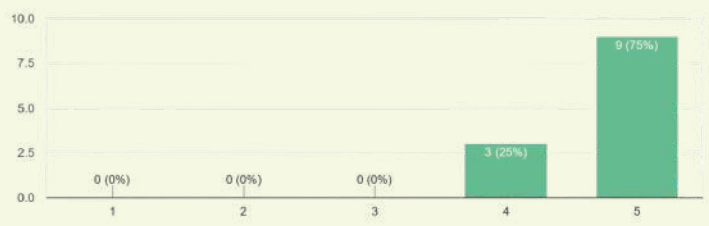




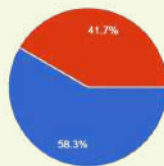
4.EVALUATION & FEEDBACK

As the program concluded, participants were invited to share their reflections through a formal evaluation.

With an average overall rating of 4.75 out of 5, the Academy was recognized for its high-quality content, relevant topics, inspiring facilitation, and excellent organization. Participants particularly appreciated the hands-on learning approach, the study visits, and the opportunity to work closely on their business ideas.



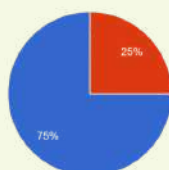
One of the most telling indicators of the Academy’s success was how well the content aligned with participants' personal and professional goals. When asked about the relevance of the content, 58.3% of participants rated it as “very relevant”, while the remaining 41.7% found it “somewhat relevant.”



- Very relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Not very relevant
- Not relevant at all

- 58.3% rated the content as “Very relevant”
- 41.7% rated it as “Somewhat relevant”
- 0% indicated low or no relevance

Facilitation played an important role in the success of the Green Leaders Academy, and participant feedback clearly reflects this. When asked to rate the facilitators’ performance and engagement, 75% of participants rated them as “Excellent”, while the remaining 25% rated them as “Good.”

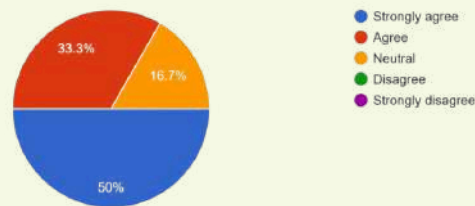


- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

- 75% rated the facilitators as “Excellent”
- 25% rated them as “Good”
- 0% rated them as “Fair” or “Poor”



The participatory and experiential methodology used during the Green Leaders Academy was met with strong approval from participants. Half of the respondents (50%) strongly agreed that the interactive approach- featuring group work, discussions, and hands-on project development- helped them learn effectively, while an additional 33.3% agreed. This reflects a clear endorsement of the Academy’s commitment to active learning. While 16.7% of participants responded neutrally, this suggests a small opportunity to further diversify methods to suit different learning styles in future editions.



- **50% strongly agreed that** the methodology supported effective learning
- **33.3% agreed**
- **16.7% were neutral**
- **0% disagreed or strongly disagreed**

Overall, the evaluation results reflect a highly successful and meaningful learning experience. Participants consistently praised the quality of the content, the performance of the facilitators, and the interactive methodology. Study visits, hands-on activities, and mentorship stood out as key strengths, while the overwhelmingly positive feedback affirms the Academy's effectiveness in building both knowledge and confidence. The insights gathered will not only guide future improvements but also reinforce the Green Leaders Academy as a powerful platform for nurturing the next generation of socially and environmentally conscious entrepreneurs.



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