LIVEWHAT PROJECT

LIVING WITH HARD TIMES

HOW CITIZENS REACT TO ECONOMIC PRACTICES AND THEIR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

HANDBOOK

OF

GOOD PRACTICES

LIVEWHAT — LIVING WITH HARD TIMES — EU FP7 • CITIZENS' RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF CRISES

EUROPE

CITIZENS

CRISIS

RESILIENCE

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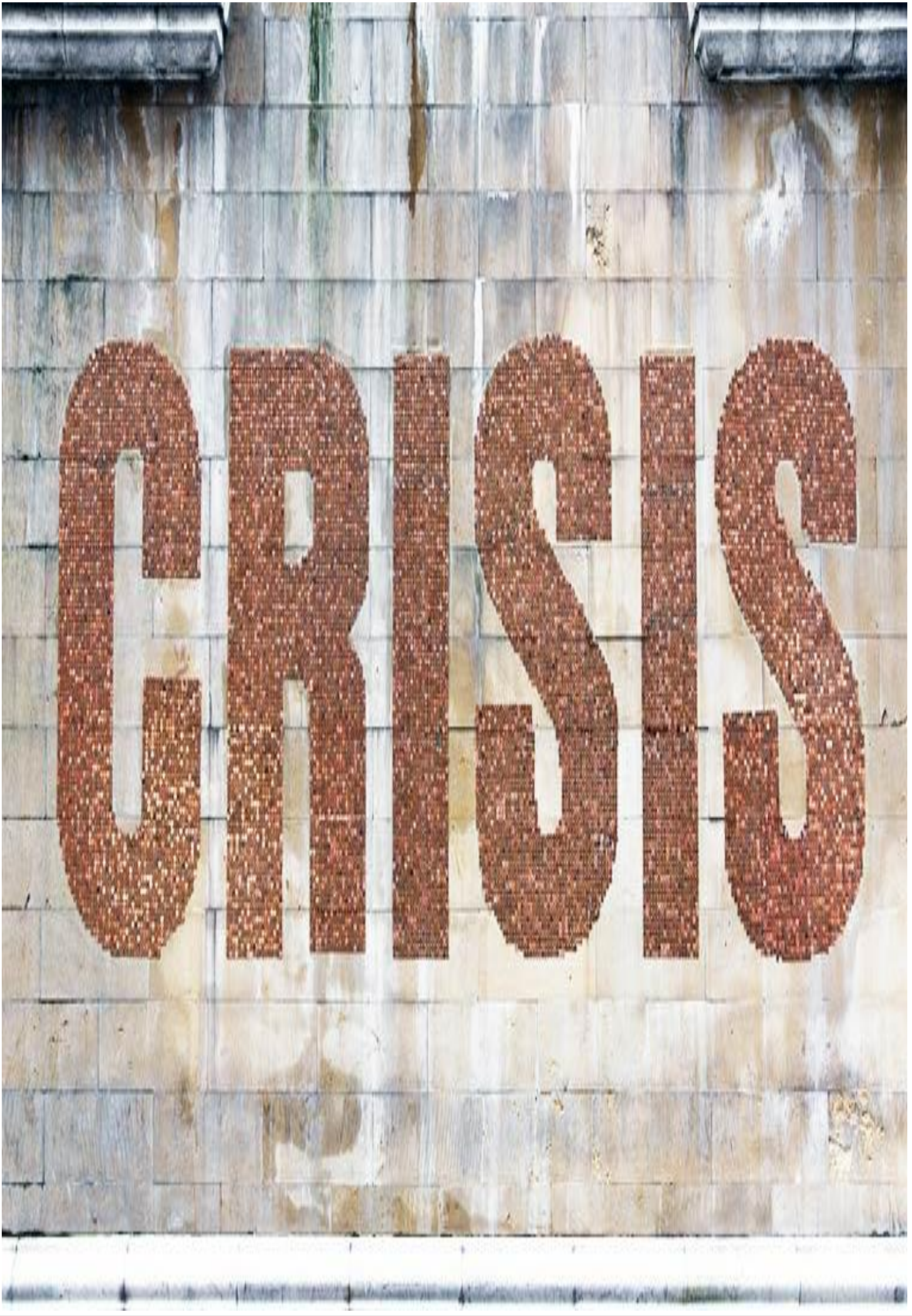
CRISIS

Executive summary

The Handbook of Good Practices presents key policy results of the LIVEWHAT project and relevant recommendations with the aim of helping policy-makers in Europe to identify a more comprehensive and concerted problem-solving approach to tackle the negative effects of the recent crisis. LIVEWHAT research has given rise to evidence-based knowledge about citizens' resilience in times of economic crisis, allowing for more effective policy responses to the negative consequences of such crises. Throughout its 36-month duration, LIVEWHAT researchers examined the ways in which European citizens reacted to the recent crisis that, at different degrees of intensity in different countries, has struck Europe since 2008, but also how they deal with economic crises and their consequences more generally. While the focus of the research was on citizens' coping strategies and responses (individual and collective), LIVEWHAT also examined policy and legal responses, so as to have a baseline for assessing citizens' resilience.

Key policy findings

On policy and legal responses to crisis:

- Since the onset of the recent economic crisis and its immediate aftermath, a predominant trend in all nine countries is that the reforms enacted have aimed to flexibilize the workforce, often in a way that places the burden of reforms on the employee side (see e.g. Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Poland, Germany, France and Italy). Also, reforms in many countries have directly targeted the situation of public sector employees.
- Although the majority of national reforms directly worsened the situation for public sector employees, there are negative long-term impacts for young workers in the beginning of their labor careers.
- More than in other European countries, in the countries particularly hit by the economic crisis, such as Spain, Italy and especially Greece, the demands for budget discipline and welfare retrenchment have further aggravated the effects of the crisis on living standards, with a deterioration of the main socio-economic indicators (e.g. disposable income and poverty rates).
- Certain labor rights have come under jeopardy. Compared to ten years ago, there is less protection against dismissals and there are tightened conditions for receiving unemployment benefits in almost all the countries examined by LIVEWHAT. Particularly significant changes have taken place in crisis-affected countries such as Greece and Spain.
- The rights to unionize and strike have not changed as significantly as other labor rights. Yet, findings suggest that there is increasing willingness among the governing authorities to limit and regulate citizens' use of the freedom of assembly in many countries, most notably in France, Spain and Greece.

On collective responses to crisis:

- National discourses in almost all the nine countries examined have provided a political arena where the classic performance of contentious politics was delivered between powerful political insiders on the one hand and different types of outsider "publics" on the other.
- Public discourses in times of crisis have been a space for a struggle of access and positioning by old and new actors, that is, a process of claims-making innovation. This has generated new arenas of communication and mobilization that remain nationally confined with very low levels of European visibility.
- National public debates have largely been dominated by a discourse focused on macro-economic issues at the expense of social and labor market issues. As a result, the voices of technocrats and policy-makers arguing with economic groups have gained prominence in the public domain at the expense of labor and civil society organizations as well as ordinary citizens.

On individual responses to crisis:

- Citizens' understandings and experiences of the crisis vary by the national context in which one is situated and whether the country experienced a deep or lighter economic crisis – pointing also to a deep north-south split in Europe. Countries where the crisis was lighter had to suffer fewer consequences, such as having to make drastic cutbacks in consumption, including staples such as food or medications and visits to doctors. On the other hand, the situation is more serious in those countries harder hit by the crisis.
- Citizens' economic experiences and perceptions of the fairness of inequalities spurred by the crisis play a key role in shaping citizens' support for welfare-state redistribution. If deprivation is deep, frustration, distrust and dissatisfaction might find expression in collective action and protest activity.
- The crisis affects national identity and nationalism in different ways for individuals. Those belonging to the lower classes become more nationalistic when exposed to information about their country losing economic status. Conversely, individuals belonging to middle and upper classes become less so. This sheds light on the micro-mechanisms behind the idea that ethno-nationalist and nativist responses to the economic crisis spread around at these times, especially among those who were more seriously hit by the economic crisis.
- The effects of the crisis – unemployment, exclusion, inequality, poverty – have obliged European citizens to rethink the way organized communities meet social needs. One product of this rethinking has been the emergence of Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs) – formal and informal groups with primarily social objectives – as part of a growing social and solidarity economy.

- In all nine countries studied by LIVEWHAT – but especially in countries hit hard by the crisis -AAOs were found to complement other channels of providing goods and services, thus serving as buffers against the crisis, providing for goods and services to address emerging urgent needs.
- Participation and membership in AAOs contributed to an empowerment process. At the individual level, participants and beneficiaries gained empowerment through their active involvement in the participatory decision-making process within and outside organizations when they bargained with external stakeholders. At the collective level, AAOs contributed to the empowerment process of communities by demonstrating that all individuals can become active economic and social actors.

In view of the above, the Handbook outlines a set of policy pointers aimed at European Institutions, the European Commission, National and Local Governments and Civil Society Actors that invite us to reflect more broadly on how to achieve their determination not only to restore inclusive growth but to lay the foundation for a better Europe, and not less Europe. A summary of these policy pointers is given below.

Key policy pointers for European Institutions and the EU Commission:

1. Listen and engage actively with those citizens and groups whose voices have been neglected and who have been systematically left out of national discourses on the crisis.

2. Work for Better, not Less Europe - a "better Europe" is where a relaunch of the European Social Model creates tangible benefits for all countries of Europe and not just for the affluent.

3. Provide stronger political leadership by addressing the impact of the current economic crisis on citizens' well-being so as to ensure that the EU is seen as leading the solution going forward rather than being part of the problem. This should involve:

- Rolling out "European in character" redistributional policies.

- Increasing co-ordination and facilitation to bring together countries with similar issues and challenges and support cross-European sharing of information and solutions.

- Strengthening strategic funding by creating spaces for more cross-European dialogue and activity particularly among NGOs and citizens at grassroots levels.

- Providing leadership to encourage developments in the social and solidarity economy (SSE).

- Explaining clearly to citizens why it is important that they make EU policy choices by voting in the European elections, not only to ensure the continued legitimacy of the EU and its institutions against rising populism and exclusionary nationalisms, but also to have to influence on the direction of policy.

- Promoting particular initiatives that are aimed at disadvantaged groups and groups harder hit by the crisis, and explain clearly why they should engage with and participate in the elections.

- Using social media and networking to engage young people with key issues that are dominating European politics.

4. Support inclusive growth with instruments such as the Europe 2020 Strategy, and at the international level with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More concerted effort is needed to put forward EU's social objectives. This should include:

- Prioritizing social investment.

- Ensuring better integration of crisis-affected groups, especially young people.

- Intensifying structural funds for crisis-affected countries.

5. Ensure inclusive governance structure, requiring evidence of meaningful stakeholder involvement.

6. Step up efforts for a new social direction for the EU by:

- Making full use of existing social oriented policy frameworks.

- Revitalizing the architecture of EU processes, in particular the European Semester.

- Adding policy coherence, by defining more clearly the different objectives of, and linkages between, key supranational social policy and macro-economic tools and soft governance instruments.

- Assessing the impact of projects funded by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) on the Union's employment and social objectives.

- Introducing social impact assessment and monitoring for countries in receipt of assistance packages.

- Allowing budgetary flexibility for investment in relevant social policies and services.

- Setting up a framework for mainstreaming social and fundamental rights objectives throughout the European Semester and within all policy areas, to ensure a rights-based approach.

- Supporting the involvement of rights-holders and organized civil society when adopting and implementing social objectives.

Key policy pointers for National Governments and Relevant Local/Regional Authorities:

7. Build inclusive labor markets as part of EU's integrated Active Inclusion strategies, ensuring that all women and men who can work access to quality employment and jobs

and facilitating progressive reintegration into the labor market of those of those who are most excluded.

8. Put forward a nationwide Strategy for Quality Employment with specific targeted interventions to invest in quality and sustainable employment.

9. Prioritize large-scale investment programs that are multi-annual and targeted at job-intensive areas and represent a way to trigger growth and, at the same time, to address social and infrastructural deficits.

10. Strengthen systems of social support as a basis for inclusive growth. Such interventions may require national governments to:

- Introduce a 'golden rule' on social protection spending – i.e. establishing a threshold or benchmark below which spending on social protection should not fall.

- Invest in ambitious integrated employment and social policies, in line with the 2013 Social Investment Package (SIP).

- Improve target strategies for groups and individuals who engage the least and who are most at risk of unemployment and social exclusion.

- Invest in good quality social services by acting proactively and exploiting the new knowledge generated through EU peer learning and the use of existing EU governance frameworks – particularly the social Open Method of Coordination.

- Mainstream social and fundamental rights objectives throughout all policies at the EU and national level to ensure that people live a life with dignity and fully participate in society.

- Open up the decision-making processes to social non-governmental organizations and users' organizations and work with them as partners in developing, implementing and evaluating social protections and social assistance policies.

- Introduce better monitoring and social impact assessments.

11. Invest in local employment and social policies and services. This, for example, may include initiating local social economy and solidarity projects that form collaborations between different types of partners that have different expertise and resources.

12. Ensure equality and inclusiveness in local and national decision-making by adapting the means and methods of dialogue to all groups (including the disabled, migrants and persons facing poverty and unemployment).

13. Ensure recognition of the role of civil society actors at all stages of policy-making, by:

- Setting up a framework for the structural involvement of civil society actors at all government levels and interacting with them on a regular basis.

