



6th EMES International Research
Conference on Social Enterprise

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Social enterprise for sustainable societies
LLN, 3-6 July 2017

ECSP-6EMES-02

Social entrepreneurship in southeastern Europe – Comparative analysis of the cases of Croatia, Serbia and Greece

Konstantina Zoehrer

Athens - Vienna, May 2017

BEST PHD
PAPER
AWARD

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SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CASES OF CROATIA, SERBIA AND GREECE

Abstract

The paper, based on an update of a postgraduate thesis, aims to explore social entrepreneurship and social enterprises in Southeastern Europe, based on a comparative analysis of the cases of Croatia, Serbia and Greece. By examining legal frameworks, regulations, contribution to social inclusion overcoming the current economic crisis, as well as the transition to different models of integrating social entrepreneurship in the wider economy and society, the thesis attempts to identify the stages of development, similarities, differences and challenges of the emerging sector.

Keywords

Social entrepreneurship
Social enterprise
Social economy
Transition
Economy

Abbreviations

ADDMA	Athens Development and Destination Management Agency
AMNA	Athens-Macedonian News Agency
CoSED	Coalition for the Development of Social Enterprises in Serbia
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DG Employment	European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
DG Growth	European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
EC	European Commission
EMES	EMES International Research Network
EMS	European Movement of Serbia
ESELA	European Social Enterprise Law Association
EU	European Union
EUNIC	European Network of Cultural Institutes
EVPA	European Venture Philanthropy Association
GECES	Expert Group for Social Entrepreneurship of the European Commission
ILO	International Labor Organisation
INTERREG	Interreg Europe financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
Koi.S.PE	Limited Liability Social Cooperatives in Greece
Koin.S.Ep.	Social Cooperative Enterprises in Greece
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPO	Not-for-profit organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
SBI	Social Business Initiative
SE Forum	Greek Social Entrepreneurship Forum
SIPRU	Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia
UN or UNO	United Nations Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID,	United States Government Agency for International Development
WISE	Work Integration Social Enterprises

Introduction

This paper, an updated version of my postgraduate thesis, aims to explore social entrepreneurship and social enterprises in Southeastern Europe, based on a comparative analysis of the cases of Croatia, Serbia and Greece.

During the last fifteen years, there is growing acknowledgement of social entrepreneurship, and social enterprises in particular, the European Commission has emphasized on the importance of the sector through policy recommendations and dedicated programmes which are not only influencing the developments in European Union member states, but also in accession candidate countries, as well as outside the EU.

Besides the analysis and comparison of the legal and institutional frameworks, a special focus is how international, European and national actors are shaping the development of Social Entrepreneurship in Croatia, Greece and Serbia. The thesis attempts to identify the stages of development, similarities, differences and challenges of the emerging sector.

In order to focus, the working hypothesis of the research is the following: **The development of Social Entrepreneurship in Southeastern Europe, comparing the cases of Croatia, Serbia and Greece is a result of the influence of International and European actors in region.**

The paper utilizes a set of twenty-nine semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face (conducted in Athens, Greece), over phone and Skype (Athens, Belgrade, Cakovec, Karditsa, Thessaloniki, Trento, Vienna, Zagreb), and written with representatives of National Ministries, civil society organisations active in the field, social enterprises, policy-makers, researchers and activists in summer 2016, during the months of June, July and August 2016, and spring 2017 (May) in order to understand the domestic and international and European context. Interviewees were chosen from following stakeholder groups: Academia, independent researchers, NGOs, support organisations, government administration, social enterprises, foundations, financial institutions, local development agencies. The variety of stakeholders was needed in order to achieve a multidimensional picture of the sector, but also to identify agreement or/and disagreement on the development of the sector on a country-basis but also to be able to compare the three cases of Croatia, Serbia and Greece. Additionally, for updates on recent developments in the region, until May 2017, interviewees have been contacted over correspondence and semi-structured interviews in order to present accurately.

Secondary research consulting selected sources like reports and policy papers from institutions like the European Commission, the OECD, UNDP and national authorities. Additionally, reports and researches by research centres, think tanks and civil society organisations as well as relevant articles in academic journals and publications, like Euricse Working Paper Series, EMES Working Papers, ICSEM Working Papers, International Journal of Social Economics, Journal of Social Entrepreneurship etc. have been consulted.

In the first chapter, I give an overview of Social Entrepreneurship from a theoretical perspective and how it has developed in Europe and Southeastern Europe as well as a short presentation of the socioeconomic context of the region during the economic crisis. A presentation and comparison of legal and institutional frameworks in Croatia, Greece and Serbia, is following in the second chapter, where I dedicate a section on

legal forms and models that are existing prior or created through changes and additions in the legal and institution environments. Then the third chapter is dedicated to international, European and national actors and their contribution in the field of Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises. The fourth chapter looks into trends and challenges of the sector, based on the interviews conducted, comparing Croatia, Greece and Serbia. In the conclusions, I present findings relating to the working hypothesis and policy proposals.

1. Social Entrepreneurship in Europe: Concept and historical background

During the last fifteen years, there is a growing acknowledgement of social entrepreneurship, and social enterprises in particular, on a local, national and international level, in comparison to previous decades where the concepts were less discussed. (Defourny and Nyssens 2013: p.1). Social entrepreneurship and its activities is often related to addressing structural problems like poverty, unemployment and social exclusion as a way to find solutions through civil society rather than government or the traditional business sector.

According to the OECD¹ *“Social entrepreneurship is the entrepreneurship that has as main goal to address pressing social challenges and meet social needs in an innovative way while serving the general interest and common good for the benefit of the community. In a nutshell, social entrepreneurship targets to social impact primarily rather than profit maximisation in their effort to reach the most vulnerable groups and to contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth.”* (OECD website)

It is important to mention though, that there is a plethora of definitions and interpretations around the term “social entrepreneurship” (Weerawardena and Mort, 2006), but as a starting point we will look into two different theoretical approaches toward social enterprise and then justify the definition that will be the basis of our analysis:

- a. The first theoretical approach, often referred to as the US school of thought (Defourny and Nyssens 2003: p.6) or the Social Innovation School of thought (Dees and Anderson, 2006: p. 44) puts the individual, the social entrepreneur, as an actor in the center. This approach describes social enterprise in a wider *sense regarding a market-oriented activity with a social mission* (Dees and Anderson, 2006). For the non-profit sector as such, based on Bornstein’s theory of systemic social change (Bornstein, 2007: pp. 1-10), organisations that are defined as non-for-profit, meet the following criteria: formal (legal personality), private, independent, no profit distribution to members, voluntary participation. The US approach sets the person, the social entrepreneur, as an actor in the center (Borzaga, Galera, Nogales, 2008: pp. 18-19)

¹ Definition on the OECD website, Social Entrepreneurship in Europe- An OECD-European Commission Project, <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/social-entrepreneurship-oecd-ec.htm>

- b. The second one, often referred to as the European school of thought or “social economy” approach, Social Enterprise school of thought (Dees and Anderson, 2006: pp. 41-44), defines social enterprise on the basis of certain criteria and as a social economy actor, (often described as the European approach), including co-operatives, associations etc. Based on a long European tradition (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001: p.1-18), rooted in the 19th century (Defourny, 2003: p.2), of organisations providing goods and services considered “public” (e.g. health, culture, social services etc.), serving the public rather than being profit- oriented, but also contributing to a different model of social policies as the state mechanisms have to cut down budgets (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001: p. 2)

The development of the social enterprise/social entrepreneurship sector in Europe has shown four trends (Nogales, 2016)²:

- Market-based activities, namely trading
- Serving society in general
- Organisations that do not emerge from the traditional social economy sector and adopt a new legal form of social enterprise
- Mobilised by citizen groups and citizen-driven

We will use for the purpose of our research the definition by the Social Business Initiative (SBI)³ of the European Commission (European Commission, 2011) and the International Research Network (EMES⁴), as it is an inclusive for activities that are generally described as social entrepreneurship but still gives a specific context, which is also open enough and therefore can be used for our cases.

