

Fact-finding visit to Madrid - May 22-24, 2017

Social Economy & Social Enterprise

Report

The context for choosing Madrid

According to Social Economy Europe, there are more than 2 million social economy enterprises and organisations in Europe, making up 10% of Europe's total business, contributing with 8% to Europe's GDP and employing 14.5 million people. While the economy has suffered under the crises, statistics show that the social economy has not only been stable throughout the recent years, but indeed experienced significant employment growth: from 11 million jobs in 2002/2003 to 14,5 million jobs in 2009/2010.



Social enterprises in Spain are well developed and the Spanish Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs is very active in promoting the social economy. Spain is also one of the 9 European Member States to have signed the Bratislava Declaration on Enhanced Cooperation to develop social economy and social enterprises.

More about social economy in Europe can be found [here](#) and more about the context in Spain [here](#).

Visiting the Carmen Pardo-Valcarce Foundation

The Carmen Pardo-Valcarce Foundation was established in 1948 and aims at promoting of the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities to enable them to participate in society on a equal basis to others. The foundation has different core activities: a school for 200 pupils with intellectual disabilities, occupational centres enabling persons with intellectual disabilities to acquire skills to make the switch to the regular labour market (e.g. post office, print shop, candy shop, furniture factory, car wash, etc.), the renting of gardening and event space and tennis fields which profit is reinvested in the foundation itself and centres to support person's suffering from mental health problems. Through its various activities, the foundation aims at helping persons with disabilities to break the circle of isolation and exclusion, promote their independence and autonomy and change societal misperceptions.



The foundation is fully self-sustainable was added by the United Nations to its Business Guide in 2007, which is a list of the 85 most reliable NGOs around the world with whom companies can form alliances. More about the Carmen Pardo-Valcarce Foundation can be found [here](#).

Visiting Taller 99 and Asiscar

Taller 99 and Asiscar fall under the section of Caritas Madrid that offers employment services to persons in vulnerable situations. These services can take many forms and range from labour market information services for individuals or for groups to organised trainings and workshops enabling people to acquire different skills.

The delegation had the opportunity to meet with and talk to employees of Taller 99 and Asiscar. Taller 99 is on the one hand specialised in producing and selling leather goods and on the other hand has a catering division called CARIFOOD. Asiscar is a courier and moving company. Both employ people in vulnerable situations who otherwise would face significant disadvantage in entering the labour market.



More about Caritas Madrid and its different sections can be found [here](#).

Visiting Conference 'Madrid, capital of European Social Economy'

The conference was organised by the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, Social Economy Europe and the Spanish Confederation of Social Economy Enterprises (CEPES) to mark the 25th anniversary of CEPES and to discuss how social economy can be used to tackle challenges faced by the European Union. The event was attended by more than 400 high-level representatives from 16 European Member States, EU Institutions, EU social economy organisations and Spanish public authorities.



The key message of the conference was clear: The social economy is a key driver for a Europe that is built on economic and social progress and leaves no one behind. It was stressed that the European project is based on common core values, such as solidarity, and that the social economy has an enormous potential in terms of closing inequalities and strengthening solidarity between citizens. It has been stressed that economic and inclusive growth must provide opportunities for everyone and cannot lead to further exclusion.

One of the key moments of the event was the adoption of the [Madrid Declaration](#), which calls on the European Commission to include a European Action Plan for the social economy in its Work Programme 2018, as well as to strengthen the role of the social economy in the European Pillar of Social Rights and the ongoing debate relating to the future of Europe. The Declaration was signed by 9 European Member States (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain), while Sweden and Romania expressed their intentions to sign in the near future. The Madrid Declaration demonstrates the ongoing strong commitment of a growing number of European Member States to promote the development of the social economy in Europe, following the [Luxembourg Declaration](#) of December 2015 and the [Bratislava Declaration](#) of December 2016.

More information about the conference and the Madrid Declaration can be found [here](#).

Visiting Movimiento por la Paz

The overall mission of Movimiento por la Paz is the fight for peace. In their work, they define the concept of peace as more than the mere absence of war. In order to promote peace and social rights more generally, the organisation pursues different activities, such as providing shelter and emotional support for women who have suffered violence, providing food and shelter (both short and long term) for immigrants, providing legal services, helping and training adults in the job search and engaging children from low income areas in after school activities.



More information about Movimiento por la Paz can be found [here](#).

Meeting Spanish national members of Social Platform members

In the evening of the second day the delegation had the opportunity to meet with Spanish national members of Social Platform.

For us it was a great occasion to network, to learn more about social economy and social enterprises in Spain and to get to know some of the great projects taking place at national level. Also for our Spanish members it was a good opportunity to learn about the work taking place in different fields and to establish contacts for future cooperation.



Visiting Ilunion

Ilunion is a unique enterprise model putting the employment of persons with disabilities at the core of its activities. Their company model aims at showing that employment of persons with disabilities is economically and socially profitable, and therefore sustainable in the long run.

Ilunion is comprised of more than 50 lines of business operating in different sectors such as tourism, consultancy, trade, health and services. It has a revenue of 730 million euros. More than 1/3 of their 33.000 employees are persons with disabilities, while the amount is much higher in specific sectors, such as industrial laundry for example (4000 workers, about 95% of them are persons with disabilities).

More about Ilunion can be found [here](#).



Visiting CONCOVI

The last visit of the trip was to the Confederation of Spanish Housing and Renewal Cooperatives (CONCOVI), which is the largest official representative of the social economy in the Spanish real estate sector. CONCOVI has promoted 1.5 million homes, most of which is social housing for disadvantaged groups.



The main tasks of CONCOVI involve supporting, advising and defending the interests of their affiliated cooperatives based on the social economy model, especially before public administrations and financial institutions and in company and private disputes.

More about CONCOVI can be found [here](#).

A short video of the study visit can be found [here](#).