- Adopting clear and transparent procedures for civil dialogue and developing guidelines for substantial engagement in the design, delivery and evaluation of policies.

- Developing new indicators to ensure the quality of engagement by drawing on civil society organizations' participative methodologies.

- Actively seeking to expand sources of information and taking into account the alternative proposals advanced by civil society actors.

- Setting up a framework for shadow reporting by civil society organizations on the implementation of national social policies.

- Engaging social non-governmental organizations as reliable partners to meet the obligation to implement the "partnership principle" of the European Structural Investment Funds.

Key policy pointers for Civil Society Actors:

14. Work to influence local, national and EU decision-making. This requires a commitment to:

- Establishing a clear strategy to strengthen links with national, regional and/or local policy-makers, and actively engage with them in finding the best way to design employment and social protection policies /services.

- Developing a capacity for independent and accurate analysis and advocacy.

- Developing a communication strategy to better explain why civil society work is important, and the role of civil society actors in providing social assistance and services at times when public financing of social services is diminishing.

- Monitoring the current situation and working for inclusive growth that ensures every person's fundamental right to live a life in dignity and fully participate in society.

15. Target strategies at groups and individuals who engage the least and who are most at risk of exclusion and precariousness. This requires a set of structured interventions such as:

- Putting forward policies and strategies to seek engagement of the most excluded in society.

- Establishing appropriate tracking and monitoring systems to track the increased demands – and the new kinds of demands - made on current services.

16. Foster participation of people and families experiencing exclusion by enhancing their capacity to engage with various dimensions of the political process, such as voice, contestation, advocacy, co-construction, negotiation, networking and building coalitions and alliances.

Introduction

This Handbook of Good Practices is the outcome of a 3-year cross-national research conducted within the framework of the EU-funded FP7 project "LIVEWHAT - LIVING WITH HARD TIMES: How Citizens React to Economic Crises and Their Social and Political Consequences." The economic crisis that has hit Europe since 2008 is without precedent in post-war economic history. The ongoing recession has left deep and long-lasting traces on economic performance and entails social hardship of many kinds. Those hardest hit are those most likely to "exit" the political sphere and withdraw from political engagement. Falling political participation and the rise of populist groups and rhetoric in various European countries is only one side of the story. Understanding how citizens develop resilience in difficult times – rather than opting for fatalism or rejecting any involvement in public life – is crucial for scientists, policy-makers, stakeholders and society at large. It is in this context that LIVEWHAT was born.

LIVEWHAT findings provide evidence-based knowledge about citizens' resilience in times of economic crises, allowing for more effective policy responses to the negative consequences of such crises. The project examined the ways in which European citizens have reacted to the recent crisis that, at different degrees of intensity in different countries, has struck Europe since 2008, but also how they deal with economic crises and their consequences more generally. While the focus of the research was on citizens' coping strategies and responses (individual and collective), LIVEWHAT also examined policy responses so as to have a baseline for assessing citizens' resilience.

The Handbook of Good Practices provides an in-depth presentation of key policy results and relevant policy pointers with the aim of helping policy-makers and civil society actors in Europe to identify a more comprehensive and concerted problem-solving approach to tackling the negative effects of the recent crisis. The Handbook is structured as follows: Part 1 presents information about the LIVEWHAT project, its objectives, theoretical approach, research work packages and outputs. Key policy results are presented, which were obtained through interviews with policy-makers and the study of policy and legal documents, an analysis of political claims in the media, a cross-national survey on citizens' attitudes and responses, a set of laboratory and survey experiments with individual citizens and an online survey and interviews with key informants involved in AAOs active in SSE. In addition to these, a set of good and socially innovative practices is presented, which were drawn from the real life experiences and evaluations made by participants in social and solidarity actions. Finally, Part 3, building on LIVEWHAT comparative evidence, advances concrete policy pointers and recommendations for three groups of actors: 1) European institutions and the EU Commission; 2) National governments and relevant local/regional authorities and; 3) Civil society actors. The purpose of Part 3 is to increase awareness about how the recent crisis could be a unique opportunity to shift toward a Better Europe, improving well-being for all.

PART 1 LIVEWHAT at a Glance

About LIVEWHAT

Launched in December 2013, LIVEWHAT's main aim was to provide evidence-based knowledge about citizens' resilience in times of economic crises in nine European countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom (UK).

Throughout its 3-year duration, the project examined ways in which European citizens have reacted to the crisis that, at different degrees of intensity in different countries, has struck Europe since 2008. Additionally, it examined how they dealt with economic crises and their consequences more generally.

The project studied both individual and collective responses from citizens, the private and the public dimensions of such responses and political and non-political responses. LIVEWHAT not only focused on citizens' responses but also shed light on policy responses so as to have a baseline for assessing citizens' resilience in times of crisis.

LIVEWHAT research was conducted by a team of researchers from nine European Universities, namely:

Project coordinator

Marco Giugni, University of Geneva

Partners

- Eva Anduiza, Autonomous University of Barcelona
- Lorenzo Bosi, European University Institute
- Manlio Cinalli, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques
- Maria Grasso, University of Sheffield
- Maria Kousis, University of Crete
- Christian Lahusen, University of Siegen
- Maria Theiss, University of Warsaw
- Katrin Uba, Uppsala University

Objectives

LIVEWHAT tackled the following objectives:

- To advance knowledge regarding the ways in which citizens respond to economic crises and their social and political consequences.

- To contribute to placing citizens' responses to economic crises and their negative consequences on the political agenda by raising awareness about the situation of groups particularly at risk in situations of economic crisis.

- To improve the problem-solving capacity of policy-makers and practitioners by providing policy recommendations and a catalogue of good practices.

- To help develop a more comprehensive and concerted problem-solving approach within member states and the European Union by promoting knowledge-transfer and policy-learning.

The project's objectives were addressed by means of a variety of data and methods: a cross-national comparative dataset on economic, social, and political indicators; the analysis of policy responses, collective responses, and individual responses by private citizens to crises; lab and survey experiments designed to assess causal effects of different dimensions of crises on citizens' attitudes and behaviors; and the analysis of alternative forms of resilience in times of crisis.

Theoretical approach

LIVEWHAT's theoretical approach allowed for studying resilience along the analytical continuum between the individual level of single citizens who learn how to "bounce back" and downplay the costs of crises, and the far-reaching forms of collective resilience aimed at entering the public domain so as to challenge inequities and foster common empowerment. The project conceived of resilience as the capacity of European citizens to stand against economic hardship through an active process of contestation and empowerment. Going beyond previous studies that have studied the impact of economic crises on specific groups such as children, youth, and families treated as passive categories, LIVEWHAT put citizens engaged in alternative forms of resilience at center stage. Alternative forms of resilience include the strengthening of social and family networks and community practices to foster solidarity in the face of crises, change of lifestyles toward more sustainable forms of consumption and production, and developing new artistic expressions. Although these transformations in citizen practices (from adapted to alternative) are decisive for citizens' resilience in times of austerity, they have not yet been thoroughly studied.

Research workpackages

LIVEWHAT undertook the following research workpackages:

Work Package 1 – Defining, Identifying and Measuring Crises: This work package aimed at defining, identifying and measuring crises by setting forward an operational definition and a set of indicators that enabled researchers to detect and compare the impact of crises on European societies. LIVEWHAT researchers resorted to conceptual and theoretical work in order to reach an operational definition of crises through the development of a database of indicators. The database contains not only indicators of inputs of crisis, such as usual macro-level indicators of unemployment, inflation, GDP, "misery index", etc., but also indicators of output of crisis, including micro-level self-reporting of subjective happiness and life satisfaction.

Work Package 2 – Policy Responses to Crises: The aim of this work package was to identify and put together into inventories key changes relating to the legislation and policies enacted by policy-makers as a response to the 2008 economic crisis, and as a method of avoiding or limiting its negative consequences. The analysis covered the period from 2005 to 2014. It drew on the study of policy documents, jurisprudence and interviews with key informants such as high-level public officials. The year 2005 was an important starting point because it allowed LIVEWHAT researchers to disentangle the reactions to the 2008 economic crisis and the earlier processes of legislative change. The countries studied were: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

Work Package 3 – Collective Responses to Crises in the Public Domain: This work package aimed at conducting a cross-country research that examined how European citizens have reacted to the economic crisis by intervening as organized collective actors through claims made in the public sphere. Through the use of political claims analysis, the research examined national public debates about the economic crisis in nine European countries, namely France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. In particular, claims were coded by random sampling of about 1,000 claims per country selected from five newspapers in each country and covering the period from 2005 to 2014. All articles containing any of the three words *crisis, recession,* or *austerity* were selected and coded, to the extent that they referred to the recent economic crisis. Moreover, claims made by, or targeted at, the EU or a European actor/addressee were identified in order to capture the visibility of the EU in the national public spheres of the nine countries over the course of the economic crisis (2008-2014).

Work Package 4 – Individual Responses to Crises: The objective of this work package was to examine individual perceptions, evaluations and responses to crises by private citizens. LIVEWHAT researchers developed a survey questionnaire to address key issues relating to European citizens' perceptions and responses to the crisis, and with the help of a specialized polling company (YouGov), collected data from across the nine European countries in the project, namely France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden,

Switzerland and the UK. Issues examined involve: What do ordinary citizens consider to be a situation of economic crisis? How do they perceive it? How do they react to crises? Who is most affected by crises? To what extent are social and political attitudes related to crises? To what extent are social and political behaviors related to crises? To what extent are the family and social life of people affected by crises? The survey was conducted in 2015 and involved a minimum of 2,000 respondents in each country.

Work Package 5 – Causal Effects of Crises on Citizens' Attitudes and Behaviors: This work package involved assessing the causal effects of different dimensions of crises on citizens' attitudes and behaviours. LIVEWHAT researchers conducted six labs and seven survey experiments with individual citizens in two countries with contrasting economic conditions, namely Spain and Switzerland. The aim of the experimental research was to study the causal mechanisms linking situations of economic crisis and their consequences on citizens. The field work took place in Spain and Switzerland from June 2014 to September 2016 combining both convenience and representative samples. With the lab experiments (five conducted in Spain and one in Switzerland), which included games, pseudo-games and vignette designs, LIVEWHAT researchers were able to manipulate individual economic conditions and assess their effects. Concurrently, the survey experiments, which were embedded in three different online surveys, were used to treat perceptions about contextual economic conditions to see how they affect outcomes of interest.

Work Package 6 – Alternative Forms of Resilience in Times of Crisis: The aim of this work package was to identify alternative action organizations (AAOs) and their impact upon vulnerable groups and communities. AAOs fall within the spectrum of the emerging social and solidarity economy. AAOs are all around us and refer to varying forms of co-operative, associative and solidarity relations. They include, for example, cooperatives, mutual associations, NGOs, self-help groups, barter networks, food banks, free medical services, soup kitchens, new cooperatives, associations of informal sector workers, social enterprise and fair trade organizations and networks. With the recent economic crisis, growing inequality and social exclusion of vulnerable groups prompted an intense interest among scholars, practitioners, activists and policy-makers on the meaning and trajectory of the SSE as a distinctive model of economic growth, we know far less about what European AAOs are, how their aims and activities unfold and how they have been navigating in times of crisis. To fill this void, LIVEWHAT researchers gathered data on AAOs in nine European countries, namely France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. Methodologically, the researchers relied on: (i) mapping and analysis of AAOs through online media sources (a random sample of 4.297 AAOs, approximately 500 in each country, was selected and studied), (ii) conduction of an online survey based on a random sample of 500 AAOs and (iii) 20 qualitative personal interviews with participants and initiators of AAOs in each country.


tASTY

2 Exposé of policy results

2.1 Policy and legal responses to crisis

This part of the handbook presents the policy-relevant findings of the research conducted under Work Package 2 that identified and put together into inventories key changes relating to the legislation and policies that policymakers enacted as a response to the 2008 economic crisis.

Key findings

► **Labor market reforms have led to precarization and loose social safety nets.**

The findings on policy responses show that significant changes have been made in the four examined fields—labor, health, tax, and social policies—but variations across countries as well as in policies themselves are very large. Still, one could find two common trends in the crisis-related changes. First, reforms in many countries have directly targeted the situation of public sector employees. Second, irrespective of their relation to the crisis as such, a predominant trend in all nine countries is that the reforms enacted have aimed to flexibilize the workforce, often in such a way that the burden of reforms has been placed on the employee side rather than on the side of businesses or indeed the state. This has been the case in Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Poland, Germany, France and Italy. Whereas some countries, notably Germany, Sweden and to a limited extent Poland and Italy, digressed slightly from this path in their immediate responses to the crisis by reintroducing some services for the unemployed, the overarching and pervasive development indicates a movement away from a rights-based understanding of labor market relations, to one where competitiveness and growth are achieved by narrowing the distribution of such rights. Indirect effects of the structural changes in the labor market, i.e., precarization, combined with less unemployment insurance and social benefits, might have negative long-term effects on large sectors of society. Even slight changes in the levels and conditions of eligibility for sickness and unemployment benefits will have potentially more palpable effects for a workforce that is increasingly less likely to be granted access to such systems. Hence, although the majority of the national reforms directly worsened the situation of public sector employees, negative long-term impacts exist for those in the beginning of their labor careers as well. The reality is that many of these workers, due to limited work intensity, will not acquire sufficient entitlement to social security benefits. **This calls for careful consideration of how to improve social protection for these workers.**

Also, more than in other European countries, in the countries particularly hit by the economic crisis, such as Spain, Italy and especially Greece, the demands for budget

discipline have further aggravated the effects of the crisis on living standards, with a deterioration of the main socio-economic indicators (e.g., disposable income and poverty levels). Hence, the crisis effects have expanded the structural gaps in those countries' national systems of social protections. **This brings to light the need for EU countries to discuss possible alternative policies and to implement the right mix of policy reforms without losing the main elements and features of the European Social Model, which is still considered a point of reference in other parts of the world, thus helping Europe to preserve its soul and its identity.**

The specificity of the European Social Model is stressed in the *World Competitiveness Yearbook*: "Another force shaping the competitive environment of a country is the distinction between a system that promotes individual risk and one that preserves social cohesiveness. The so-called Anglo-Saxon model is characterized by emphasis on risk, deregulation, privatization and the responsibility of the individual through a minimalist approach to welfare. In contrast, the Continental European Model relies heavily on social consensus, a more egalitarian approach to responsibilities and an extensive welfare system" (IMD 2000).