Mendell and Nogales describe social enterprise as *“a private and autonomous organisation providing goods or services with an explicit aim to benefit the community, owned or managed by a group of citizens in which the material interest of investors is subject to limits. Attention to a broad or distributed democratic governance structure and multi-stakeholder participation is also important”* (Mendell and Nogales, 2009: p. 6). Based on this, the three dimensions of social enterprise are:

- Social Dimension: Social or societal objective of the common good
- Economic/ entrepreneurial Dimension: commercial activity
- Governance Dimension/Participatory governance: Method of organisation or ownership system based on democratic or participatory principles

In this context, the European Commission has identified social enterprises as an important factor for the economic and social transformation of the European Union, described by the Europe 2020 strategy (ESELA, 2015: p. 14). As Defourny and Nyssens

2 On the concept of social enterprise in Europe, prepared for GECES 14.04.2016

3 From the website of the European Commission: *“Social Business Initiative aims launched in 2011, aims to: introduce a short-term action plan to support the development of social enterprises, key stakeholders in the social economy and social innovation, prompt a debate on the avenues to be explored in the medium/ long term.”* http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/social-economy/enterprises/index_en.htm

4 EMES definition on Social Enterprise from the website <http://emes.net/focus-areas/>

mention (2003) the concept of “social enterprise” in Europe appeared most probably for the first time in Italy, where through a new legal framework in 1991 a new legal form, the “social cooperative” was created (Defourny and Nyssens, 2003: p. 11) and many other European countries followed the example in the 1990s, either cooperative forms, like in France or Spain, or more flexible forms as is the case in Belgium or the United Kingdom.

Besides the creation of new legal forms, many European countries, we also see one specific type of social enterprise very dominant, the “Work Integration Social Enterprise” (WISE), which aims at the integration of socially excluded and vulnerable groups into the labor market (Defourny and Nyssens, 2003: p. 12)

On the level of the European Union, the European Commission created the Social Business Initiative (SBI) in 2011 (European Commission, 2001), which is supported by the Expert Group for Social Entrepreneurship (GECES), an advisory expert group, consisting of “public” (appointed by governments) and “private” (proposed by local authorities, civil society organisations, networks, financial institutions etc. and appointed by the European Commission) experts. It assists the European Commission to develop relevant policies, which aim at facilitating the process of Social Entrepreneurship development within the European Union but also support it outside the EU.

1.1. Social Entrepreneurship in Southeastern Europe (Croatia, Serbia, Greece)

Southeastern Europe experienced transitional processes after the end of Cold War and still, especially Serbia and Croatia, after the wars of Yugoslavia undergo transition towards democracy and market economy. Croatia and Serbia, as successor states of former Yugoslavia, have been influenced by Western Europe as well as the communist political regimes and its “administrative and social structures” (Matej, A.I., Savulescu, C. and Antonovici, C.G., 2016: p.113). The pre-Communist period, has shown a long-tradition, as in most European countries, in organisations of the “third sector”, cooperatives mostly, as they were economies based on agriculture, similar to Greece. During the Communist era, those became absorbed by the public sector, and controlled by the state (Babos P., Clarence E. and Noya A., 2007: p.8).

In 2009, the European Union experiences the global financial crisis, which also influences also the Southeastern European countries, facing recession. Based on data from Focus Economics (2016), Southeastern Europe marks a weakening of its economies in general, because of the developments in Greece and Turkey.

What the economies of Greece, Croatia and Serbia share during the period from 2009 until today is high unemployment, poor social welfare systems, high percentages of debt and a growing informal, so called “grey” or “shadow” economy (Sotiropoulos, 2014a and 2014b, Bejaković, 2015, Spear, Aiken, Noya, and Clarence 2012 and USAID 2013).

As for the issue of social entrepreneurship development, it is worth noting that there is not sufficient data available for countries in Southeastern Europe regarding the social entrepreneurship sector (Galera, 2009: pp. 14-15), even for Greece, which is a long-time member of the European Union, does not have relevant data sets. In general, socio-economic development and in particular development of social entrepreneurship

activities and social enterprises in transition economies of Southeastern Europe, have been influenced heavily by the past as they are often related to political party structures of the previous eras. Additionally, in Southeast Europe, including Greece, the weakness of legal and institutional frameworks has hindered the development of social enterprises (Spear, R., Aiken, M., Noya, A. and Clarence, E., 2012: p. 21).

Similar to other European countries, social enterprises are closely linked to the provision of welfare services also in Southeastern European countries. A common point about social entrepreneurship development in Southeastern Europe is that it is rather limited or nascent, because of the cultural barriers that exist, based on the historical background. In the cases of Serbia and Croatia, Galera refers to the “transition myth” (Galera, 2009: pp. 17-19 and Babos P., Clarence E. and Noya A., 2007: p.8), which created policies strongly free-market-oriented and profit-centred, and has been completed by the absence of a healthy welfare state and the legacy of the command economy.

In Southeastern Europe, as it is the case also in other European countries, there is a present discussion around the concept of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. In Greece (Bekridaki, 2016) “the discourse started under the pressure of the European Union top-down with the Law 4019/2011 itself”. The recent implementation/ application of the new legal framework of Law 4430/2016, intensified the conceptual discourse in Greece. In Croatia (Vidovic and Baturina, 2016: p.6) it started around 2005 when the concept got introduced by international organisations (Vidovic, 2012 and 2013: p. 4) and intensified through the accession process of the European Union. As for Serbia, it is still working on its own concept of social entrepreneurship (Milovanovic, 2016), but influenced by the European Union.

The emergence of social enterprise in Europe has had an impact also on Southeastern Europe, whereas social enterprise has been strongly associated with labor integration of vulnerable social groups and therefore legal forms and organisation models that would serve this cause were created⁵ (European Commission, 2014b: pp. 42-46), also in Croatia (Institutions, Social Cooperatives)⁶, Serbia and Greece (Limited Liability Cooperative, Social Cooperative Enterprises) we see legal frameworks if not already passed through parliament and implemented like in Greece, being under discussion and drafted like it is the case in Serbia. Political recognition of the sector is crucial for its development and sustainability within a functioning market economy.

From a historical perspective, Croatia and Serbia share common issue, based on the common past, where civil society in general was strongly related to the state and the previous socialist regimes, a fact that influenced the development of civil society in a broader context.

From a conceptual perspective, the awareness and discussion about social entrepreneurship and social enterprises emerged in the 2000s, as a concept introduced from abroad by international organisations and the European Union in all three countries, as I will present in a following chapter. In order to also understand the also the conceptual perspective, we have to mention that for Croatia and Serbia, the term “social”

5 Legal forms and legal frameworks will be analysed in more depth in the next chapters.

6 Institutions Law (Zakon o ustanovama, NN 76/93; 29/97; 47/99; 35/08)

is translated “socijalno” or “društveno”: “socijalno” relates to poverty and “društveno” relates to collective activities imposed by the socialist regime (Šimleša, 2012: p 25 and Kekic, 2016).

From a policy-making perspective, the influence of the European Union on national policies intensified the discourse. Greece has a law on Social and Solidarity Economy, Law 4430/2016, the public consultation of which was limited to less than a month in the middle of summer (AMNA, 2016), and passed parliament in fall 2016. It replaced the legal framework created under the previous law on Social Entrepreneurship, Law 4019/2011. The implementation of what the new law created is still under development.

