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**Mapping European Social Economy:
Employment, Social Dialogue and the European Pillar of Social Rights**

Project nr. 101052222

Final event

**Why social economy needs more visibility and representation in the
national IR systems? Country insight Bulgaria**

2nd July 2024

From 9.00 to 14.00

Venue: COOP Brussels

Quai Demets 231070

[B-1000 Brussels](#)



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Country insight Bulgaria:

In Bulgaria, the social economy is still developing, and its potential is not fully realized or recognized. My country has made some progress after the adoption of the Social and Solidarity Economy Act in 2018, which provides a legal framework for social enterprises. However, there is still a need for greater **integration** of the social economy into the broader economic and industrial policy frameworks. The **social enterprises** tripled last year to 90. There are 1,200 registered agricultural, consumer, production, and housing **cooperatives**, 3,600 community cultural centers (chitalishta), NGOs that prioritize social objectives over profit maximization and contribute to social cohesion, employment, and economic stability. The social economy faces several **challenges** that **necessitate greater visibility and representation** within the national Industrial Relations' system, like:

- **Economic and Social Impact:** It has the potential to play a crucial role in **addressing social challenges, creating jobs, and fostering inclusive growth**. Enhancing its visibility can highlight its contributions to the national economy and encourage supportive policies and funding opportunities.

Country insight Bulgaria:

- **Economic Diversification:** The social economy can contribute to economic diversification by fostering **entrepreneurship** and **innovation** in sectors that are not typically addressed by traditional businesses. This diversification is crucial for Bulgaria's **economic resilience and sustainability**, particularly in regions heavily reliant on a single industry, and during economic crises due to their community focus and sustainable practices.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** The social economy aligns well with the United Nations' SDGs, particularly in areas such as **reducing inequality**, promoting **sustainable economic growth**, and ensuring **decent work for all**. Bulgaria takes 41st place among 193 countries and low ranked are equality and education. Highlighting its role can help Bulgaria meet its international commitments.

Country insight Bulgaria:

- **Regulatory and Financial Support:** Greater representation can lead to improved access to financial resources, grants, and subsidies tailored to the unique needs of social enterprises. It can also foster a regulatory environment that recognizes and supports the diverse forms of social economy organizations.
- **Awareness and Recognition:** Increasing the visibility of the social economy can enhance **public understanding and appreciation of its role**. This can lead to increased consumer support, volunteerism, and partnerships with mainstream businesses.
- **Labor Relations:** Involving social economy representatives in the Industrial Relations' system can lead to **more comprehensive labor policies** that address the needs of diverse worker groups, including those in non-traditional and precarious employment.

Country insight Bulgaria:

- **Collaborative Growth:** A stronger presence in national dialogue can foster collaboration between the social economy and traditional sectors, leading to more holistic and sustainable economic development strategies, adequate support and recognition for their contributions to a more resilient, and sustainable economy.
- **Promoting Social Inclusion:** Social economy organizations often prioritize the inclusion of marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities, long-term unemployed, and ethnic minorities. Enhanced representation can ensure that their voices and needs are considered in policy-making processes, leading to more inclusive labor markets and social policies.
- **Facilitating Policy Development:** Increased representation of the social economy in industrial relations systems can lead to the development of more supportive policies and legal frameworks. This can include access to finance, favorable tax treatments, and supportive regulatory environments that enable these organizations to thrive.



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Thank you for your **attention!**

Yuliya Simeonova – Vice-President of ISTURET Steering Committee



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