Indeed, the financial crises in Asian countries have also provided proof of weaknesses in economic and social recovery not premised on social partnership and democratic values (Stiglitz 2002). Is the European Social Model currently losing its vitality, thus endangering the long-term sustainability of Europe's model of economic growth? In the long term, is the current withdrawal of the state from social expenditure, social services and other basic public services compatible with the aspirations and the vision that European nations agreed on a few years ago? Is Europe ready to lose its European Social Model, which is the envy of other countries and regions in the world? **We might ask whether the policy changes brought about over recent years actually contradict the place that the European Social Model should have in European construction.**

► Certain rights have come under jeopardy.

Since the crisis and its immediate aftermath, certain labor rights have come under jeopardy. Compared to ten years ago, there is less protection against dismissals, and there are tightened conditions for receiving unemployment benefits in almost all of the countries that LIVEWHAT has examined. Particularly significant changes have taken place in crisis-affected countries, such as Greece and Spain. The rights to unionize and strike have not changed as significantly as other labor rights have. This could be the result of opposition from organized labor or the fact that some more fundamental rights are more difficult to change due to the legal traditions of the examined countries. This is also demonstrated by the incremental changes in the regulations of public assemblies (Spain, Greece, the United Kingdom), which limit citizens' freedom of assembly, especially using some forms of action or restricting the

areas accessible to protestors. **In some cases, this is a direct result of the numerous street demonstrations opposing austerity policies.**

We hear little about the limitation of citizens' fundamental rights in contemporary Europe. However, our findings suggest that there is an increasing willingness among governing authorities to limit and regulate citizens' use of the freedom of assembly in many countries. In some cases, this is a direct result of the numerous street demonstrations opposing austerity policies. So far, many of the most restrictive proposals have been defined as unconditional (France, Spain, Greece). **From the perspective of the protection of citizens' fundamental rights, these trends call for further attention by civil society groups, scholars and politicians.**

Legislative changes have strongly influenced the daily lives of citizens, but one could also examine these as challenges to European treaties (Maastricht, Lisbon) and charters. The Lisbon Treaty directly refers to democracy and invokes citizens' equality (Art. 2) or transparency and the involvement of civil society in policy process (Art. 15). These principles were clearly challenged when Troika (European Commission, European Central Bank and IMF) proposed austerity measures via memorandums of understanding for crisis-affected countries, such as Greece or Spain. **Crisis-related changes to public policies have arguably reduced the sovereignty of the member states but have decreased the legitimacy of democratic input at the national and EU levels.**

2.2 Collective responses to crisis in public discourses

This part of the handbook presents the policy-relevant findings of the research conducted under Work Package 3 that examined how European citizens have reacted to the economic crisis by intervening as organized collective actors through claims-making in the public sphere.

Key findings:

► National discourses about the economic crisis have stood out for their eminently "exclusionary" character.

The findings on collective responses in the public sphere suggest that during the period of 2005-2014, a discourse focused on macro-economic issues largely dominated national public debates in almost all of the nine countries examined. The analysis also shows that national discourses have been highly competitive environments in which actors compete for public visibility, resonance and legitimacy. The economic crisis has provided a political arena in which the classic performance of

contentious politics has been delivered between powerful political insiders on the one hand, and different types of outsider "publics" on the other.

The lack of a straightforward vector linking the grievance to the grievant is far from being a bizarre result of the analysis. The existence of any grievance, even when consisting of the economic crisis, has been grounded in the contentious dynamics that link political insiders and outsiders within the same field of intervention. Thus, the politics of the economic crisis has been most salient when it was brought at the core of neoliberal readjustments of the labor market dividing workers, on the one hand, and capital, on the other.

Particularly in countries less affected by the economic crisis, such as in Germany and Switzerland, the political contention over the crisis has been generally pacified. This has left a crucial space of political intervention for economic actors and groups (despite their low grievance). In this case, it is noticeable that policymakers and the state have dominated debates about the economic crisis. Sometimes this has happened in addition to specific professional organizations and experts who, most likely, have supplied policymakers and the state with expertise on the crisis. As a result, the voice of technocrats and policymakers sharing arguments with economic groups has gained prominence in the public domain at the expense of labor and civil society organizations as well as ordinary citizens. Even the labor organizations have had little to say about major policy "reforms" that have been pushed forward in the labor market as a way of reacting to the (low intensity of the) crisis.

Overall, the process of pacification in the public domain has been politically driven, embedded in the weakness of labor movements and other civil society organizations vis-à-vis stronger political entrepreneurs, such as economic organizations. Such an erosion of the contribution of labor and civil society actors and of ordinary citizens to public debates seems problematic from the normative point of view of democratic inclusion and also from the point of view of the democratic quality of public debates.

In this respect, a more inclusive approach opening up more channels of communication and representation for the "silent publics" would be necessary. Policy and media actors should give more space to these unheard publics to voice their claims and positions on various aspects of the economic crisis. By so doing, they could turn public discourse from a de facto exclusive practice kept only for insiders into a more democratic and less top-down process.

► Discourses about the crisis have remained primarily nationally confined.

Far from being a simple economic type of crisis to be seized through usual economic measures, the economic crisis has stood out for its eminently political character. The findings clearly indicate that the economic crisis has emerged as a political resource

for some entrepreneurs who have made use of the idea of the economic crisis, even when basic economic indicators do not show a context of economic crisis. It therefore seems that public discourses in times of crisis have been a space for the struggle of access and positioning by old and new actors, that is, a process of claims-making innovation. This has generated new arenas of communication and mobilization that, however, remain nationally confined.

In particular, all of the nine countries examined show very low levels of European visibility in their national debates—with some variations. Some of these variations appear puzzling at first sight, yet they may reveal important insights if seen from another angle: For example, the low presence of the EU in the national debates in the UK may be due to the high levels of Euroscepticism that exist in the country, or the low presence of the EU in the national debates in Switzerland may be due to the country's broader global financial interdependence. Other findings, however, are difficult to decipher: For instance, national debates in Spain and Italy (countries highly affected by the crisis) display lower degrees of a European presence than those in Sweden (a country whom the crisis does not significantly affect).

In any case, the visibility of the EU and European issues in the national debates does not seem to be *directly* related to the severity of the economic crisis or to the harshness of public policy retrenchment in the different European countries. Particularly, it may be argued that the higher levels of EU presence in the national debates in Germany may very well be linked to the country's leading role in the EU during the economic crisis, to its position as a creditor in the debt crisis, and to the "internal use" that German national actors have made of the country's leading role in the EU. In this respect, it should also be inquired whether the moderate levels of European visibility in France reflect its difficulties in co-leading the European project during crisis years.

All in all, it seems that the recent crisis has had no significant effect in terms of advancing the presence of the EU and European issues in national debates. Quite importantly, the results confirm the uncontested primacy of national communicative flows in every country, leaving limited visibility for the EU or European protagonists and subjects. Hence, a Europeanized political communication in which national actors make claims within a European frame of reference transcending geographical boundaries proved rather weak during the period of 2008-2014, that is, when the economic crisis reached its peak. Apart from the limited presence of the EU and European actors, it seems that issues of the representation of a clear-cut European public in the politics of dealing with the crisis have largely been neglected. This is part and parcel of the broader EU democratic deficit that has become more acute during the crisis years. The latter is related to a lack of responsiveness of the EU and accountability in the wider context of how the EU has responded to the economic crisis.

A swift and radical democratization of European affairs may very well speed up the rise of a vital EU public sphere that will give access to those publics affected by the crisis, and clarity and legitimacy to the ways in which the EU has shaped its responses. In the end, a European response to the crisis can only be the outcome of a more or less democratic interplay between the integration of governments and actors across boundaries, and the integration of peoples and public spheres. Therefore, establishing a more visible dialogue with citizens on the impacts of the economic crisis may have a tangible effect in the long term; this could be accomplished, for instance, by developing better communication on how the EU has dealt with, and is still dealing with, the economic crisis, by organizing public "deliberation" events and by forging strong transnational partnerships for EU communication and exchanges between European citizens and policy actors and stakeholders.

2.3 Individual responses to crisis

This part of the handbook presents the policy-relevant findings of the research conducted under Work Packages 4, 5 and 6 that identified and assessed: (i) individual perceptions, evaluations and responses to crises by private citizens (Work Package 4); (ii) causal effects of different dimensions of crises on citizens' attitudes and behaviours (Work Package 5) and (iii) alternative action organizations (AAOs) and their impact on vulnerable groups and communities (Work Package 6).

Key findings:

► The crisis has intensified Europe's North-South divide.

The findings of a cross-national survey on individual perceptions, evaluations and responses to the recent crisis indicate that countries tend to be differentiated in their public perceptions of the crisis and responses to it on the basis of whether the crisis was deeper or lighter. Countries in which the crisis was lighter, as might be expected, are more positive about economic conditions and are less worried about the crisis. This is not surprising because they also had to suffer fewer consequences, such as having to make drastic cutbacks in the consumption of staples, such as food or medications and visits to the doctor. On the other hand, the situation is more serious in those countries harder hit by the crisis. As such, the findings have shown that people's understanding of and experiences with the crisis vary by the national contexts in which they are situated and whether their countries experienced deeper or lighter economic crises—pointing also to a deep North-South split in Europe.

In recent years, notions of a North-South divide within the EU—in particular, within the Eurozone—have increasingly gained attention in the European discourse. The North-South divide, in our research, is seen in four key areas. The first is when citizens were asked to report their satisfaction with governmental policies in four fields: poverty, unemployment, precarious employment and immigration. The results show that satisfaction levels in all four policy fields are particularly low in Southern European countries—most notably in Greece—as opposed to satisfaction levels reported in the Continental, Scandinavian and Anglo Saxon countries of our sample. Second, when citizens were asked to compare their living standards to those of their parents, most citizens in Continental, Scandinavian and Anglo Saxon countries indicated that they believed their living standards were better vis-à-vis a third of respondents in the Mediterranean and Southern countries, including France, Greece and Italy, and about half in Spain.

Third, citizens were asked to rate living conditions in their own country and then those in the other countries in the project. The results show once again that a small to moderate proportion of citizens in Mediterranean and Southern countries rate living conditions in their own countries as good vis-à-vis an overwhelming majority in Continental, Scandinavian, and in Anglo Saxon countries. Fourth, the proportion of individuals in various countries has to make reductions in consumption as a result of the crisis, and this is taken into consideration. The results show again that reductions were more widespread in Southern European countries as opposed to the Continental, Scandinavian and Anglo Saxon countries of our sample, which the crisis did not affect much.

Clearly, although global in character, the crisis has revealed more about the North-South divide in Europe that we could ever see. Certainly, traces of a North-South divide in the Eurozone with regard to economic fundamentals, such as (youth) unemployment, purchasing power, income per capita or GDP per capita, existed long before the 2008 economic crisis unfolded. However, the dividing lines always seemed bridgeable for the South as the European project promised—from the mid-1990s on—a convergence and the prospect of growth and prosperity. The customs union, the Single Market and the Economic and Monetary Union are all major stages in this process.

The recent crisis seems to have reversed this positive development and has since cast serious doubt on the European integration model of convergence. Even if there should finally be light at the end of the tunnel of the Euro crisis, visible scars will remain, as this division not only reflects pure economic performance but also reflects the resurgence of nationalist stereotyping at the expense of European solidarity. A divided Europe feeds parochialism, stereotyping and, ultimately, extremism. In this respect, **pro-Europe policymakers have to stop taking the North-South divide at face value. Looking into its causes and impact will expose the poverty of Eurosceptic arguments; the technocratic agenda that has driven European policymaking will also receive a reality check.**

► European integration is being threatened by rising nationalism, a lack of inclusive policies and a supranational redistribution agenda.

LIVEWHAT's experimental findings bring to light important insights regarding citizens' support of redistribution and the impact of a crisis on support for nationalism and the EU. Findings have provided clear evidence that individuals' economic experiences and perceptions of the fairness of inequalities that the crisis spurs play a key role in shaping citizens' support of welfare-state redistribution. If deprivation is deep, frustration, distrust and dissatisfaction might find expression in collective action and protest activity. The evidence presented shows that collective action or more generally political participation in its different modes has been found to be significantly affected by the economic crisis in different directions. Moreover, deprivation enhances participation in collective action only when it is group-based, but reduces it when it is strictly personal. This effect of collective deprivation is channelled through moral outrage, and it is independent from the cost of collective action.