Croatia adopted a Strategy for Social Entrepreneurship Development 2015- 2020 (Vidovic and Baturina, 2016: pp. 4-7), which introduced a new definition of social enterprise, but not a legal form nor legal status as some EU countries have a practice and as it was the case for Greece. In Serbia, the legal framework is under development and there is not a specific Strategy Plan in place yet.

The global economic crisis (Borzaga and Galera, 2014a) has contributed to problems like high private and public debt, unemployment, social exclusion, poverty etc. that demand in-depth structural reforms in most countries of the region, and especially our three cases.

2. Institutional and legal framework - Different regulation approaches, similar difficulties

The concept of social entrepreneurship and the contribution of social enterprises is part of the socioeconomic agenda of the European Union, namely the Europe 2020 strategy, and therefore influences developments on the subject more or less in its member states, Croatia and Greece in our case, but also in accession countries like Serbia.

There is no unified legal umbrella under which the European Union recognizes one legal form, or one legal framework as the representing model for the sector. Besides the conceptual part, social entrepreneurship and social enterprises, as part of the broader context of social economy, are recognized in various and different forms and legal structures, depending civil society, welfare, public policies and the development of the business sector as such. They existed under different names in the past and are an emerging phenomenon of the last decades for all our three cases of Greece, Croatia and Serbia.

In this chapter we will examine the institutional and legal frameworks for social entrepreneurship and social enterprises, taking the tradition of social economy and the relation to the European Union as common starting points. In order to provide a better understanding we will present a short overview, and including in our analysis insights based on the stakeholder interviews.

In the case of Greece, a new law on “Social and Solidarity Economy” (Hellenic Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Solidarity, 2016) and the development of its organisations, including the legal framework for Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship got introduced in October 2016. A public consultation of the draft law was held in July 2016, in order to include comments of stakeholders. The draft law amended articles and

paragraphs, and adds new parts to already existing text of Law 4019/2011. According to Sofia Adam (2016), independent researcher for Social and Solidarity Economy, “the new law aims to cover a number of weaknesses of the institutional framework of Greece regarding the initiatives of the Social and Solidarity Economy, and to state/present a strategy. We could argue, that it aims to open up the field, identifying the legal entities of the sector and creating a basis of values which should be incorporated by this initiatives.”

Law 4430/2016 followed, law 4019/2011, which established the Social Cooperative Enterprise, and laws 1667/1986 and 2716/1999 established the legal form of the Limited Liability Social Cooperatives (Koi.S.P.E.), a work integration social cooperative for people with mental health issues. Law 4019/2011 introduced the term “Social Entrepreneurship” and the legal form of Social Cooperative Enterprise (Koin.S.Ep.), as the only form of social entrepreneurship recognized by the state. Thus it does not define Social Enterprises, based on criteria (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001: pp 1-9) as identified by the Social Business Initiative (SBI) of the European Commission, nor its operational aspects and therefore not a functional supportive legal regulation for the sector.

Nikos Chrysogelos, president of the Social Cooperative Enterprise “Anemos Ananeosis” described that “Law 4019/2011 created a dynamic and expectations which were exaggerated. On a practical level, the Social Enterprise⁷ has to follow the same rules regarding taxation as the traditional business sector, without criteria being applied” (2016).

Panagiotis Tournavitis (2016) Managing Director of the Cooperative Bank of Karditsa, proffers that “a legal framework is a positive step as it helps the Social Enterprises to position themselves and to be recognized but the legal framework should not restrict Social Enterprises and Social Entrepreneurship one specific legal form, as it does at the moment.”

Additionally, the current legal framework under Law 4430/2016 excludes a wide range of traditional actors of social and solidarity economy (Alexopoulos, 2017) and, similar to the previous law 4019/2011, forms of cooperative or not-for-profit enterprises, that do meet the criteria of the SBI of the European Commission (European Commission website, definition on social enterprises), a problem that the new draft law aims to fix together with the fragmentation in cooperative legislation (Adam, 2016 and Klimi-Kaminari and Papageorgiou, 2010). With the new law, the sector as a whole has been challenged with confusion on bureaucratic, employment generation, tax and income procedures (Alexopoulos, 2017).

Bekridaki Georgia (2016) mentions, that “the support for social enterprises from the state was visible only with the law 4019/2011, not with relevant policies that supported the development of the sector, not with support centers.”

Legal complexity is a common ground also for Croatia and Serbia (Petricevic, 2011: pp. 9 -10). In the case of Croatia, there is no dedicated law for Social Entrepreneurship or Social Enterprise as such but activities, as it happens in most countries, pre-existed expressed through various organisation types of civil society, (citizen initiatives, voluntary organizations, cooperatives, etc.).

⁷ Meaning here the legal form of Koin.S.Ep

Davorka Vidovic (2016) from the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Zagreb explains: “First, on the macro level there is no supportive institutional nor legal environment. There is a Strategy for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship, adopted in 2015, but the institutional and legal environment is not much supporting in the sense that it would make it easier for social enterprises. The Strategy is a good positive first step towards creating a supportive environment, but its implementation is slow as there is only the first call for grants for social enterprises announced this summer.” Strategic documents that are perceived as important for the development of the sector (Regional Cooperation Council, 2015: p.2 and Vidovic and Baturina, 2016) are the National Strategy for Creating an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2012-2016 (Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2012: pp. 50- 61), the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in Croatia 2014-2020, the Croatian Tourism Development Strategy 2020, the Entrepreneurship Development Strategy 2013-2020, the Strategy for Women’s Entrepreneurship in Croatia 2014-2020.

The National Strategy for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship (Government of Croatia, 2015) focuses on four areas:

- a. Developing a legislative and institutional framework
- b. Establishing financial mechanisms for the efficient operation of social enterprises;
- c. Promoting the importance and role of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises through formal and informal education
- d. Ensuring the visibility of the role and the possibilities of social enterprise and informing the general public about issues related to social entrepreneurship and social enterprises.

“Croatian legislation does not recognise social entrepreneurship as a specific legal term. Legislation that may be relevant for social enterprises include the Act on Associations, the Act on Cooperatives, the Company Act, the Act on Foundations, the Act on Social Welfare Institution, the Act on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons, the Act on Public Procurement and the Act on the Promotion of Small Business Development”, points out an anonymous researcher from Croatia in an interview (2016). The first state documents mentioning “development of social entrepreneurship and social capital as an important component of social development” (Anonymous researcher, 2016) are the Program of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Non-Government – Non-Profit Sector from 2000 and the first strategic document mentioning the term “social entrepreneurship” was the National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2006-2011 (Government of the Republic of Croatia 2011, 2012, 2015 and Vidovic and Baturina 2016).

Hence, there is a variety of legal forms that are used by social enterprises or social entrepreneurship activities, a similarity with Greece, where a dedicated legal framework tries to regulate the sector and Serbia, where we will see even convergence based on the common past.

Dražen Šimleša, Research Associate at Institute of Social Science IVO PILAR Zagreb, (2016) points out that “a specific legal framework regarding social economy and social enterprises, would add to clear notion and transparency”, similar as Popi Sourmaidou

(2016), Board of Directors of the Network of Social Cooperative Enterprise in Central Macedonia, mentions for the Greek case.

