

# EUROPEAN PROJECT CAPSE

Collective Action for Parity in the Social Economy

## POLICY BRIEF

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## 1. Why the CAPSE project ?

Gender inequalities continue to hinder the full and equal participation of women in the governance of the social economy (SE), despite their overrepresentation among employees and volunteers. This economy, which is built on democratic principles and social justice, still suffers from male-dominated governance and invisible mechanisms that perpetuate inequality.

The European project **CAPSE** (Collective Action for Parity in the Social Economy) was designed to:

- **Analyze:** Provide an accurate overview of the barriers and needs faced by organizations regarding gender parity in their leadership bodies.
- **Inspire:** Highlight exemplary initiatives and share good practices from within the SE sector.
- **Raise awareness:** Encourage social economy networks and federations to recognize gender inequalities within their governance structures.
- **Support and equip:** Develop educational resources, deliver training, and assist organizations in creating roadmaps toward more inclusive governance.

## 2. Key findings

- European parity legislation largely overlooks the social economy.
- SE organizations, often small in size, are not covered by existing quota regulations.
- Quantitative parity (numbers) does not guarantee qualitative parity (actual exercise of power).
- The democratic principle “one person = one vote” can obscure issues of gender parity in SE governance.

### **3. Practical recommendations for social economy stakeholders**

#### **a) Raise awareness across all SE levels**

- Train leaders on gender-balanced governance.
- Create networks of committed organizations to share tools.
- Promote good practices and inspiring testimonials.

#### **b) Integrate parity into statutes**

- Enshrine parity as a founding principle.
- Set balanced quotas and monitor them regularly.
- Introduce co-presidency or mixed co-leadership structures.

#### **c) Train for inclusion**

- Educate leadership teams on qualitative parity.
- Address biases, speaking time, and meeting structures.
- Use practical tools like the CAPSE self-assessment.

#### **d) Develop a parity action plan**

- Formalize commitments through a strategic plan.
- Appoint a parity officer.
- Monitor progress and adjust actions accordingly.

#### **e) Promote women's access to leadership**

- Set up mentoring and handover systems.
- Adapt the conditions of responsibility (hours, term length, etc.).

## 4. Policy recommendations for systemic change

### a) Adapt legislative frameworks to the SE

- Extend quotas to organizations with fewer than 250 employees.
- Acknowledge the democratic specificities of SE structures.
- Make certain public funding conditional on verified parity commitments.

### b) Build a common European foundation

- Launch a **European Charter for gender-balanced governance in the SE**.
- Include parity criteria in EU calls for projects.
- Harmonize the collection of gender-disaggregated data at the European level.

### c) Develop financial incentives

- Create dedicated funding for training and evaluation.
- Provide bonus funding for gender-balanced organizations.

### d) Adapt evaluation tools

- Develop indicators tailored to the participatory nature of SE governance.
- Encourage the use of frameworks like the **GREENA Toolkit**.

## 5. Go further

- [Project - CAPSE Project](#)
- CAPSE White Paper
- [Methodological Guide - CAPSE Project](#)
- [Interviews on the state of parity - CAPSE Project](#)
- [Directive \(EU\) 2022/2381 of the European Parliament and of t...](#)

## Coordination and partners

- [ESS France](#) (Coordinator – France)
- [Chaire TerrESS – Sciences Po Bordeaux](#) (France)
- [COCETA](#) (Spain)
- [ConcertES](#) (Belgium)
- [Pour La Solidarité - PLS](#) (Belgium)

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