As the crisis continues and disillusionment sets in, the effects of rising nationalism, putting increasing pressures on member-state politics, began to unfold. The experimental findings show that the crisis affects national identity and nationalism in different ways for high-status and low-status individuals. Those belonging to the lower classes become more nationalistic when exposed to information about their country's losing its economic status as a country. Conversely, individuals belonging to the upper-middle classes become less so. This helps with understanding the micro-mechanisms behind the idea that ethno-nationalist responses to the economic crisis spread around at these times, especially among those who are more seriously hit by the economic crisis.

What these implications suggest is that the combination of economic crisis, deprivation, defense of national interest at the popular level and incomplete integration at the European level constitutes a particularly damaging cocktail for EU democratic legitimacy. Historically, the project of European integration was the vehicle for building bridges across borders and links between individuals in different countries. Jean Monnet summarized this intention in the phrase "we are uniting people, not forming a coalition of states." The progress was slow, gradual and not without crises, but it has transformed Europe. The EU has become an increasingly important factor in citizens' daily lives. The domain for European policy making has grown. Yet, the public has come to perceive the EU as more and more remote (read technocratic) and national governments as less and less responsive to their concerns—often as a result of EU mandates. This has translated into **increasingly volatile national politics, with the electoral cycling of incumbent governments and the growth of populism, as extremist parties with anti-euro and anti-EU messages get attention, votes and even seats in the European and national parliaments.**

Such toxic politics have been fueled by the EU's North-South divide as seen above, and the EU's poor economic performance. All of these developments have left European

citizens with a vague feeling that the EU is no longer the guarantee for prosperity it once seemed to be. The question is thus "Can the EU rebuild public trust and support for European Integration?" The most common objection to democratizing policy making in the EU is the absence of *demos* or a public sphere. It is claimed that respecting and tolerating political opponents is only possible within nation-states where intense and exclusive bounds between individuals reflect the culture and identity of similar values and preferences. However, this analysis mistakes the results of a historic process for its precondition. Value and preference consensus is the result of common deliberation, and democratic institutions are a necessary condition to make it possible. It is not by coincidence that ethnic strife and violent conflict is more frequent in dictatorial regimes because democratic institutions enable the process of deliberation, which leads to consensus. Overcoming the fragmentation of Europe's polity would require institutions that allow European-wide policy deliberation. Yet, this is apparently not possible as long as no European public sphere—as stressed above—is in place that facilitates the same intensity of communication flows across borders as within nation states. Also, it is not possible as long as the crisis continues and disillusionment sets in.

Present times are not dangerous times yet, but as nationalism is rising—putting increasing pressures on member-state politics—it will become harder and harder to resolve the crisis with innovative ideas about European unification because polarization will increase, not decrease. In this respect, the European Parliament needs to get some "size" in Eurozone governance, building on the fact that its elections now anoint the commission president and have become more of an equal partner, beyond the talking shop to which it has been relegated by its lack of formal role in Eurozone governance. But it needs to do this by also bringing in national parliaments and national citizens into the deliberation process. The EU also must develop better linkages between the EU and national-level representative institutions, and more points of access for citizens in Brussels, to ensure greater responsiveness to citizen input, whether expressed at the national or EU levels. **Today, uniting citizens across Europe means establishing a democracy that allows them to take their destiny into their own hands.**

The EU additionally requires processes that work in ways that encourage inclusiveness of the victims of crisis. Here, the challenge is to find new ways of addressing a general redistributional problem in the EU that will persist in the long term if adequate social and economic responses are not provided, and of governing the Eurozone in a way that works effectively and responds to the will of the citizens. **The emergence of EU redistributive policies calls for a bigger effort to integrate civil society in the decision-making process.** Civil society actors, such as think tanks and NGOs, do have the experience and technical resources necessary to provide much-needed advice, but social movements and educational institutions might have a say, too. With democratic legitimacy in peril, more needs to be done to ensure that citizens have more to say over EU policies and politics.

► AAOs have been turned into a significant buffer against the crisis.

LIVEWHAT data show that the effects of the recent economic crisis—unemployment, exclusion, inequality and poverty—have obliged European citizens to rethink the way in which organized communities meet social needs. The needs of large groups in society in crisis-affected as well as in countries less affected by the crisis are neither met effectively by conventional markets nor by the state. One product of this rethinking has been the emergence of AAOs—formal and informal groups with primarily social objectives—as part of a growing SSE. In all nine countries that LIVEWHAT studied, AAOs were found to complement other channels of providing goods and services. **This includes the reintegration of vulnerable groups into working lives and the extension of social welfare and protection by providing goods and services to address emerging urgent needs.**

What the findings show is that AAOs in all nine countries studied share common features that distinguish them from the public economy and from the conventional for-profit economy. Driven primarily by social-benefit motives as opposed to capital accumulation, these organizations are largely "people-centered." They all aim to pursue combined social and economic objectives, and they share specific operating principles based on participation, solidarity, mutual help, voluntary involvement and collective ownership.

Yet, **if AAOs are not simply to be a response to crisis but rather an effective means to expand and diversify according to each society's needs and dynamic, then policymakers need to put in place the ideas, strategies and ways to learn and adapt to complex and changing circumstances, and not least to external pressures and shocks.** This also involves the ability to produce new goods, innovative services and processes that meet social needs or create new social relationships and collaborations. Seen in this way, the recent growth of AAOs presents the opportunity to: 1) rethink the way of life in a society that suffers from exclusion, inequality and poverty and2) plan more comprehensive and democratic economic and social policies that comprise production inclusion, social equality, poverty eradication and the reduction of wealth concentration.

All in all, AAOs can contribute to designing a new growth model, as they represent another business format based on value like long-term benefit, and the primacy of people over capital. Therefore, **this period of crisis in which we find ourselves is not only a threat but also an opportunity to lay the basis of a better economic model.**

► Not only a buffer but an effective vehicle for empowerment.

Empowerment is an important factor that allows individuals and communities to have a voice and to be represented. Empowerment can be built through a variety of processes and mechanisms. LIVEWHAT's findings show that participation and

membership in AAOs contribute to an empowerment process, individually and collectively. Participants and beneficiaries gain empowerment through their active involvement in the participatory decision-making process within the organization and outside of the organizations when they bargain with external stakeholders.

At the collective level, AAOs also contribute to the empowerment process of individuals and communities by demonstrating that all individuals can become active and productive economic and social actors. Hence while already prominent in Western and Northern Europe, AAOs have considerable grown in Southern European countries over the past years to become a significant economic and social factor across Europe. Nevertheless, **more efforts are required to build and establish a common understanding about the necessity of an SSE-oriented policy-making especially at local, regional, national and EU levels.**

► AAOs cannot work in silos, but enabling policy environments are required.

LIVEWHAT findings show that disabling environments associated with AAO funding, weak initial conditions, assets and competencies have rendered some AAOs, especially in crisis-affected countries not only inherently fragile but also amenable to those populations at the bottom of the ladder in terms of endowments and capabilities. At the same time, the limited political will and capacities of state institutions, including local governments, to craft and implement enabling policies, along with weak governance arrangements and spaces for the co-construction of policy, have impacted the possibilities of designing and implementing collaborations to solve problems. Hence, in crafting synergies and collaborations, the issue is how to ensure that the AAO actor's "voice," or seat at the table actually translates into his or her becoming a player who can effectively influence decision-making processes.

Periods of crisis are accompanied by recovery plans and plans for reforming systems that contributed to the crisis. In this time of crisis recovery, therefore, the promotion of AAOs in decision-making structures and of SSE considerations within policy frameworks is a significant tool for achieving social inclusion and cohesion, from local to European levels. More particularly, **the growth of AAOs and the development of the SSE often require public policies to recognize the particularities and added value of the SSE in economic, social and societal terms (e.g., forms of governance, outreach of vulnerable groups).**

Crucially, creating overall "enabling policy environments" raises some issues, such as how to institutionalize AAOs in governmental structures; the centrality and interfaces of the AAO in other policies; and how to establish permanent and effective mechanisms for AAO participation in policy management, which should be treated cautiously so as to avoid the emergence of antagonistic relations between the AAO and state actors.

► United, we can achieve more.

Strong collaboration between public policymaking and the actions that the growing grassroots experiences of groups of citizens have put forward should be sought to promote a more inclusive and democratic economy that is resilient to crisis**. Isolated organizations and enterprises cannot develop or sustain AAOs. Networking and partnerships are key factors in building a strong, recognized and visible SSE.** More particularly, AAOs need to root themselves in community, mobilize various stakeholders and build strong alliances with social partners and public authorities. Although this process requires a lot of effort on the part of AAO actors, for successful partnerships and networks to emerge, national and regional governments need to acknowledge AAOs' crucial role in the provision of goods and service because of their capacity to mobilize resources from the community and within the marketplace to achieve public benefit. AAOs' capacity to produce innovative solutions to complex problems should become the focus of territorial policy and of interventions aiming to support AAOs and local communities in creating strategic planning processes and collective projects. Admittedly, developing strong partnerships and networks is not an overnight miracle; it requires a long-term vision and a strategic plan that allows different stakeholders to work together successfully. On their end, AAOs need to step up their efforts to network among themselves at the local, national and European levels. Through their federations and networks, they may enhance their representation and collaboration capacities.

On the part of policy makers, efforts are required to determine what is required to create strong networks and partnerships with AAOs, adapted to their countries' specific realities and SSE potential. For instance, networks that practice *inclusiveness* are expected to be the most successful in developing new public policy and in creating development tools for the emerging AAOs. Because they are better able to show the scope and the depth of the SSE in different country contexts, networks that are able to bring together a wide variety of AAOs and other stakeholders will, in the end, manage to initiate social dialogue with government and other social partners. Furthermore, given the different national experiences, the emergence of new networks may often be the result of the *flexibility* of existing AAO structures. Clearly, "one size does not fit all," as different national policy and legal frameworks and governance structures are expected to impact on the emergence, effectiveness and sustainability of new networks. Building from the bottom up to take into account new realities and diverse approaches is characteristic of sustainable networks and partnerships. Moreover, *transparent, participatory governance* is a characteristic of dynamic networks, particularly in the case of new networks. Member participation is the basis for the activities of emerging networks and continues to be essential for established networks to be able to identify priorities and to satisfactorily carry out mandates of representation and promotion. Lastly, **the strongest networks are those based on local and regional structures that are rooted in communities and territorial realities.** Such networks will benefit from the support of a wide range

of partners, and their contribution to socio-economic development and inclusive growth will be clearly demonstrated in the field.

► AAOs' grassroots experiences offer some good practices that are intuitive in terms of eliciting positive impact on society and policy-making.

LIVEWHAT findings strongly underscore noteworthy, good practices from national AAO responses to the crisis about the conditions and contexts that enable AAOs to realize their potential, address contemporary social challenges and act as effective actors in policymaking and agents of social change. A key conclusion from these good practices, which are presented below, is that the promotion of AAOs in decision-making structures and of SSE considerations within policy frameworks is a significant tool for achieving social inclusion and cohesion, from local to European levels. It requires that public policies created to support the development of AAOs at the European, national and local levels are dynamic—constantly evolving in response to changing social conditions—as well as demand the strong and active participation of AAO actors in their planning, execution and monitoring. In crafting synergies and collaborations, the issue is how to ensure that the AAO actor's "voice," or his or her seat at the table, actually translates into his or her becoming a player who can effectively influence decision-making processes and social change through collective action ("co-production").

Inventory of good and socially innovative practices

(Data drawn from the interviews with AAOs participants in the nine countries studied by LIVEWHAT)

AAOs successfully adapting to new needs

Spain and Italy

"Things can't go on as they have before"

In Southern European countries, the loss of jobs caused by the recent crisis meant not only the loss of incomes but also an increase in vulnerability, especially in countries without strong social safety nets. In **Spain**, the crisis has given rise to new social vulnerabilities involving rising numbers of people experiencing in-work poverty, with economic constraints forcing them to work in increasingly precarious jobs or pushing them down the slippery slope into unemployment, demoralization and despair. These and other concerns relating to market and state failures have opened up the space for adaptation. The issue of adaptation here relates to the question of institutional and social innovation. This requires having the ideas, strategies and ways and means of learning and adapting to complex and changing circumstances, and not least to external pressures and shocks. It also involves the ability to produce new goods, services and processes that meet social needs or to create new social relationships and collaborations.

In this respect, AAOs in Spain have been adapting in three main ways:

First, most interviewed AAO participants said they came to realize that, in working with vulnerable people as well as helping people, they try to **give them the skills** necessary for improving their living conditions, including their household economies, their nutrition and psychological help. The reason given for working on empowerment rather than dependency on subsidies is that, whereas their campaigns and projects were designed mainly to cover the increasing material needs of people at the onset of the crisis, after some years, the organizations observed that people did not improve their living conditions and instead relied on the subsidies. Thus, working on people's skills is seen as an investment to allow people to find a way out of poverty. For example, one interviewee said that his organization used to have a service to help people to find jobs, but four years ago, it introduced some changes to its employment advice projects. Apart from helping people to find jobs, the organization also teaches them new skills, such as IT, perseverance in tasks and assertiveness. It also has a small company where people can gain work experience and practice their new skills, giving them more chances to keep jobs in the future.