As far as Croatia and Serbia are concerned, Croatia is part of the European Union, so many requests from the European Union have pushed Croatia (Galera, 2016) to adopt a Strategy for Social Entrepreneurship, which has taken a long time to being approved. Although it is important to mention that the driving force for the creation of the strategy came from the broader civil society and social enterprises sector (Vidovic, 2016). When compared to Serbia at least there is a much stronger commitment from policy-makers on supporting social enterprise even if this commitment is more theoretical than practical, because the National Strategy needs to be implemented (Galera, 2016). In Greece, there has been a similar Strategic Plan for the development of the Social Entrepreneurship sector in 2013 (Hellenic Republic, 2013), aimed at creating an operational framework, but its implementation process proved being weak (Tzouvelekas and Zoehrer, 2015). Law 4430/ 2016 foresees support measures similar to Law 4019/2011 such as access to a social economy fund, access to the support programmes for entrepreneurship and unemployment.

As for Serbia, “there is not a legal framework as such, as one comprehensive for all kind of social enterprises and Social Entrepreneurship in Serbia. Actually what we have now are the different pieces of legislation, connected with the different legal forms that are existing, some of them even from the socialist time”, explains Jelena Milovanovic from the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction, Government of Republic of Serbia (SIPRU) (2016), during an interview, but Social Cooperatives got introduced by Article 11 of the Law on Cooperatives in 2015.

According to Ninoslav Kekic (2016) from the Policy Coordination Unit, “the legal framework for social enterprises in Serbia is incomplete. The only definition of social enterprise is the definition of social cooperatives, but the Law on Cooperatives insufficiently defines the specifics of these cooperatives. Social Entrepreneurship is included though in the Strategy for the support to development of small and medium-sized enterprises, entrepreneurship and competitiveness for the period from 2015 to 2020 and Action plan for the implementation of the Strategy for the support to development of small and medium-sized enterprises, entrepreneurship and competitiveness 2015-2016. It is also recognized as a concept in Pillar 6. “Development and promotion of entrepreneurial spirit and the encouraging of entrepreneurship among women, youth and social entrepreneurship.”

Additional legal documents influencing the development of Social Entrepreneurship in Serbia are: Social Protection Law, Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disability, Associations Law, Law on Endowments and Foundations, Companies Law, Cooperatives Law, Law on Volunteering, Profit Tax Law and Value Added Tax Law (Spear, R., Aiken, Noya, A. and Clarence, 2012: pp. 38-41 and Cvejic, 2013 pp. 48-59).

“It is the same situation in all countries, in Western Balkan region, we do not have developed institutional support, Teo Petricevic from ACT Group stated in an interview (2016).

Regarding the fiscal framework, there are no specific tax incentives or regulations for social enterprises and social enterprises, depending on the legal form pay taxes as traditional businesses (Chrysogelos, 2016, Vidovic and Baturina 2016: pp. 14 -16) in Greece and Croatia.

2.1. Legal forms and models of Social Enterprises

Whether there is a dedicated legislation or not, from the approach of the European Union (2011), SBI (2011) and EMES (Nyssens, 2006, Borzaga and Defourny, 2001), there is no single legal form that could meet the social enterprise criteria of social, economic and governance dimension as presented in the first chapter. In Greece, Croatia and Serbia, we see a variety of legal forms and operating models: associations, NGOs, cooperatives, limited liability companies, foundations, sheltered workshops, private social welfare institutions.

- Legal forms that have been identified in the three countries are:
- Civil society organisations - NGOs- Associations
- Cooperatives
- Social Cooperatives
- Enterprises for employment and professional training of persons with disability
- Sheltered/ protected workshops
- Limited Liability Company and other entities
- Informal forms

Civil society organisations (CSO), NGOs with trading arms and Spin-offs

In Croatia, as it is the case for the entire region in Southeastern Europe, social entrepreneurship and the first social enterprises started from the civil society sector (Vukovic, 2016). There is an agreement between researchers Galera (2016), Vidovic (2016), Baturina (2016) and Petricevic (2016), that a social enterprise model that is quite widespread and well-known in Croatia is the one of social enterprise conceived as a trading arm of an NGO. Baturina (2016) argues that “many civil society organisations rather decide to create enterprises, and not cooperatives, because it is much easier for them to do it in that way to operate in a kind of hybrid way”. An anonymous researcher from Croatia (2016) explains further during an interview that “on one hand, civil society organisations, are labeled as living on state support or European Union support projects and on the other hand, when they are doing something financially attractive or sustainable, then the state makes a law which hinders them to continue this kind of activities and taxes them as regular businesses.”

A similar model that NGOs follow in Serbia is the establishment of for-profit entities, limited liability companies, so-called spin-offs (Rakin, 2016), but seems more complex to maintain for smaller organisations. As NGOs in Serbia were given the possibility to engage in an economic activity by the Law on Associations, some of them did so for different reasons:

- a. to diversify their profit, that they could reinvest more
- b. for sustainability, or
- c. because they wanted to try some new types of activity (Milovanovic, 2016).

According to a research conducted by “SeCons” and “Grupa 484” in 2014 (p. 18) and published by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, civil society organisations are considered social enterprises if they met the following criteria:

- Minimum of 25% of its income by performing an activity aimed at social objectives and has at least one employee
- Minimum of 25% of its income by performing any activity and has at least 50% of employees from vulnerable categories
- Minimum of 25% of its income by performing any activity and spends more than 50% of the earned income on social objectives.

In Greece, there is no data available of how many NGOs choose this model of operation, but as the new law introduces criteria (Adam, 2016, and Theodorikakou, 2016), that organisations have to meet in order to be considered organisations of the Social and Solidarity Economy, they might be available in the near future.

This mode of Social Enterprises, which is based mostly on income-generation is also called “earned-income” model (Defourny and Nyssens 2012), describing social entrepreneurship emerges as a revenue-generating strategy implemented by civil society organisations in order to meet their objectives.

Cooperatives

Cooperatives have a long-standing tradition in all three countries, but not all meet the criteria of social enterprise (Galera, 2016). In Croatia, the number was around 1300 at the end of 2015 (Petricevic, 2016). Some cooperatives in Serbia could also be also define as social enterprises, but some are from the socialist era of the country, and because of that they do not always behave like social enterprises in the market (Stancic, 2016).

For a better understanding of the context regarding the cases of Croatia and Serbia, with respect to their transitional status (Regional Cooperation Council: pp. 65-81 and pp. 121-135), it is worth mentioning that there is a strong historical legacy of the cooperative sector from former Yugoslavia (Spear, Aiken, Noya, and Clarence, 2012 and Galera, 2009) related to the socialist era and its values (Stancic and Vukovic, 2016). This legacy is also a reason why the cooperative sector as such was in a more marginalized position (Šimleša, 2016) and not supported by national governments. In the last ten years, many new types of cooperatives started being established in Serbia under the same legal framework, but

being built on modern principles and also, started they operating in parts of the economy or society that were not as traditional as the previous generations of cooperatives (Milovanovic, 2016 and Regional Cooperation Council, 2015: pp. 121-135).

Regarding Greece, as well in this case, some cooperatives could be considered social enterprises. The cooperative model has experienced in the past a negative reputation, as state-subsidized non-viable organisations (Kaminari and Papageorgiou, 2010 and Bellis, 2016). From a policy-making side, the cooperative legislation is under discussion to be united and amended (Adam 2016).

Social Cooperative Enterprise - Social Cooperative of Limited Liability

In Greece, Social Cooperative Enterprises, shortly Social Cooperatives, emerged in the early 2000s and were introduced through the “Development and Reform of mental health services and other provisions” under Law 2716/1999 (Gazette A’ 96/17-5-1999), called Social Cooperative Enterprises with Limited Liability (Koi.S.PE.). This aimed at the socio-economic inclusion, work-integration, of people with mental health disabilities (Zoehrer, Tzouvelekas, 2015). The later Law 4019/2011 is following the previously mentioned Law 2716/1999 and Law 1667/1986 on civic cooperatives, and establishes the legal form of Social Cooperative Enterprise (Koin.S.Ep.), without taking into consideration that the previous legal framework already created a type of work integration social cooperatives, which have experience and have created jobs in the past and still generate jobs (Theodorikakou,, 2016) like “Klimax Plus”, which generates income from its main activities of recycling and catering on a market-basis, through contracts with the private sector.

