

Long-awaited Social Economy Action Plan sends major signal of support to social enterprises active in the circular economy

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For immediate release

RREUSE warmly welcomes the European Commission’s publication of the Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP)¹, establishing a 9-year framework to ensure social economy actors are appropriately recognised and further supported within Europe’s low carbon, circular and digital future. In particular, RREUSE applauds the Commission for its comprehensive, transversal and long-term vision, which undoubtedly helps raise awareness of the challenges faced by the sector and provides inspiring legislative, fiscal and financial actions to address them.

It is promising to see that a number of provisions introduced in the action plan aim to enable a more sustainable and supportive environment for social enterprises to thrive. For instance, the development of coherent framework conditions includes guidance on targeted taxation policies for differing social entities, an area of work strongly recommended and supported by RREUSE throughout the years².

In addition, RREUSE is pleased to see an emphasis on socially responsible public procurement to achieve wider social policy objectives, including through national workshops for local and regional authorities, as well as the greater integration of social clauses in the Commission’s own tendering processes. Strengthening the business-to-business market opportunity to buy social through the Single Market Programme initiative also appears promising. While this constitutes a very positive start, RREUSE would also like to encourage greater synergies between the social and circular agendas, notably by including green criteria alongside social ones within public procurement³.

In light of this, RREUSE warmly welcomes the value to social enterprises and their essential role in maintaining a circular economy that ensures resource-efficiency and creates local jobs, especially through re-use and repair. RREUSE agrees with and will readily contribute to the future development of guidance for partnerships between social and private actors in the circular economy, including through the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform of which RREUSE is a member.

As Michal Len, Director of RREUSE insisted “Specific support measures for social enterprises working in re-use and repair is particularly timely given the swell of interest in the circular economy and their added value in creating jobs, skills, and positive environmental impact. The measures laid out in this action plan addressing youth, legal frameworks, internationalisation and access to finance among others provide a starting point to leveraging new opportunities and partnerships for social enterprises to act as key agents of Europe’s circular future. Moving forward,

¹ European Commission (2021) [The Social Economy Action Plan](#)

² RREUSE (2018) [RREUSE comments on EU VAT rule proposals](#)

³ RREUSE (2019) [Social public procurement for environmental services: examples from the RREUSE network and beyond](#)

we urge the Commission to create further links between the social and circular economies in its future revision of the Circular Economy Action Plan⁴. This will enable a more resilient, fair and circular framework across the EU with social enterprise at heart.”

RREUSE will publish a more detailed analysis of the Social Economy Action Plan early next year.

Notes to editors

RREUSE is an international non-profit network supporting the development of social enterprises in the circular economy through innovative policies and partnerships, and the exchange of best practices. RREUSE counts 31 member organisations spread across 29 countries.

The social enterprises represented within our network specialise in the field of re-use, repair and recycling. They generate invaluable social, economic and environmental impacts by providing local and inclusive employment as well as a strong sense of belonging for the most vulnerable in their communities.

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⁴ European Commission (2020) [Circular Economy Action Plan](#)