Second, organizations have **developed new projects** based on the increase in the population's economic needs. Many of the organizations interviewed work with the concept of "energy poverty," which consists of not having the capacity to pay for basic utility services: water, electricity and gas. The increase in poverty means that some families/individuals can no longer afford these supplies, causing a sharp deterioration in their living conditions. One of the interviewed AAOs is a cooperative that offers electricity produced with renewable sources of energy. The cooperative signed an agreement with some city councils that families whose electricity supply was about to be shut off could receive electricity through the specific AAO. Another example more based on advocacy is the official energy poverty petition (Popular Legislative Initiative) that involved many associations. They worked to understand the extent of energy poverty in Catalonia and then worked on collecting signatures, and finally, they defended and negotiated the law in the Autonomous Catalan Parliament, which they saw passed.

Third, the focus is on **raising awareness** about the concept of "social and solidarity economy." AAOs are currently implementing projects to explain SSE to young people and children by emphasizing how a social and solidarity economy is fundamentally about reasserting social control or "social power" (Wright 2010) over the economy by giving primacy to social and often environmental objectives above profits, emphasizing the place of ethics in economic activity and rethinking economic practice in terms of democratic self-management and active citizenship.

The same tendency can be detected in **Italy**. A set of AAO participants interviewed said that they have as a core element of their initiatives and projects the idea of an alternative model of consumption and, in general, economy. Activities include the organization of solidarity-based purchasing groups, the management of fair-trade shops and the creation of a vast network of farmers and consumers who are able to grow food, following the principle of organic agriculture and of 0-km trade, and to sell it in different spaces in the city, from social centers to public squares.

A recent **experiment** in the field of agriculture is an AAO that involves a collective of former agronomy students that has occupied an abandoned state-owned farm in the outskirts of the city and is now working it following the principles of self-management, treating it as a common. The activities of the organization include the production and commerce of food, laboratories of agriculture for the public and the distribution of small portion of lands to local families as self-managed gardens. The idea of self-management informs the story of another interviewed AAO participant as well, an occupied factory that follows the example of the "recuperated factories" in Argentina in a rather different context given the fact that the last owners took away all the machines: Its initiatives include all sorts of activities, from renting space to recycling, with the goal of providing incomes for the workers of the cooperative and of promoting principles and practices of self-management as an alternative to the crisis. At the same time, self-managed spaces become laboratories in which different initiatives and projects take place, from labor-related assistance to healthcare aid, from legal services to informal education, and from hospitality of refugees to 0-km markets.

Overall, these forms of **solidarity-driven adaptation** have reinforced people's **resilience** and fuelled **collective forms** of **coping**, **producing** and the **provisioning** of social services, calling into question conventional wisdom about growth and social welfare models.

AAOs striving for empowerment

Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.

Sweden and Greece

In **Sweden**, **empowerment is generated through education** and is encouraged via several Swedish language courses, helping people to learn to read and write or to provide the traineeship in various enterprises or inside the organization. For example, beneficiaries can be part of cooking in the soup kitchen, can help in the social café and social supermarket and can engage in cultural and handicraft practices. One of the interviewees recalled a comment form one child: *"My mom is* working *in X."*

"There is no tool for social change more effective than the empowerment of people"

This idea and experience of "working" rather than studying or participating was considered something very important for the self-esteem of the beneficiaries by several interviewees. Several of the interviewed organizations proudly noted that their trainee-programs have helped people to find permanent jobs and to have more choices and control in their lives.

For AAOs in **Greece**, **self-actualization** is a need satisfied when the individual is given opportunities to be **creative** and **skillful**. The mission of AAOs offering social tutorials is to provide learning opportunities to children from families that have been hit by the economic crisis, to improve their school performances and help them to succeed on university entrance exams.

Also, AAOs for the protection of the youth address young people who experience or are at risk of social exclusion, such as young prisoners, young Roma, young immigrants, young unemployed and young women, to whom they provide support services for **empowerment** and **capacity-building**.

AAOs effectively influencing policymaking

"Together, everyone achieves more" is about building relationships with people in authority and speaking with them about particular issues or community needs.

UK

"Together everyone achieves more''

Strongly apparent across all of the organizations interviewed in the **UK** was that links to other actors in the field were considered utterly crucial for operating properly as a third-sector organization and for effectively influencing decision-making. All organizations **actively forged connections** with other voluntary third-sector groups as well as with the relevant state bodies, especially the police, MPs and local government, NHS and clinical commissioning groups, GPs, etc.

Often, it felt like implicitly, and in many cases explicitly, a large part of providing a service to people was actually in the bringing together of organizations to work more effectively, especially between the state and the third sector. No organization thought it could operate in a vacuum, and most stressed the need to be on good terms with the local authority and any relevant government bodies.

In many cases, the state and the voluntary sector, when dealing with the vulnerable or marginalized groups, which were the focus of the service, provided two different types of safety nets. The characteristic of the net depends on the group in question, but often the state provided the legal, rights-based protection, while the third sector provided frontline intervention (a homeless shelter, a refuge, a parcel of food) or information and resources for the beneficiary to access state services more effectively. In this sense, much of the third-sector emphasis at a strategic level was to better weave these two safety nets together. For the most part, **the more closely they worked together**, **the more efficient** it was perceived to be.

Sweden

In **Sweden**, the core ideal for the majority of the organizations is equality or the idea that people should be helped regardless of their social, political, ethnic, religious or sexual backgrounds. **Equality** is emphasized even when groups have mentioned that their aims are to guarantee the rights of different groups, for example, children's rights or the right to accommodation.

"Seeking to influence the policies and practices of the powerful"

Yet, in addition to aiming for equality and social work—solving the basic problems of food and accommodation—most interviewed AAOs, noted that it is important to work with political advocacy to **educate public and policymakers** about the problems their beneficiaries have and the reasons for these problems. This can work via writing "letters to the editor" in the main newspapers, participating in larger public opinion campaigns (e.g., "World Aids Day") or responding to various requests for information about beneficiaries from the state actors.

More particularly, **political advocacy** for many interviewed AAOs works mainly via two channels: direct contact with policymakers and public campaigns. There is also some significant networking with other groups, which could be seen as a part of organizational development and capacity building. One example is telling here:

> *We help to put important questions to the national agenda, we represent their* [women's] *voice, we tell to politicians that these women have these particular problems – they cannot say that to the Minister of Equality themselves - they never meet him.*

Also, some interviewees participated in lobbying actions, such as the annual *Almedal Week*, which facilitates contacts between civil society and politicians. Others are frequently included in the municipal or state discussion groups about social problems. Some respondents also noted that the recent economic and refugee crises have increased the need for organizations' knowledge and information for the state and regions. As one representative noted:

> *We have an important role* [in the policy process] […] *especially now when municipality wants to know more about our beneficiaries (homeless people) and invites us to participate in several of their panels.*

The outcomes of political lobbying were already noted above, and several groups indicated their influential role in the policy process, especially in promoting several legislations regarding women's rights and asylum issues. Changing public opinion and policies is obviously a hard task, and organizations do not really discuss which of their actions are the most effective. Rather, they emphasize the combined set of actions, such as media campaigns and direct meetings with politicians. These last are also typical for any civil society organizations in Sweden.

Furthermore, several AAO groups provide judicial help and help their beneficiaries to write official letters of appeal to the court after negative decisions from, for example, the migration authorities. One respondent noted happily: *We often write letters to authorities* […] *Last week we actually won against the Migration Agency!*

Hence, the way in which concepts and ideas **inform policy and strategy** is important. AAO and state actors are **instrumental** in terms of mobilizing resources for productive and social ends. State institutions are very important cooperation partners for the Swedish organizations, as most interviewees noted. Only one interviewee noted having no relations with the municipality, and a few noted that they have very little funding from the state. The organizations that collaborate or cooperate with state institutions are generally seeking with, and on behalf of, disadvantaged people to bring equality and to support good development through **influencing the policies and practices of the powerful**.

AAOs work at three levels: the **national, regional and municipal levels**. The large nation-wide groups work directly with the political elite, being participants in parliamentary committees or advisory groups for particular state agencies. Those groups that work mainly with health issues cooperate with various hospitals organized at the regional level in Sweden. What is

more, the majority of the examined AAOs have close contacts with various municipal agencies, such as those working with the issues of social services, culture and city planning. In this way, local NGOs have become more involved in on-ground programs involving community-based mobilization, capacity building, awareness raising, etc. The purpose of this **networking and coordination** with local and regional actors is to develop a strong voice on critical issues, or as one interviewee stated, *…to fight and make visible poverty and alienation in the society.*

Poland

"Acting together to produce results"

The **co-production** and **co-construction** of public policies referring both to the participation of AAO and to market actors in the implementation of public policies (for example, services management and supply) and to actors' participation in defining and drawing up policies (determining general policy lines and key elements) is a key factor in the delivery of results. These practices provide a major opportunity for democratizing the economy, and public policies in particular, by introducing forms of governance based on the participation of AAO and market actors. In addition, in this context, AAO actors are no longer confined to the role of passive service consumers.

The contribution of AAO actors is particularly promising in this area as the Polish case demonstrated. In **Poland**, the "co-construction" of policy, the cooperation among AAO actors, working alongside other labor market and civil society actors, and the state combined with political advocacy are key mechanisms for ensuring that **public policy** is effectively **informed by knowledge**.

Examples of co-construction include:

- the developing of a local method of social consultations in the neighborhood (informal policy-oriented group),
- contributing to several local projects funded from a participatory budgeting system (formal service organization),
- developing a policy scheme on public deliberation, adopted formally by one of the ministries (formal policy-oriented organization),
- developing a regional granting and simultaneously networking scheme in which applicants for grants evaluate all competing projects. This turned out to be trust-building and contributed to merging similar but complementary projects into bigger and more successful ones in the region (formal service oriented organization),
- several examples of municipalities implementing solutions against air pollution, promoting social consultations, etc. (policy-oriented organizations),
- significant contribution to passing national law on: spatial planning, social integration, social economy policies, etc. (formal service-oriented and formal policy-oriented organizations).

Such co-construction examples encompass **various dimensions of the political**, including voice, contestation, advocacy, negotiation, networking, and building and sustaining coalitions and alliances. In short, as a result of the practice of getting AAO stakeholders to the table to be consulted, AAO interviewees stressed that they have made the issues on which they work (global injustice, air pollution, developers destroying the city) significantly **more present** in the public discourse.

AAOs creatively using facts to influence policy

UK and France

"Knowledge is power"

"Knowledge is power" can be an important source of AAO activity as noted by **UK** interviewees who emphasized the professionalization focus on **feedback and data collection in several AAO initiatives**, such as: At a children's hospice, a partnership with a nearby IT company had introduced electronic feedback (e-feedback) on tablets, which the parents were able to fill in; a homeless organization used a national database (CHAIN) to collect data on rough sleepers; infrastructure agencies frequently surveyed their members, etc.

In **France**, various forms of **knowledge-driven activities** have been noted. One of these consists of the **collaboration with, and support of**, universities and research centers so as to further shared projects. An AAO representative, in this regard, said:

> *This phenomenom is widespread in France. There are some national associations which specialized themselves in the participation to scientific projects co-directed together with scholars from the academic world. We also do that sometimes. It is useful in order to illustrate and publicly expose the situation. We take part in national and international academic conferences and we host and receive scholars and keep in touch with them. The work we do, this way, is to build networks and expose the situation with credible sources and scientific data to back up our claims.*

In the words of another AAO interviewee:

> *Besides, to work with scholars allow us to reflect on our very activities from the outside. When you work in a hurry you have no time to stop and reflect, and in that professional researchers can sometimes be helpful.*

To effectively exploit the data collected, it is important to consider the target audience whom those conducting advocacy want to influence. One of the interviewees, for example, has put emphasis on the collection of data over the specific problems that illegal migrants face when trying to gain access to the state welfare to informthe public aboutthis issue. This work of the education of citizens is an important step with a view of pressuring the government into the undertaking of specific choices and the elaboration of overall policies.

AAOs growing into changemakers

Italy

While awareness about the crisis's adverse impacts on vulnerable populations in crisis-affected countries grows, AAO activities are performed to support change significantly widen.

In **Italy**, while some interviewed AAOs are well aware that the direct effect

"From ideas to impacts"

of their initiatives in terms of bringing about change is limited by structural factors, by the fact they are small volunteers' organisations and by the fact that they are unable to face all of the issues that the economic crises in their communities have generated, they consider what they do to be particularly relevant because it creates the conditions for **reconstructing the social fabric** that the crises have weakened.