Law 4430/2016, based on the previous 4019/2011, keeps two sub-categories of Social Cooperative Enterprises:

- a. Social Cooperative Enterprises for Inclusion, known also as work integration social enterprises for vulnerable social groups e.g. disabled persons, drug addicts or former drug addicts, young offenders etc.
- b. Social Cooperative Enterprises for Collective/Productive purposes, being active in a wider range of sectors e.g. culture, education, local products etc. promoting collective interests.

Social Cooperative Enterprises acquire their commercial capacity through their legal status. The commercial capacity does not make the Koin.S.Ep. for-profit commercial companies (Adam, 2014: pp 34-42). Currently, there are around 700⁸ social cooperative enterprises registered in Greece, and 17 are Social Cooperative Enterprises with Limited Liability (Theodorikakou, 2016).

⁸ During the research, efforts to establish communication with a representative of the Hellenic Ministry of Labor and a representative of the Registrar of Social Entrepreneurship in the Ministry in order to confirm officially this number. Unfortunately there was no answer from the Ministry. Based on data received by the Ministry in April 2015, there were 700 Social Cooperative Enterprises registered at this point.

Additionally, law 4430/2016 created the Workers' Cooperative Enterprise as a legal form.

In Croatia, Social Cooperatives are recognised by law (Rosandic, 2016) with one article, Article 66, within the Act on Cooperatives, since 2011, but without any further regulation (Petricevic 2016 and Vikovic, 2016).

Based on the Cooperative Act (OG 34/11, 125/13, 76/14):

"A Social cooperative is a cooperative established with the purposes of providing:

- assistance in meeting basic needs of the socially disadvantaged, disabled and other natural persons which they cannot otherwise meet on their own or with an assistance of other family members due to adverse personal, economic, social circumstances;
- work and economic integration for persons with reduced work capacity and other natural persons who lack resources for meeting basic needs, and are therefore unable to meet those needs by themselves, their work, non-labour income or any other sources. Members of a social cooperative may be users or providers of services or workers of the cooperative."

Therefore without any further support or restricting regulation, specifications on how they should facilitate work integration, which is considered one of their main aims, social cooperatives have to self-recognize, self-define as social cooperative (Galera, 2016). There are more than 40 (Vidovic, 2016) in Croatia and one of most suitable forms of work integration social enterprises in the country (Vidovic and Baturina, 2016: p.10)

Also, in Serbia, Social Cooperatives exist, some of them established through NGOs from the year 2000 onwards, providing social services (Milovanovic, 2016). Similar to Croatia, they are defined by Law on Cooperatives (Kekic 2016, Cvejic, 2016 and Spear, Aiken, Noya, and Clarence, 2012: p. 91)

Social Cooperatives in all three countries are connected with work integration models, but it is also civil society organisations that establish activities regarding work integration (Vukovic, 2016 and Milovanovic, 2016).

Enterprises for employment and professional training of persons with disability

A legal entity similar to Social Cooperative Enterprise of Limited Liability (Koi.S.PE) created under Law 2716/1999 in Greece, are the Enterprises for employment and professional training of persons with disability in Serbia (Regional Cooperation Council 2015: p. 124). This form is presented in a report by the OECD (Spear, Aiken, Noya, and Clarence, 2012: p. 26) as the only legally recognized form of social enterprise. Most of those social enterprises operate with government subsidies, and lack capacity to adapt to the new economic environment after the Yugoslav wars, but, according to Milovanovic (2016) could be transformed into WISE models, if the support and promotion from the government side existed.

Sheltered/ Protected Workshops

Sheltered/protected workshops are a form we see in Croatia and has been identified as one legal entity of social enterprise, although not autonomous organisations and usually established and managed by local authorities. They face sustainability issues, as they lack in market-orientation and the ones that survive are supported by the government and have managed to produce products for the market, while the rest are still depending on subsidies (Vukovic, 2016 and Vidovic 2016).

As Sonja Vukovic (2016), president of CEDRA HR and Slap mentions:

“When we talk about Yugoslavia or socialist models, there are several very good models in Yugoslavia in socialism, but we did something very stupid actually. We started with our own countries with the notion that anything we had in socialism was bad, which was not the truth of course. What we did was, that anything that had to do with socialism is now off and we were trying very hard to get new capitalistic models, not taking care of socialist collective, or the social aspect of it.”

Limited Liability Company and other entities

During the last few years, some other types of social enterprises started to appear, in Serbia, which use the legal form of a Limited Liability Company, a for-profit entity with a social mission re-investing their profits into their social cause (Milovanovic 2016 and Rakin 2016), but they are not recognized legally as social enterprises, they are only self-defined as such. This is a similarity also with Croatia, where Limited Liability Companies are also chosen as a legal form by associations, other non-for-profit organisations (Vukovic, 2016) and individuals for social enterprise. They do not have any legal recognition though, but are self-defined as businesses with a social mission, as social companies. In Greece, we also have examples of similar legal forms of companies, that define themselves as social enterprises, not being recognised as such by the legal framework yet.

Informal forms

As Social Entrepreneurship and social enterprises have their roots in the broader civil society sector, including citizen initiatives, volunteer organisations and local exchange groups, potential social enterprises start as informal forms of activity. This form is even more difficult to follow because of their nature. In Greece (Garefi, 2013 and Omikron Project, 2014) and Croatia (Institute for Social Sciences IVO PILAR, 2015: p. 60) there have been efforts to collect data regarding these organisational structures, which are considered as emerging social enterprises also in the case of Serbia (Spear, Aiken, Noya, and Clarence, 2012: pp. 29-30)

3. Ecosystems of social enterprises in Southeastern Europe (International actors, European Union, Social inclusion, employment and poverty relief etc.)

A wide range of stakeholders is involved in the promotion, establishment and development of Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises. The influence of international organisations, like the USAID and British Council, European actors like Heinrich Boell Foundation and the European Union itself seem to be an important driver, but it is also national actors from civil society at large and networks of organisations that have a strong presence in the ecosystem and also take part also in the discourse on policies for the sector. In this chapter, we will look into the following groups of actors in categories, describing their role in the development of Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises in Croatia, Greece and Serbia:

- International and European actors
- European Union
- National actors

3.1. International and European actors

Besides the influence of the European Union, not only in term of policies but also funding, international organisations are contributing to the development of Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises, mainly through educational programmes and skills-capacity building and often in collaboration with national and local stakeholders.

For Croatia (Tonković and Križanović, 2012: p. 95) and Serbia, it is through international organisations like USAID, especially until 2007-8 (Galera, 2016), and the British Council, which started some of the first initiatives around the topic (Cvejic, 2016 and Vidovic 2012: p. 12, Regional Corporation Council, 2015: p. 107). Especially, the British Council, supported the discussions and development of the sector in Greece (British Council, 2012) through its programme “Think Social. Act Business.”, in Serbia (Spear, Aiken, Noya, and Clarence, 2012: p 41) as well as in Croatia with the programme “Skills for social entrepreneurs” (British Council, 2010). In Greece, the programme was supported jointly by the European Network of Cultural Institutes (British Council, 2013). Furthermore, the British Council also worked closely with the Municipality of Athens and the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (Kokkinakis, 2016). Another international actor, who is active and shows particular interest in the sector, is the Heinrich Boell Foundation which supports conferences, workshops, skill development schemes in all three countries. Namely in Greece, the Heinrich Boell Foundation is one of the organisations participating in the Greek Social Entrepreneurship Forum, SE Forum (Greek Social Entrepreneurship Forum, 2014). It is worth mentioning that it is also the Austrian bank, Erste Bank and (Rakin, 2016) the Erste Bank foundation, that is active in the sector through Corporate Social Responsibility programmes and direct financial support, grants and loans for social enterprises e.g. microfinance instruments launched in the beginning of 2016 (Rakin, 2016) and support organisations. In the region of the Western Balkans, Croatia and Serbia in our research, but explicitly not in Greece, where the bank does not have any presence. Unicredit and its foundation, Unicredit Foundation,

were mentioned as an international financial actor (Petricevic, 2016 and Videvic, 2016) but its activity was describes as project-based rather than strategic involvement in the sector. One example of such a project is a programme called “My Community”, which provides direct financial support to social enterprises.

