

## What is WINS?

WINS is a project co-funded by the European Union, that aims to promote workers' involvement in social economy enterprises (SEEs) in Europe. It also strengthens transnational co-operation between workers' and employers' representatives, as well as between social economy enterprises and trade unions in respect of employee involvement. Moreover, WINS encourages employees to know their rights to information, consultation and participation (also referred as "ICP rights") when they work for a (social) enterprise, and the rights and obligations which allow them to have sufficient information when they become an employee or owner of a worker-owned company or other type of social economy enterprise.

## What is a social economy enterprise?

A social enterprise is an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for its owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities. These enterprises cover a broad range of activities from social services to financial providers such as banks. Possible legal forms include cooperatives, mutual societies, non-profit associations, foundations and social enterprises. In a few countries there is a long-standing history and tradition of social economy, while in other countries the sector is very underdeveloped.

## Where can you find online resources that improve worker participation in companies?

On the WINS website you can find a collection of links to legal materials, good practices, project materials, news, videos and connections to previous projects on the subject of information, consultation and participation rights (ICP) and social economy enterprises in several languages. You can always ask for more information from the WINS partner organisations.



# WINS

WORKERS' INVOLVEMENT IN  
SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTERPRISES

Partners:



© DIESIS, 2022

Please see DIESIS's other publications at: <http://www.diesis.coop/>  
Reproduction is authorised provided that the source is acknowledged.

This document reflects the view of its authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained in it.



WINS Project is co-funded by the European Union (Grant Agreement no. VS/2020/0078)

### **Have you ever thought of creating your own social economy enterprise to be able to participate in decision-making?**

Did you know that in social economy enterprises people and the social purpose prevail over capital? This is achieved through autonomous, transparent, democratic and participatory management, which prioritises decision-making based on people and their contributions of work and services provided to the company, or is based on the company's social purpose, rather than on contributions to financial capital.

In these companies, especially in worker-owned companies or worker cooperatives, you can develop your function as a worker and at the same time be a partner of the company, which allows you to participate in decision-making through democratic mechanisms. You will share in the results of the economic activity the cooperative carries out, based on the work you contribute and, where appropriate, to your cooperative's social purpose.

In addition, your company will promote solidarity, both internally and with society at large, favouring local development, equal opportunities between men and women, social cohesion, the integration of people at risk of social exclusion, the generation of stable and high-quality employment, the reconciliation of personal, family and working life, and sustainability.

### **What would your rights be if you were part of a social economy enterprise, for example a working member of a worker cooperative platform?**

National and European law ensures your rights to information, consultation and participation when it comes to “traditional” legal forms in the social economy.

However, if you are working for a digital platform, possibly in the home delivery or mobility sector, and you think that your working conditions are abusive and you are considering grouping together and creating your own digital platform, you must know that cooperative platforms exist.

These cooperative platforms differ from traditional platforms in that they must be governed by the cooperative principles of co-ownership and democratic governance. Therefore, you and your colleagues must participate in all their processes – in their ownership, in decision-making and management, as well as in carrying out their day-to-day work.

In this way, you can develop your work within a project-based environment and with decent conditions for workers.

But since the process is expensive and involves extensive specialist knowledge, we advise you to go to a representative trade union or a cooperative organisation in your country (e.g. IED in Slovenia or Public in North Macedonia) that can explain the model well.

### **How can you participate in a social economy enterprise?**

The legal framework and the options available are not the same in all countries. However, it is possible to set up a non-for-profit foundation or a cooperative at least.

Most of the companies in the social economy are participative organisations, in which your status as a partner is based on your participation in the processes of production and distribution of goods and services, either as a provider of any of the factors of production or as a consumer of the products. That is, you can participate by contributing your work, your social capital, and your decisions.

To maintain good relations in the entrepreneurship project, it is essential that each person has an area of responsibility and that there are no overlaps in decision-making, although it is often necessary to make joint decisions. The people who make up the cooperative must complement each other, support each other, and know how to get the best out of themselves and also of others.

Members and workers in social economy enterprises (just like in “ordinary” companies) have the right to participate in decision-making via corporate bodies like the general assembly and the governing council, both regulated by company bylaws.

Remember that in a cooperative each person has one vote.