A representative of an AAO explained in this way the outcome of its initiative on the local community:

> *For the Roma we are really the only place where they can go. In Campania there is a rather big problem with healthcare assistance to foreign minors. If parents do not have a residence, or a job, when children are sick they have to be brought to the emergency room, when the law establishes that minor have to be assisted even if they are illegal or anyway without a residence. For them it is really clear that we are their only reference, so it is easy to understand the usefulness. Then I was really happy to have a positive feedback from the people of the neighbourhood, that appreciate the fact that they can come here, even only to talk about the problems they have. The people thanks us, even only to have chosen this place, that does not have many services.*

Concurrently, activists belonging to more politicised AAOs tend to go beyond the direct outcomes of their action, when asked about turning their ideas into impact on the community, and to underline the relevance of alternative action to **recreate social ties**, **creating a sense of community**, that they consider fundamental for **political action.**

A very clearly example comes from a representative of an AAO, who stated that:

> *The ambulatory allows you to be recognisable in the neighbourhood and to transmit some messages. […] It is nice, when we do the ambulatory there is these groups of ten people waiting, there are the ladies, the migrants, there are very funny scenes. And it gives you the chance to talk: "Madam, do you know that they are closing the hospital?", and you can start transmitting, in a very simple way, some messages. And we organised the rally against the closure of the hospital, some of them came, in solidarity. It is not the thing that will make you do the revolution, but…*

The relationship between direct and indirect outcomes and the **capacity for change** is analysed by an activist of another Italian AAO, who stressed that:

> *We want to give immediately an answer, that can be an answer of solidarity, with the activities, that in some way are services that should be provided by public institutions, and that now are not granted. But at the same time we do not want to limit ourselves to give an immediate answer, as a resistance to the crisis, but we want to build, based on*

these resistances, a project that challenges the municipality on some small struggles that we can conduct. […] We aim first of all to reconstruct an immediate resistance to the problems the crisis has brought us to face. But above all we want to make so that this kind of resistance can create a recomposition of all the subjects that have no voice in the political dynamics of our territory and of country, and rebuild from below an encompassing political project.

In the end, transforming ideas into concrete impacts in the context of the economic crisis seems to be for many AAOs an opportunity for building their **capacity for change.** Not only doAAOs tend to propose initiatives and projects that are partially replacing the role of the state, and from which public institutions may learn more than something, but also these projects prove to be significant **learning experiences** for the organisations themselves and for the people involved in them.

Greece

"Bringing innovation to people"

In **Greece**, as an outcome of the crisis, the increase in the number of beneficiaries has led to the establishment of criteria and evidence-based decision-making in AAOs' beneficiary groups. This is the case of AAOs with social tutorial missions and those working for families. The opposite, however, occurs, when an AAO avoids determining beneficiaries to stay clear of stigmatization. This is observed in the case of social kitchens, which do not distinguish between participants and beneficiaries, thus reinforcing the **transformational character** of **co-participation** at the forefront. Hence, whoever wants to share the experience of cooking and eating altogether is welcomed to take part as a participant and a beneficiary of a social kitchen, as an interviewee stressed:

It does not matter who you are and where you come from; what matters is that we are human. Those who believe humans are all equal, do have a position in the social kitchen […] The homeless could find food but wanted to have a company, they don't want others to feel pity for them and give them food as they feed dogs [...] An owner of a multinational company came and I told him I will accept his contribution, given that he would come to cook and eat with us together on the road; indeed he came and cooked with us and ate in the plastic bowls.

AAOs are generally characterized by their disposition to identify societal needs and to invent **new** and **unconventional ways** of satisfying them. **Flexibility** is crucial for the survival and success of AAOs, as awareness on what to expect is limited. AAOs' potential for innovation relates to their objectives, which can be divided into three categories: first, to help others, second, to recommend alternative forms of organizing the socioeconomic life and, third, to defend rights (individual, social and ecological).

In **Greece**, the provision of goods and services to those in need of support includes a broad spectrum of **humanitarian and solidarity projects**, such as soup kitchens; the provision of clothing, food and commodities; monetary support; the provision of shelter, medical and educational services; and accounting and legal services, transfer facilities, counselling and

psychological support. Formal service-provision oriented AAOs undertake this kind of action, such as the charitable fund of the Greek Orthodox Church, AAOs working for children and family protection, and groups and collectivities that do not constitute legal entities, such as social clinics, AAOs with social tutorial missions and local networks for the support of the poor. It is not rare, however, to find **policy advocacy**–oriented groups performing such actions, such as groups for the support of migrants, which collect apparel and offer language tutorials for migrant populations.

Within the activities and projects that the abovementioned AAOs have implemented, there are initiatives with an **innovative character**. For instance, the Church in cooperation with an academic team undertakes a program of the homeless' social inclusion; they find shelter for homeless people in different locations of the city to avoid ghettoization phenomena. Moreover, a program that a municipality's social service with the collaboration of AAOs has undertaken includes granting vegetable gardens both to families (based on social criteria) and to public services, such as day nurseries, thus contributing to making them self-contained but also encouraging social learning. Yet, another innovative initiative concerns food delivery to poor students, via the introduction of a method that assures the anonymity of beneficiaries, as a representative of an AAO noted:

> *In a school with 150 children, some of them are chosen to be given food for free, but nobody knows. So the child goes to the canteen and gets it – he knows he will go there every noon at the break to get a sandwich and an orange for free. […] but nobody knows the child is not paying in the canteen.*

AAOs working for children protection also develop innovative initiatives. One of them is the provision of medical and dental services to children who live in distant and inaccessible areas, through the conversion of a truck to a small medical center that travels all over Greece. Another initiative encourages adolescent voluntarism through participation in campaigns on teenagers' issues, such as smoking prevention, the environment and internet safety. Another one concerns family reunification actions for refugees, and yet another project involves activities for the daycare of children from poor families, as one interviewee emphasized:

> *We take the children from their home in the morning, accompany them to school, take care of their medical needs, their reading, their food, their clothes, their entertainment and in the afternoon their parents pick them. Social workers and psychologists help children in this structure. At the same time, they help parents to recover, e.g. to find a job.*

Concerning the projects that AAOs working for the support of families introduced, these include: a charity shop, a program of parental counseling through experiential parent workshops in public schools, a hall of residence for students from poor families and the dispatching of goods to refugee camps together with the organization of art workshops.

AAOs working for youth largely undertake projects that aim to encourage

artistic expression as a means of creativity, participation and social inclusion. Most of them have an educational character, such as theater, music, cinema, dance, handicraft and photography classes. In addition, they operate tutorials and language classes together with programs of psychological and social support for migrants and refugees, while a mobile primary school class with interactive elements represents one of their most innovative initiatives.

Innovative initiatives are developed not only with respect to the main activity of AAOs but also for the accomplishment of **complementary aims**. For instance, social kitchens apart from food delivery are also undertaking projects to help people in need, such as finding and organizing spaces for the homeless to serve their basic needs, and organizing social tutorials for pupils from poor families. Similarly, social clinics, apart from medical services, undertake activities for the support of refugees but also for the support of other AAOs, such as social kitchens and work collectives. One such project includes the purchase of coupons from a social economy grocery and their provision to refugees and to social kitchens. Another initiative aimed at promoting tolerance toward refugees includes the organization of outdoor interactive activities and artistic events in which both refugee and native populations participate.

There are also **unconventional and eco-friendly initiatives** that facilitate production, non-capitalistic principles, non-hierarchical relationships and non-mediated economic exchange. These initiatives include the introduction of time banks, alternative currencies and crypto-currencies, trade without intermediaries, decision-making through the establishment of assemblies and alternative ways of building. In what follows, the representative of the integral cooperative described how the alternative currency system operates:

> *[There is a] platform in which all members are registered, essentially it includes the balance of each member, our wallet in alternative currency which tells you your purchases, your coins, if the balance is negative or positive and it records in a transparent manner all changes in an account.*

Moreover, the networks of consumers-producers are projects of community-supported agriculture, which establish an electronic channel of direct communication between producers and consumers, aiming to **strengthen local production**. Together with the electronic platform, their members organize public communication events, such as public talks, in-farm events and participation in eco-fests.

Concurrently, **knowledge diffusion** initiatives seem to be particularly important for AAOs. The target of communication may be not only citizens but also other new AAOs, as a representative of an AAO stressed:

> *We organize a sustainability workshop […] in which we share our experience and help people who are either starting now or have already started but do not know how to address issues of internal operation, such as how to organize themselves, how to make collectively decisions in the assembly, about subgroups, members' commitments etc. This is one part. The other part is the practical one, including costing and issues regarding the operation of the*

cooperative. And another one is the political part.

Last but not least, social cooperatives and work collectives often undertake initiatives at the organizational level. **Bonding** and **collective identity-building** are important in collective ventures upon which the livelihoods of participants depends. For instance, a participant of a local bio-farming cooperative describes the establishment of a conscience support group that deals with all issues concerning the cooperative's values, philosophy and principles of operation.

Working together to produce results

France, Sweden and Greece

Organizational complementarity describes a configuration in which the viability of an organizational entity is strongly or entirely conditioned by the existence of several other organizational entities and forms such that their conjunction offers **greater resilience** and **better performance** compared with alternative configurations. A focus on AAO organizational complementarity brings us to the heart of organizational synergies.

"Organizational complementarities matter"

In **France**, for instance, there is extensive AAO engagement in the establishment of networks. Several different AAOs**work together** and pooltheir efforts so as to face the economic crisis and **increase the visibility** of their actions and initiatives. In doing so, the causes that different organizations commonly support become more visible *vis-à-vis*policy elites and public power representatives, for example, through jointly arranged demonstrations, events and communications.This eventualy comes down to the establishment of **new associative spaces** where different organizations can work together. Some associations, for example, have engaged in squatting inan old, abandoned hospital in Paris. They have used the building to work together for welcoming homeless people. The place has also become a place for cultural exchange, where many meetings, assemblies and events are held. Also important is **"sustained participation,"** i.e., the involvement of prior beneficiaries—both in terms of knowledge about the beneficiaries and the help they need.

In **Sweden**, from 2011 to 2015, there was a significant change in terms of information and contact with help organizations for asylum-seekers thanks to the experience and cooperation of different AAOs. Scaling up sustained participation through AAO networks has **strengthened AAO capacity**, helped fieldworkers to better **identify good practices** for supporting people in need and facilitated the **sharing of experiences** outside of the network.

In **Greece,** cooperation is generally sought with the **local administration**, which is seen as supportive. With regard to AAOs' relation with other groups, it seems that **cooperation and networking** is a basic element for them to **develop their activity**, to **get to know better** their field or for knowledge **exchange purposes**. Cooperation is usually met among groups of the same or relevant activity as well as of the same region. For instance, organizations that have families with children as their target populations cooperate with teachers and parents' associations but also with groups of a more specialized interest, such as with groups of breastfeeding support,

which happens in the case of a local network for supporting the poor. In a similar vein, social clinics cooperate with neighboring organizations of the same action field but also with other local collectivities and citizens groups. Likewise, social cooperatives and work collectives report having assisted new ventures by lending them know-how. AAOs are also actively seeking partnerships with other AAOs through **networking**, which is usually attained through participation in festivals (e.g., eco-festivals, alternative economy festivals) that accommodate workshops, public talks and artistic events, where different types of AAOs get to know one another and **share their experiences.**

AAOs valuing success

Greece

"Caring for people in need in a changing society"

Success in the area of SSE can be attributed both to the services the AAOs provide and the promises they deliver, namely an economy that meets needs on a sustainable basis by putting people and communities ahead of profits and by delivering economic performance while upholding the values of solidarity.

In this respect, in **Greece**, amidst the economic crisis, AAOs that orientate themselves toward service provision, such as charitable funds of the Greek Orthodox Church, social clinics and AAOs with social tutorial missions, ascribe their success to the **outcomes** of their actions, namely **relief for those in need**. On the other hand, for AAOs such as social cooperatives and work collectives, their survival and continuation are valued as a success in its own right. Furthermore, for pressure groups, such as environmental organizations and advocates of vulnerable groups, success is usually connected to the achievement of their **political aims**. Our interviews, however, reveal that, particularly for informal AAOs, what is valued at most, thus being recognized as a success, is when they achieve remaining loyal to their missions, reaching the public, promoting **solidarity** and an **alternative model of economic growth** vis-à-vis current austerity, motivating people to make **informed choices** and effectively helping them to (as an AAO representative stressed):

> *…Take their lives into their hands, to define their needs and, even in very difficult times, to dream and to look at some prospects and make something themselves.*


HOPE

PART 3 Key policy pointers

LIVEWHAT policy pointers targeted at European Institutions and the European Commission, National and Local Governments, and Civil Society Actors - invite us to reflect more broadly on how to achieve their determination not only to restore inclusive growth but to lay the foundation for better Europe, not less Europe.

Key Policy Pointers

3.1 European Institutions and the EU Commission

✓ **Listen and Engage**

EU leaders and parliamentarians must listen and engage actively with those citizens and groups whose voices have been neglected and they have been systematically left out of national discourses on the crisis. European institutions and the EU Commission need to understand and respond better to people's concerns and propose a new, positive vision of Europe. Everyone, perhaps most importantly the young, needs to be more actively involved in decisions that have an impact on European citizens' future.

✓ **Work for Better, not Less Europe**

It is not 'too much Europe' that have alienated people, leaving them feeling disempowered and left behind, but current economic policies of reducing deficits and boosting 'competitiveness' that have eroded the European Social Model and promoted too narrow an interpretation of growth. A 'better Europe' is where a relaunch of the European Social Model creates tangible benefits for all countries of Europe and not just for the affluent ones.

✓ **Provide Stronger Political Leadership**

This recommendation is about action today – to respond to people's concerns; to abate the fears and looming threats of tomorrow. Provide stronger leadership by addressing the impact of the current economic crisis on citizens' well-being so as to ensure that the EU is seen as leading the solution going forward rather than being part of the problem.