Regarding international and European actors, Panagiotis Tournavitis (2016), Managing director of the Cooperative Bank of Karditsa, points out during an interview that there is a need for building and strengthening the already existing infrastructures for Social Entrepreneurship in Greece in strong collaboration together with the national, regional and local stakeholders in order to create sustainable infrastructures and support mechanisms, rather than investing directly into social enterprises or building support structures that are temporary and project-based.

“USAID was quite strong in Croatia and then the first trainings have been supported by USAID. We cannot ignore the fact that we have been educated by US people and according to their model but then again we adapt their model to the circumstances”, states Andreja Rosandic (2016), Sustainability Manager at Nesst during an interview. Nesst itself was one of the first actors who promoted and provided some grants based on their model since 2006, but narrowed down its operations in Croatia during the last two years (Vidovic, 2016 and Petricevic, 2016) and stopped its operations in Croatia in 2016.

According to Dražen Šimleša (2016):

“It were the international organisations who brought the concept of social entrepreneurship to Southeastern Europe and especially Croatia. It was then transferred through civil society organisations which is visible in their approach to social entrepreneurship, US-school rather than the European approach, which becomes stronger the last five years, maybe a little more”

Šimleša sees a shift from the person-centric, US approach, to more community-based European approach, which also reflected in the National Strategy for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship. Regarding international organisations, Teo Petricevic Director of ACT Group (2016), agrees that their presence is very small during the last years. Novkovic and Golja mention (2015: p. 158) also the presence of The Soros Foundation, SIDA-Sweden, MANTRA-The Netherlands, as supporter of the civil society in Croatia.

From international aspect, also in Serbia, the influence is coming mainly through donations, USAID being one of the main actors (Rakin 2016 and Borzaga, Galera and Nogales, 2008: p. 40), contributing to the development of civil society and social entrepreneurship. In Greece, US-rooted organisations like “Ashoka”, an international NGO promoting social entrepreneurship, which organises competitions, programmes and conferences.

UNDP had a development programme for social enterprises, mostly in the field of environment, covering all the region of Southeast Europe and Black See countries, including participants from Greece, Croatia and Serbia (UNDP, 2013)

An international organisation that operates in all three countries is the Impact Hub, namely Impact Hub Athens in Greece, Impact Hub Zagreb in Croatia and Impact Hub

Belgrade in Serbia. The Impact Hub is a global association of local organisations, which bring in experience and programmes and competitions from the global network (Kokkinakis, 2016 and Krivokuca 2016), which helps to showcase good practices, but according to discussions with stakeholders they are considered new actors in the ecosystem.

The European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA) has started to organise events and activities in Serbia and Greece (Krivokuca, 2016, EVPA 2014 and 2015), in Greece its only member is the Latsis I. Foundation for Public Benefit (2016), in Serbia it is Smart Kollektiv (Krivokuca, 2016), a support organization and in Croatia the Cooperative for Ethical Finance and Nesst (EVPA, 2015).

3.2. European Union

The European Union is listed as a separate actor, as it significantly influences national policies either in Greece and Croatia, which are member states, or in Serbia, which is an accession candidate. Social Entrepreneurship and social enterprises are considered by the Europe 2020 strategy driver for inclusive growth, job generation, work integration, provision of social and healthcare services. In regard to Greece and Croatia, it is the European Union that has pushed for the development of Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises (European Commission, Task Force for Greece, 2013b and Galera, 2016). Jelena Milovanovic from SIPRU (2016) points out that “the developments of the European Union, especially now, with the crisis, with Greece, with the migrant crisis, with Brexit, of importance for the general public but not for the sector of social entrepreneurship in Serbia.”

Additionally, it is one of the major investors, donors of the sector through various programmes regarding employment (DG Growth, 2014 and 2015) or Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) programme for accession (Novkovic and Golja, 2015: p. 164) for the case of Serbia and Croatia before joining the European Union as a member in 2014, and INTERREG programmes for the cases of Croatia and Greece.

3.3. National actors (governmental, non-governmental, civil society, private sector)

Government organisations

Ministries, regional and local authorities and other government organisations are involved in the development of Social Enterprises, whether actively framing supporting policies or more passively. From an institutional perspective, we have already presented and compared the existing frameworks in the three countries from which the involvement of various ministries, especially the National Ministries of Labor, Employment and Social Policies, is visible. One of the reasons of their involvement is explained by the fact that social entrepreneurship and social enterprises are linked to social policy, as it is also the case on the European Union level. More specifically, social entrepreneurship and social enterprises are considered a solution for work integration of vulnerable and other

special social groups (European Commission, 2013a), mostly through the WISE models of social enterprises, and a path to combat unemployment, which marks high rates in all three countries in our research.

In Serbia it is different government organisations involved, the Ministry of Social Policy which is working on the new law, as presented in the previous chapter. (Milovanovic, 2016 and Kekic, 2016), Ministry of Finance and Economy. According to the OECD (Spear, Aiken, Noya, and Clarence, 2012: p. 47), there is a weakness of understanding between government bodies and the non-governmental actors in the field.

In Croatia, it is the Ministry of Labour and Pension System, the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth and the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs that are active in the field (Ivanković Knežević, Miličević, Sesar and Brlek, 2013), as well as the National Foundation for Civil Society development, which is takes a stronger role (Vidovic, 2016)

These institutions through cooperation with civil society organisations have recognized the importance of the social enterprise sector and are actively involved in its development through the creation of a number of strategies, which include measures to encourage social entrepreneurship. The Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs is the holder of the National Strategy for the creation of an enabling environment for civil society 2012-2016 in which “the development of social entrepreneurship as a lever of social development and poverty reduction” and “creation the normative and institutional framework for the development of social entrepreneurship” are explicitly mentioned.

Besides ministries, which represent central governments, there are also regional and local authorities, who have a role in the ecosystem. Regarding Greece, Theodorikakou (2016) points out that local authorities should support the Social Entrepreneurship and social economy initiatives in general. An example that has been actively supporting are the Municipality of Athens and the Development and Destination Management Agency of Athens, the local development agency operating under the Municipality, with the their programme “Enterprising Socially” (ADDMA, 2015)

Intermediary organisations: Social Entrepreneurship support

In all three cases, Greece, Croatia and Serbia, the conceptual discussion on what social entrepreneurship and social enterprises are is not only a theoretical discourse but it frames how national stakeholders position themselves and interact with each other. The so called intermediary sector, support organisations and networks for Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises, has been emphasized by all stakeholders interviewed for this research from the three countries. Although there are differences, because of the special socioeconomic conditions and context of each country, the importance of intermediary organisations resonates with a shared statement for the development of the sector, during the last years. A similarity in all three countries lies in the cooperation of various stakeholders into networks for the promotion and support for Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises.

In Serbia, the Coalition for the Development of Social Enterprises (CoSED) was established from a number of organisations and social enterprises supporting the sector (Regional Cooperation Council, 2015: p.12 and Cvejic, 2016).

“The Coalition for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship in Serbia was founded by five big non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which were already working, very known, very successful in their own policy field and joined efforts, because they recognized that one area where they could cooperate was the one of Social Entrepreneurship. So, they established this coalition, which is still an informal coalition, but they use to operate under this common umbrella called Coalition for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship. It was established by the European Movement in Serbia, Smart Kolektiv, initiative for development of cooperation, TRAG foundation. They started to appear in public under this common umbrella. Under this umbrella is also Sense, the Social Economy Network of Serbia, which is gathering 20-50 social enterprises. Some of these NGOs were the ones who established some social enterprises in the previous period. Some were successful, some were not so successful”, explains Jelena Milanovanovic (2016).

Bijana Dakic - Djordjevic, Exective Director of TRAG Foundation (2016) argues that:

“Since we are lacking a favorable environment the Coalition for the Development for Social Entrepreneurship created the Belgrade Declaration⁹, which followed the Strasbourg Declaration¹⁰ (European Commission, 2014a), and was a civil society initiative based on good practice from Europe and tried to use this as the advocacy tool toward the government, which was very rigid in its approach and decided to work on a law and going into the direction of using social entrepreneurship as type of welfare system.”

Explaining further the developments in the sector, Dina Rakin (2016), Researcher at the European Movement Serbia mentions in an interview:

“Organizations like the European Movement of Serbia, that is part of the Coalition of the Development of Social Entrepreneurship, are important for support. We do not have social enterprises, but we do work in the field, with advocacy, research. Those organisations are really important and recognized by social enterprises and national institutions and internationally, especially on the EU level.”

The National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Cvejic 2016 and Rakin, 2016) in Serbia is also named as one of the actors active in the field of Social Entrepreneurship in Serbia, but more in terms of promoting corporate social responsibility rather than social enterprises as such.

In Croatia, one of the biggest actors is CEDRA HR, a cluster for ecological and social innovation and development, founded by the organisations Slap, ACT, in partnership

9 The Belgrade Declaration on the development of Social Entrepreneurship in the region of Western Balkans and Turkey is a strategic document signed by stakeholders of social entrepreneurship in the wider region of Southeastern Europe <http://belgradedeclaration.net/>

10 The Strasbourg Declaration got adopted during the conference “Social Entrepreneurs Have Your Say” in 2014, which was hosted by the European Commission

with the associations Zdravi Grad Split and the Centre for Technical Culture from Rijeka (Vidovic, 2012) as a national network of support centers, having offices in Zagreb and the cities of Osijek, Čakovec, Dubrovnik, Split, Rijeka (Vukovic, 2016), and actively engaged in the discussions around the National Strategy for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship but also doing educational programmes.”

This was, according to Sonja Vukovic, Director of CEDRA and President of Slap (Vukovic, 2016), “a platform to start dealing, developing and creating favourable conditions for social enterprise in Croatia, and putting all key stakeholders at one place. So, at that time, we realized that we had to do something on our own, meaning that social enterprises have to join together and start making off what we really need and what kind of support we need from that government and other organisations. It was a kind of policy platform, but we also needed support centres, resource centres.”

CEDRA HR is a national network that covers the whole national territory as follows: all Slavonian region, east continental part of Croatia, west part of Croatia, region of central Croatia (CEDRA Zagreb), three resource centers on the coast, covering north, mid and south Adriatic areas (Vukovic, 2016).

Giulia Galera stresses out that “in Croatia, there are many social enterprise networks, which is a difference to other central and Southeast European countries. There is a really good ability of organisations to get together for lobbying and coordination purposes, to try to become stronger together. And this is a very important dynamic, which also allows also the replication. When compared to other countries, Croatia is quite good in this respect.” (Galera, 2016),

In Greece, there are similar support networks. The Social Entrepreneurship Forum (SE Forum), which hosts national and regional conferences and networking opportunities for the sector (Bellis, 2016, Chrysogelos, 2016 and Sourmaidou, 2016). It is an informal platform, which was founded from a variety of actors in field operating on a national, regional and local level and created also during its conference in November 2015 a Code of Conduct for Social Enterprises and their support organisations (Social Entrepreneurship Forum, 2014 and 2015), which was opened up to public consultation during the first semester of 2016. In the shadow of the new law 4434/2016, many informal networks around social and solidarity economy, the commons, cooperativism have emerged, hence the discussion of the sector focus more on the recent legal developments, which have caused confusion.

On a regional level, the Network of Social Cooperative Enterprises of Central Macedonia (Sourmaidou, 2016) followed by the Network of Social Cooperative Enterprises of Eastern Macedonia, are the only networks of their kind in Greece. One of the educational programmes it created with Ergani Women Entrepreneurship Centre (Ergani, 2015), called “So New”, which was implemented 2015-2016 in the region of Central Macedonia, was supported by the grant-making foundation Solidarity Now (Solidarity Now, 2016), associated to Open Society Foundation. In Thessaly, in central Greece, the Development Agency of Karditsa operates as support organisation with education and consulting services tailored to the sector of social enterprises and social economy in general (Bellis, 2016). The Cooperative Bank of Karditsa, together with the Cooperative Banks of Ioannina and Chania (Crete) established in collaboration with the Development Agency of

Karditsa a collaborative social finance scheme, aiming at the creating a Social Enterprise Ecosystem Fund (SEE GR, 2017), one of the initiatives funded through the Social Finance Enterprise Initiative of the European Commission.

This is a similarity with Croatia, where out of a similar initiative, supported by CEDRA and the Cooperative for Ethical Banking, the project “eBanka” was created (Vukovic, 2016) aiming at creating a bank targeting the social and cooperative enterprise sector. In difference to Serbia, where mainly European and International actors rather than national ones, drive financial support for social entrepreneurship activities.

In terms of support, Philanthropic Foundations and grant making foundations, are seen in the sector as actors, mainly through financing activities of intermediary organisations or direct funding of social enterprises in Greece (Theodorikakou, 2016) and Serbia (Dakic-Djordjevic, 2016), where there is a special emphasis on social enterprises in the sector of green economy.

Conclusions: Challenges and trends for the development of social entrepreneurship in Southeastern Europe (Croatia, Serbia, Greece)

The terms of “social entrepreneurship”, “social entrepreneur”, “social economy” and “Social economy enterprises” are often used inter-changeably in all three cases, and even if they are linked with each other, their inter-changeable use, has caused conceptual issues in a common understanding from different stakeholders (Petričević, 2012, Bekridaki, 2016, Borzaga and Galera, 2014a). Something that we do not only encounter in Southeastern Europe, but also from the side of the European Commission itself, one of the major actors in the field in our cases. This is also pointed out by a position paper of EMES (2011), in which the need for clearance in terminology is emphasized. As the European Union and its policies influence local developments in one way, introducing legal and institutional frameworks, or another, by creating dedicated programmes and initiatives to promote and finance the sector, its communication needs to be clear.

A common understanding is closely related with the identity of the sector in each country, whether it is self-defined or defined by the government policies. Social enterprises are emerging economic actors, but given the long tradition of Europe, social-enterprise-oriented activities are not a new form, but a different form of enterprise within the economy.

The institutionalization attempts of national governments in order to strengthen the sector have been restricted to legal or policy documents (strategic documents) in Croatia, Greece and Serbia and have contributed little to the actual development of Social Entrepreneurship, and especially social enterprises. Regardless, if there is one legally recognized form of social enterprise or not, in all three countries, various forms are used. The institutionalization based on criteria, which could fit all legal forms, or amendments of existing legal forms (Galera and Salvatori, 2015: p. 6) has proven to be a more efficient strategy rather than creating a new legal form.