This should involve:

→ **Rolling out "European in character" redistributional policies**, such as an EU Framework on Minimum/living wages with a view to effectively combating poverty and facilitating inclusion in the labor market, and an EU Unemployment Benefit. Whilst the current EU Treaties explicitly exclude EU Directives in the area[1] of minimum wages, the proposal could become a focus in negotiations on Treaty change if supported by social partners. Currently, it could be implemented as a voluntary framework, underpinned by collective bargaining. An EU framework should be underpinned by a benchmark of 60% of average wages and offer a positive hierarchy in relation to adequate minimum income. It should be indexed to the real costs of goods and services and the inflation rate (Eurofound 2014). Moreover, the idea of an EU unemployment benefit was initially proposed through an EC Communication on the Social Dimension of the EU, and would provide a key EU automatic stabilizer that could reduce imbalances in the Eurozone, as well as ensuring workers have decent income support through initial periods of unemployment. The duration of unemployment benefit should be at least 18 months and seamlessly overlap with minimum income and other benefits to ensure adequate income support, regardless of their age or situation (EAPN 2016).

→ **Increasing co-ordination and facilitation** to bring together countries with similar issues and challenges and support cross-European sharing of information and solutions. Also encourage a pan-European approach to participatory citizenship that involves working with other European institutions and European countries beyond the EU.

→ **Strengthening strategic funding** by creating spaces for more cross-European dialogue and activity, particularly among NGOs and citizens at the grassroots level; providing greater information and access for young people and hard-to-reach groups in member state countries; and encouraging the sharing of experiences and solutions through exchange programs and the funding of more cross-European research in order to strengthen the evidence base on which to make policy decisions in this area.

→ **Providing leadership to encourage developments in the social and solidarity economy.** Leadership and support from the EU for social and solidarity economy initiatives would benefit both people in need of support (through health and social care programs) and societies in general, and this would be consistent with the Social Investment Package (SIP) published in 2013. Social and solidarity economy initiatives could also provide valuable employment opportunities for people who belong to disadvantaged groups. This is especially relevant when many countries are finding it difficult to meet the various targets set under the Europe 2020 Strategy.

[1] Article TFEU 153, 5 excludes EU competence on pay.

→ **Explaining clearly to citizens why it is important that they make EU policy choices** by voting in the European elections, not only to show their support for the common values of democracy, human rights, social cohesion and tolerance that underpin European citizenship and ensure the continued legitimacy of the EU and its institutions, but also to have a voice and to influence the direction of policy. Developing a specific campaign that explains how the European Parliament works and what MEPs do, underlines the importance of voting, reinforces the link between the EU and citizens and strengthens the EU's democratic future against rising populism appeals to exclusionary nationalisms and nativist rhetoric.

→ **Promoting particular initiatives** that are aimed at disadvantaged groups and groups harder hit by the crisis, and explaining clearly why they should engage with and participate in the elections.

→ **Using social media and networking** to engage young people with the key issues that are dominating European politics, such as the economic crisis, youth unemployment and the future of the EU, so that they come to understand how the European Parliament and their MEPs are central to the solution of these issues and how they are linked to policies and political institutions at the national and local level.

✓ Support Inclusive Growth

Support Member States in efforts to promote growth and jobs, fight poverty and social exclusion, and promote equality and solidarity – both at the EU level in the EU treaties (Article 3 TEU), with instruments such as the Europe 2020 Strategy, and at the international level with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Supporting full participation in society and empowerment for all, it may also help people to regain faith in politics and in the EU project.

The Treaty of Maastricht, establishing the European Community, introduced among its fundamental objectives the "European Union's ability to achieve the promotion of a high level of social protection," but also the improvement of living standards and quality of life, and additionally, "economic and social cohesion, as well as solidarity between Member States" (Principles, Article 2). The EU Commission has also acknowledged the long-term positive economic and social returns of investing in social policies and services in its recent proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights.

However, despite these commitments, we have seen trends of widening gaps between north and south in social and economic terms. These trends pre-date the financial crisis, but their aggravation has not been accidental; it is largely the result of policy responses made in recent years, with reforms of social protection systems increasingly leading to cuts in the social sector, and austerity measures aimed at

boosting competitiveness, causing a downward spiraling of social standards that in turn further fuels the economic and social crisis.
More concerted effort is needed to put forward the EU's social objectives. This should include:

→ **Prioritizing social investment** - Social investment has a positive, preventive impact on people's health and well-being, ensuring long-term savings for public budgets and improving the labor force's skills. This may include inter alia the introduction of common social standards at the EU level[2], emphasizing that inclusive societies are more resilient societies and recognizing that inclusive growth is not only about the most effective ways of promoting growth, but also about closing the gaps between those who are powerful and better-off and those who are poor and excluded.

→ **Ensuring better integration of crisis-affected groups** - We have seen that the reforms carried out by certain European countries have worsened the chances for those in the beginning of their labor career. Tens of millions of young people, especially in Southern European countries, are about to leave school and enter a depressed labor market. A lack of decent work opportunities at an early age may permanently compromise the future employment prospects of youth. A number of policy instruments needs to be adapted in order to allow early detection of change and elaboration of rapid responses. For example, the Youth Guarantee should be dedicated to the development of decent jobs[3] and not just used to deliver a technical increase in the employment rate, and the EU Commission should monitor the efficiency of EU funds spent on labor market integration of young people, especially in terms of long-term effects of support received, as evidenced by the quality and sustainability of the jobs concerned.

In addition, in light of the growing proportion of precarious jobs among the new jobs offered across Europe, the EU Commission should include measures to ensure adequate social protection and the quality of jobs when putting forward proposals and recommendations promoting the mobility of people. This includes developing a clear and common EU definition of "quality of jobs," facilitating access to social protection arrangements (for example, to unemployment benefits as well as to other income support for those who work but are at risk of in-work poverty). Moreover, while the issue of the definition of quality jobs has been raised on a number of occasions at the Union level (e.g. the Junker Investment Plan), a serious approach

[2] Important social standards are quality and sustainable employment, adequate income support throughout the life cycle and universal access to quality and affordable care, social, health, housing, education and life-long learning services (see SOCIAL PLATFORM, "EU Social Standards" Position Paper, 2016).

[3] "This involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families ... better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns..." (International Labour Organization, 2007, p.4)

using common indicators has not yet been finalized. In this context, it is difficult to measure disparities between Member States. Quality jobs should constitute an integral part of achieving the "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" that the Europe 2020 Strategy is intended to deliver. A key message from the OECD's Employment Outlook 2014 is that "policies should seek to promote more and better jobs" (p.17). This is supported by the finding from their recent research that "Across countries it does not appear to be the case that better job quality is achieved at the cost of fewer jobs. Countries that perform well in terms of overall job quality also tend to perform well on job quantity (as measured by the employment rate), and vice versa" (p.81). The renewed attention given to this issue in the Commission's latest Employment and Social Developments in Europe (2014) report is promising.

These actions would be in line with the Active Inclusion Recommendation (2008/867/EC), according to which income support or access to services should not only be available to those who are unemployed, but also to those whose income from employment does not prevent them from experiencing poverty. In this respect, cooperation and coordination between employment and social services across Europe should be strengthened.

→ **Intensifying structural funds for crisis-affected countries -** Structural funds should be better resourced to assist the countries in which (youth) unemployment is highest and to work with governments to support quality programs. The rhetoric in support of social inclusion must be supported by an investment of sufficient scale to make a significant impact on reducing the gaps between those who are powerful and better-off and those who are poor and excluded across Northern and Southern Europe.

✓ Ensure Inclusive Governance Structure

The EU Commission should require evidence of meaningful stakeholder involvement in deliberative processes leading to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies, using the monitoring systems in place under the Europe 2020 Strategy, as well as for countries in receipt of financial assistance programs. This is of particular importance given the evident level of distrust of national and European institutions.

This would be consistent with the Charter on Shared Social Responsibilities, which envisages well-defined deliberative processes to ensure that individual preferences are reconciled with widespread priorities in the field of social, environmental and inter-generational justice, and to reduce imbalances of power between stakeholders. Concurrently, the EU Commission should provide guidance on civil dialogue to Member States in particular by putting forward specific guidelines on stakeholder involvement for the development of EU-related policies.

✓ Step up Efforts for a New Social Direction for the EU

Europe's north-south divide is socially, economically and politically unsustainable, and existing policy frameworks are insufficient to reverse the breakdown of the European Social Model. We need ambitious rules and guidelines set at the EU level to foster upward social and economic convergence and a stronger Social Europe. It is high time to find more fruitful ways to combine and revamp existing governance tools in order to reach balanced socioeconomic outcomes.

In this spirit, a comprehensive approach is proposed that includes:

→ **Making full use of existing policy frameworks** - The EU is far from powerless; it has at its disposal social instruments such as the Social Investment Package (SIP) and the Recommendations on Active Inclusion and on Investing in Children, the proposed European Pillar of Social Rights that need to be fully operationalized to support people and families.

→ **Revitalizing the architecture of EU processes**, in particular the European Semester, to ensure that policies in the economic field and those in the social field are consistent. Very often, they contradict each other, with economic priorities taking precedence over social priorities. Instead of having a trade-off between economic and social priorities, governments should take a comprehensive approach.

→ **Adding policy coherence** by defining more clearly the different objectives of, and linkages between, different relevant tools to achieve consistency. These tools include the Social Investment Package (SIP), the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion (EPAP), the social Open Method of Coordination, the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), the European Semester, the Scoreboard of Social and Employment Indicators, as well as the social indicators in the scoreboard of the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure.

→ **Assessing the impact of projects funded by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) on the Union's employment and social objectives** - This should involve performing an extensive and comprehensive ex-ante and ex-post social impact assessment of the different policies and recommendations put forward throughout the European Semester, in particular in Country Specific Recommendations (CSR)and the Annual Growth Survey (AGS). The social impact of recommendations should be considered when drafting Country Specific Recommendations (CRS), especially those requiring fiscal consolidation measures. Country Specific Recommendations should aim to (1) achieve improved labor market activation measures that are capable of leading to quality jobs rather than low-paid or insecure jobs, and (2) avoid weakening the universal availability of basic services as this reduces rights and results in an increase of poverty and inequality. There also needs to be a requirement on governments to monitor and report on how

their policy choices are moving their countries towards targets set for employment (that is, secure, quality jobs), poverty reduction and education.

→ **Introducing social impact assessment and monitoring for countries in receipt of assistance packages** - Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) should specify the actions needed to achieve all of the Europe 2020 targets, including in relation to employment, education and poverty reduction, and they should not be limited to implementing the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding entered into with the EC/ECB/IMF. In addition, social impact assessment and monitoring must become integral to the assessment process for program countries so that if reform is needed, it is tailored to individual circumstances, capable of taking into account different impacts on different socioeconomic groups and cumulative effects on certain categories of disadvantaged populations.

→ **Allowing budgetary flexibility for investment in relevant social policies and services** – After years of cuts and austerity measures, welfare systems have come under strain in many countries; this trend must be reversed to ensure the quality and adequacy of social welfare systems and services. In its Communication of January 2015 ("Making the Best Use of the Flexibility within the Existing Rules of the Stability and Growth Pact"), the Commission displayed its willingness to allow budgetary flexibility to encourage the effective implementation of structural reforms, promote investment and take better account of economic cycles in individual Member States. In this spirit, the EU should allow the necessary budgetary flexibility for this type of public expenditure, providing countries with the much needed fiscal leeway to invest in adequate social protection and in social, health and education services. To this end, further flexibility and exclusions from the deficit targets are necessary. In this respect, it may also be useful to organize joint meetings of EPSCO and ECOFIN to discuss political and practical strategies and follow up on concerted actions. The inclusion of more social indicators, along with the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP) Scoreboard, can further reinforce this direction. Moreover, the overall objectives would have to be re-balanced, putting social and macroeconomic imbalances on par.

→ **Setting up a framework for mainstreaming social and fundamental rights objectives** throughout the European Semester and within all policy areas to ensure a rights-based approach. Mainstreaming social and fundamental rights is needed to ensure a life of dignity and full participation in society for all. There is, furthermore, a need to provide access to all social and fundamental rights included in the EU treaties, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, EU secondary law and case law, as well as in all relevant regional and international provisions, such as the European

Social Charter, the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the ILO Recommendation no. 202.[4]

→ **Supporting the involvement of rights-holders and organized civil society** - Rights-holders and civil society are on the frontlines in the development of responses to social needs and the reinforcement of human rights. They have an understanding of solutions that work or do not work, and of what needs to be improved. Therefore, their participation is vital not only in the design of social policies, but also in their implementation and monitoring. When adopting and implementing social objectives, a framework for structured, meaningful and sustainable involvement of these parties should be established.

3.2 National Governments and Relevant Local/Regional Authorities

The policy pointers in this section are addressed to national governments and also to local and regional authorities, wherever they have the power to act in relation to the areas covered.

✓ Build Inclusive Labor Markets

EU recommendations commit to three pillars of active inclusion, involving inclusive labor markets, adequate income support and access to high-quality services. However, we have seen that national reforms in the area of employment protection have largely aimed at creating greater flexibility and competitiveness in the labor market at the expense of job security and social protection.

Given the scale of the fall in employment as a result of the recent recession and the bleak outlook for job creation, particularly in Southern Europe, it is important that labor market reforms must not be accompanied by the threatened loss of basic social protection and welfare benefits or assistance. Given the scale of the losses in employment and the fact that there are insufficient jobs to meet the demand, such measures will merely cause poverty and worsening desperation.

Labor market reforms should aim to establish at national, regional and local levels inclusive labor markets as part of the EU's integrated Active Inclusion strategies. Such labor market reforms should ensure a wide inclusive and democratic process to decide upon labor market and social priorities.

They should ensure access to quality employment and jobs for all women and men that can work, and they should facilitate progressive reintegration into society and

[4] See ILO's recommendation on Greece to bring its labor relations system back to fundamental rights (365th Report of the Committee on Freedom of Association, 2012).

the labor market of those who are most excluded by helping them, for example, build new skills and access public employment services for support. Reforms should also include removing barriers to employment and social inclusion through the adoption of the Article 19 Equal Treatment Directive.

✓ Put forward a Nationwide Strategy for Quality Employment

Getting Europe back to work is not the only challenge. Equally important is ensuring that new jobs are quality ones that allow people to enjoy a decent standard of living and contribute to their well-being and to a robust economy. Job quality was already a concern before the crisis, but the fallout from the crisis and the internal devaluations and fiscal consolidation policies adopted have led to an erosion of the European Social Model, and the notion of quality jobs appears to have taken a backseat. At the turn of the century, there was a political consensus in Europe, set out in the Nice Council Conclusions (December 2000), around the idea of quality work as a necessary element in delivering competitiveness and full employment. In 2010, following the adoption of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the European Commission's Communication identified "better job quality and working conditions" as one of the four key priorities for achieving the EU 2020 employment target.

This momentum should be taken forward. The quality of a person's working life is a key aspect of their quality of life. Poor-quality jobs can lead to income insecurity, social exclusion, poverty in old age and poor physical and mental health. Concurrently, quality jobs are an essential feature of a well-functioning economy. Quality jobs give workers better job satisfaction, improved skills and greater motivation, which in turn lead to stronger, more productive and more innovative enterprises (OECD 2014).

Creating quality and sustainable jobs, including in the social, health and care services sector and in the social economy, should be a priority for policy-makers. Quality jobs should constitute an integral part of achieving inclusive labor markets and the "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" that the Europe 2020 Strategy is intended to deliver.

Thus, continued efforts are needed to put forward a Strategy for Quality Employment at the national level with specific targeted interventions to invest in quality and sustainable employment to counter the increase of in-work poverty, precariousness, poor working conditions and labor market segmentation.

Targeted and measurable interventions in the field of education and training (in view of the correlation between higher employment rates, higher educational attainment and participation in education and training throughout the life cycle), childcare policies to foster women's participation in the labor market and the reduction of gender employment and pay gaps, as well as sustainability of work are key elements

of job quality that should form an integral part of a nationwide Strategy for Quality Employment (CEPS 2010).

✓ Prioritize Investment Projects

We need to look to the future of labor markets, starting now. Without investment, there will be no jobs, and without jobs, there will be no recovery. Large-scale investment programs that are multi-annual and targeted at job-intensive areas represent a way to trigger growth and, at the same time, to address social and infrastructural deficits.

This requires cooperation and coordination between different ministries and agencies, as well as a comprehensive strategy for exploiting all investment policy funds available at the EU level, such as the European structural and investment funds (ESIFs), with the goals of: 1) supporting businesses to increase their competitiveness, find new markets and create new jobs, and 2) giving people, particularly young people, the opportunities to train or retrain, or to start businesses. The focus of investment projects would need to be tailored to the situation in each individual country and region. Areas that might be considered include development of housing, health and social care infrastructure, education and early childhood care infrastructure and renewable energy sources.

✓ Strengthen Systems of Social Support

Given the depth and duration of the economic crisis and the impact of structural measures, especially in Southern European countries, the resilience of social protection systems must be improved to enable them to provide protection to the entire population in need. Governments now need to introduce social protection interventions for the future, which will represent a promising path towards reducing poverty and inequality, as well as acting as a basis for inclusive growth.

Such interventions may require national governments to:

→ **Introduce a Golden Rule on social protection spending**, i.e. establish a threshold or benchmark below which spending on social protection should not fall. The threshold will need to take into account demographics and the balance between the different pillars of social protection across the life cycle. EU solidarity and flexibility in debt and deficit calculations will be necessary to enable the Member States who have the biggest challenges to reach such a threshold. The increased spending for these Member States should be discounted in the calculations of public deficit and debt (see EAPN 2016).

→ **Invest in ambitious integrated employment and social policies** in line with the 2013 Social Investment Package (SIP). This includes maintaining and improving investments in adequate social protection systems, in the creation of, and equal access to, quality employment, as well as in social, care, health and education services beyond infrastructure.

→ **Target strategies at those groups and individuals who engage the least and who are most at risk of unemployment and social exclusion** -There needs to be a targeting of strategies in order to assist hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups, including young people, who are most at risk of unemployment and exclusion. It is crucial for a healthy democracy that all groups engage, and it may improve social cohesion in times of economic difficulties if disadvantaged groups are also involved in the political decisions and economic governance issues that affect their lives.

→ **Invest in high-quality social services** – The provision of high-quality services (such as affordable childcare, education, health, disability and other social services) reduces exclusion and is crucial to the employability prospects and social mobility of different income groups. High-quality services are an essential part of a country's social infrastructure and should be prioritized. National policy-makers should act proactively and exploit the new knowledge generated through EU peer learning and the use of existing EU governance frameworks that promote the exchange of best practices and provide guidance to Member States – particularly the social Open Method of Coordination. These are vital tools for implementing effective social services as well as adequate, accessible and financially sustainable social protection systems and social inclusion policies.

→ **Mainstream social and fundamental rights objectives throughout all policies** at the EU and national level to ensure equality for all and to make sure that people live a life of dignity and fully participate in society.

→ **Open up the decision-making processes to social non-governmental organizations and users' organizations** and work with them as partners in developing, implementing and evaluating social protections and social assistance policies.

✓ Introduce Better Monitoring and Social Impact Assessments

Many of the fiscal reforms being made currently in several European countries to achieve short-term budgetary savings are choices that will cost more and challenge social cohesion in the long term. It is crucial that social assessments become the drivers of public governance.

Social assessments of the impacts of cuts to services that focus beyond the short-term cost savings should be integrated into decision-making processes. In addition to this, it is crucial to mainstream social targets in all other policies. All new social measures should be monitored vis-à-vis their tangible, measurable results, and their longer-term consequences should be assessed as well as their short-term ones.

✓ Invest in Local Employment and Social Policies and Services

As a result of austerity measures, social protection systems and services have suffered drastic cuts at a time when they are needed the most. This is particularly true for local levels of government, which are often charged with providing social assistance and services. Therefore, it is essential that local government bodies responsible for the implementation of employment and social policies and services are able to identify new ways of delivering social value for society.

This, for example, may include initiating local social economy and solidarity projects that form collaborations between different types of partners that have different expertise and resources. These partnerships can enable the sharing of expertise, resources and responsibilities and provide disadvantaged people and families with innovative opportunities for real and significant participation in their local communities, as LIVEWHAT evidence on alternative forms of resilience illustrates.

To foster local partnerships, local and regional authorities should take full advantage of the social investment aspects of the programming of EU funds, 2014-2020, including the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund), the ESF (European Social Fund) and the FEAD (Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived) and others, to fund projects that will foster solidarity, innovation and, ultimately, social inclusion.

✓ Ensure Equality and Inclusiveness in Local and National Decision-Making

Not all people are equal and have equal resources to participate. This is especially true for those groups that pay the highest cost for the crisis. For a participatory process to be democratic, the disengaged and the voiceless must be actively empowered and receive specific attention. This also means adapting the means and methods of dialogue for all groups (including the disabled, migrants, persons facing poverty and unemployment, etc.).

3.3 Civil Society Actors

✓ Work to Influence Local, National and EU Decision-Making

Civil society organizations have a societal role channeling voices, acting as watchdogs, creating social capital and supporting the creation of a genuine democratic public sphere. Civil society organizations must seek to challenge current realities, in which those who are vulnerable are paying the highest price for the crisis. This may require a commitment to:

→ **Establishing a clear strategy** to strengthen links with national, regional and/or local policy-makers, and actively engaging with them to find the best way to design employment and social protection policies and services that are responsive to people's needs.

→ **Developing a capacity for independent and accurate analysis and advocacy**, which is valuable when the major providers of social analysis do not, in practice, include data, analysis or proposals targeting the situations of those who are vulnerable.

→ **Developing a communication strategy to better explain why civil society work** is important and the role of civil society actors in providing social assistance and services at times when public financing of social services is diminishing, with tools such as FAQs, briefings and training sessions. Incorporating all of these aspects into civil society organizations' work is crucial in order to fight exclusion and precariousness, especially in light of the emergence of new forms of work in the field of "co-production of public policies and services."

✓ Monitor the Current Situation and Work for Inclusive Growth

Exclusion and lack of social and labor market prospects, especially for the youth, is seen as a costly historical legacy of the recent crisis. This is true not only for the crisis-affected south but also for the European north that is experiencing a return to economic growth. In light of these developments, there is indeed an emerging global consensus on the fact that there can only be sustainable and long-term growth if it is inclusive. Otherwise, there is a high risk of persistent stagnation. This has been stressed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2015), the International Labour Organization (ILO 2015) and the World Bank.

We simply cannot accept leaving part of our societies behind anymore. Civil society organizations have direct experience with and knowledge of the impact the recent

crisis is having on so many people who are vulnerable in one form or another. They must use that experience and knowledge to monitor and assess what is happening and work towards the articulation and development of inclusive growth that ensures every person's fundamental right to live a life of dignity and fully participate in society, and that allows people to overcome the sense of instability that is spreading everywhere and to regain control over their lives and futures.

✓ Target Strategies at Those Groups and Individuals Who Engage the Least and Who are Most at Risk of Exclusion and Precariousness

We have seen that social protection schemes in several countries typically only cover those in formal employment, while a significant number of the population works in precarious jobs. As a result of the economic recession, precarious employment is increasing. The most excluded people and households are those that are left out of any social safety net. The people who are mostly found in situations of impoverishment need help here and now.

To reverse this situation, a set of structured interventions are needed, which may include:

→ **Putting forward policies and strategies to seek the engagement of the most excluded in society -** Social civil society organizations must be part of recovery policies aiming to reach out to workers and families and provide services in order to promote their social and active inclusion. Civil society organizations can assist a society in identifying people in need and developing solutions to address their immediate and longer-term needs. Civil society organizations can mobilize solidarity in society, organize volunteers and put forward innovative projects within the limits of current resources.

→ **Establishing appropriate tracking and monitoring systems -** Civil society organizations who work to provide services can, by putting appropriate tracking and monitoring systems in place, track the increased demands – and the new kinds of demands - for their services, including demands that they are not able to meet due to lack of resources. Thus, they can help to provide an earlier and more rounded view of the picture as it emerges as well as make the case to intensify recovery policies for those most in need, closing the loopholes on current services.

✓ Foster the Participation of People and Families Experiencing Exclusion

As defined by UNRISD in the late 1970s, "participation" refers to the organized efforts of the disadvantaged to gain control over resources and regulatory institutions that affect their lives (UNRISD 2003). Fostering the participation of the vulnerable and the powerless means enhancing their capacity to engage with various dimensions

of the political arena, such as voice, contestation, advocacy, co-construction, negotiation, networking, and building and sustaining coalitions and alliances. Those civil society organizations that provide services to people experiencing exclusion are in a position to give a voice to the experience of the people they serve, a voice that tends to have few outlets for expression or influence in national public discourses as we have seen – and these accounts can have an impact within and beyond country borders.

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Recommended further reading

Reports

(downloadable from http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/?p=452)

- LIVEWHAT D2.3. "Report on Legal Analysis of Rights Depletion" (part of Work Package 2 – Policy Responses to Crises).
- LIVEWHAT D2.4. "Integrated Report on Policy Responses to Crises" (part of Work Package 2 – Policy Responses to Crises).
- LIVEWHAT D3.2. "Citizens' Responses to the European Economic Crisis in the Public Domain" (part of Work Package 3 – Collective Responses to Crises in the Public Domain).
- LIVEWHAT D4.2. "Integrated Report on Individual Responses to Crises" (part of Work Package 4 – Individual Responses to Crises).

- LIVEWHAT D5.3. "Integrated Report on Causal Effects of Crises on Citizens' Attitudes and Behaviors" (part of Work Package 5 - Causal Effects of Crises on Citizens' Attitudes and Behaviors).
- LIVEWHAT D6.4. "Integrated Report on Alternative Forms of Resilience in Times of Crisis' (part of Work Package 6 - Alternative Forms of Resilience in Times of Crisis).
- LIVEWHAT Synthesis of Project Main Findings

Policy briefs

(downloadable from http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/?p=450)

- LIVEWHAT First Policy Brief
- LIVEWHAT Second Policy Brief
- LIVEWHAT Third Policy Brief
- LIVEWHAT Fourth Policy Brief
- LIVEWHAT Fifth Policy Brief

Handbook of Good Practices

LIVEWHAT project

LIVING WITH HARD TIMES

HOW CITIZENS REACT TO ECONOMIC CRISES
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