It is true that Croatia, Greece and Serbia share similar socioeconomic conditions, and despite the fact that one would argue that Social Entrepreneurship is in all of them in an early phase of development, their pace and characteristics of development are different. For the cases of Croatia and Serbia though, the influence of international, Anglo-Saxon organisations, especially US-based or US-related is stronger present, than it is the fact in Greece, where those organisations have at times an active role, but are not embedded into the local/domestic context.

Based on the interviews and literature, Croatia, Greece and Serbia have not tapped into the full potential of social enterprises as such yet. What is evident that in the absence of supporting policies and implemented mechanisms, they are operating bottom-up, often within the informal economy or as volunteer organisations. Especially, Greece, as the oldest member of the European Union, seems, particularly regarding the legal framework, disconnected from European good practices, lessons learned which would facilitate the process.

Croatia, Greece and Serbia share the involvement of traditional domestic actors, like civil society organisations and cooperatives, in the emerging field of Social Entrepreneurship.

In all of them there are efforts, with different results though, to create a common understanding, identity and voice of the sector. In the case of Croatia, the strongest example would be CEDRA- because of its organizational reach- in the case of Greece the Social Entrepreneurship Forum, because of its slow but steady institutional growth- and in the case of Serbia the Coalition for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship as it made a clear statement with the Belgrade Declaration.

If we would assess the stages of development of Social Entrepreneurship based on Galera and Salvatori, (2015: pp. 7-8) Serbia is clearly at an embryonic stage, especially because the sector does not show that it is not self-driven yet and depending on foreign actors (Dakic- Djordjevic, 2016). As there is a tradition of associations, cooperatives in all three cases. It is worth mentioning that in Croatia and Greece, cooperativism is increasing run by non-traditional social groups like young people (Vidovic, 2016 and Bellis 2016) going beyond the work integration enterprises. Especially social cooperatives and other legal forms dealing with people with disabilities, or work integration of vulnerable groups, tend to be used as a privatization process of welfare services.

Croatia is outstanding from our analysis because of the interesting bottom-up approach its actors have taken in order to shape the sector but also influence national policies into the direction the sector itself needs. It is the only country in our comparison that has a national network of support centers, organized from the civil society sector, and not the state, which provides the sector with a stronger standing in the dialogue with authorities but also safeguards the autonomy of the sector. It seems that in this case policies would be supportive rather than imposing and put Croatia in the category of a progressively emerging Social Entrepreneurship sector (Galera and Salvatori, 2015: pp. 8-9).

Although Greece has a dedicated legislation for the sector, in fact the top- down approach of the state did not bring the awaited results. The main aim of Social Cooperatives created under Law 4430/2016 and the previous Law 4019/2011 was to provide a solution to unemployment, namely the work integration of unemployed people (besides people with mental disabilities). The economic contribution or development of the sector since 2012 is not known through public data and the data available on the number of those entities is not accurate. Greece, although there was not the same influence from international organisations, was clearly influenced by initiatives and policies of the European Union regarding the sector, but did not manage to create an identity of the sector, except the efforts of the Greek Social Entrepreneurship Forum with its Code of Conduct (2015). We would argue that the state of the sector is between embryonic and progressively emerging, but because of the impact of the economic crisis holding back, as the private sector as a whole, and depending on state-driven decisions, as it was pointed out from interviews (Sourmaidou 2016 and Bellis 2016).

Based on the current political and socioeconomic circumstances, including the legal and institutional framework as well as the contribution of actors in the field, all the three countries - Greece, Croatia and Serbia - face challenges for the development of the Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise Sector, partly because the sector as such is in its early stages in these countries (Šimleša,, 2016, Bellis, 2016 and Dakic - Djordjevic, 2016). In this chapter, I will try to identify and analyse the challenges and trends, based on interviews conducted with stakeholders.

1) Weak or not supportive environment (legal and institutional, financial, non- financial)

In all three countries efforts to create a legal framework in one way or another have taking place (ISEDE-NET, 2012: pp. 69-80). What is questioned by stakeholders is the efficiency and outcomes of those efforts in order to actually facilitate the development of Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises (Chrysogelos 2016, Krivokuca 2016, Vidovic 2016 and Milovanovic 2016). For Croatia, the National Strategy for Social Entrepreneurship Development needs to be implemented (Vukovic, 2016 and Šimleša, 2016). In Greece, “there is a basic framework for social cooperative enterprises and a number of organisations that are raising awareness and creating opportunities for social entrepreneurs. On the other hand, Greece also lacks a strong base to support new businesses in general, when taxes and unstable political structures cannot guarantee the sustainability of these new businesses, urging most of them to seek opportunities outside Greece,” (Farmakis, 2016). Additionally, the legal framework is changing (Sourmaidou, 2016). The development of a support system for social enterprises is considered weak in all three countries, also because of the problems of access to finance, support funds, but also the absence of any benefits to social enterprises (Chrysogelos 2016, Rakin 2016, Petricevic, 2016). As for Serbia, legal and institutional framework is not recognizing appropriately the sector as such, neither does the private sector, especially banks, provide appropriate financial support (Rakin, 2016). “It is necessary that all participants in the economic system, before all the decision makers and relevant state authorities, organizations and institutions and private enterprises as well that are focused on profit generation, recognize specific role of the social entrepreneurship and help its affirming, survival and functioning”, says Ninoslave Kekic (2016). Tournavitis (2016) mentions explicitly that what is missing for the support providers is a kind of standardization of processes for the sector. Closely linked to the supportive environment for the development of Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises, is the own capacity, the lack of business skills, of the social enterprises themselves in all three countries in our research (Rakin, 2016, Rosandic, 2016 and Tournavitis 2016)

2) Culture

Cultural elements were mentioned during most of the stakeholder interviews for each country, as one of the main challenges. For the cases of Croatia and Serbia, this is linked to the tradition of post-socialist regimes (Dakic - Djordjevic 2016, Radojicic 2016, and Odinsky-Zec, 2016) and the strong presence informal economy (Šimleša, 2016), as entrepreneurship is perceived as a “grey area”, because of the lack of trust also in institutions: “... You can make laws and institutions, but if people do not trust them that they are functioning well, you did nothing. The majority of people will still not support it. Maybe, I would emphasise culture, values, and norms are a as main challenge to overcome” (Vidovic, 2016). For the Greece, Croatia and Serbia is the lack of business mindset-related to culture (Kokkinakis, 2016, Rosandic, 2016 and Stancic, 2016) a common issue. The lack of a culture of collaboration was also pointed out for Greece specifically. The Self-organisation of the sector, as a way to self-establish from a bottom-up perspective, based on shared values, principles rather than connected with specific political parties or clientelistic relations with the state (Chrysogelos, 2016 and Stubbs &

Zrinščak, 2015: pp. 398 -403) has been emphasized in order to avoid mistakes done by the civil society, NGO sector in the past (Krivokuca, 2016, Theodorikakou 2016, Šimleša, 2016).

A trend named is Public Procurement as an opportunity area for social enterprises (Tournavitis 2016, Petricevic 2016, Kekic 2016) with “ developed in terms of clauses and acknowledgement of the social value of this organisations, can be a key driver in social enterprise development in the region. Public procurement is one strategy, not specific of the region of course, because it is a core topic all across Europe. There are very negative examples of public procurement as a substitutive strategy to responsibilities the public authorities. The experience like the UK, is in some way not a positive experience, because social enterprises have been used as a privatisation strategy to the core. What we are looking at is co-planning together with public authorities and social enterprises,” says Galera (2016).

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