Social & Solidarity Economy

1st European Forum on SSE

January 28th 2016

European Parliament

# What

We calling for social enterprises to represent Ireland in Brussels next year at the European United Left / Nordic Confederation Group (GUE / NGL) Social and Solidarity Economy Forum.

# When

Brussels, January 28th 2016. European Parliament. Expenses covered if selected to attend.

The Irish Social Enterprise Network is looking for people that want to partake in the upcoming event in Brussels and meet with leaders from across the divide in formats yet to be decided. The closing date to apply is December 14th.

# Next steps

Apply now through the application available online. We will contact you with the results. The application is to be decided between the Irish Social Enterprise Network and the GUE/NGL grouping.

# Background:

Last May, the European United Left / Nordic Confederation Group (GUE / NGL) decided to turn its traditional support to the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) into one of its main strategic processes.

As an alternative proposal to the dominant economic-productive model, the SSE understands the economy not as a goal but as a tool to reach personal and community welfare and development. Integrating economic activities centered on people, their community and the environment, the SSE affects not only the way the production is carried on but all the aspects of the economic process, promoting fairer relations of production, a different approach to the goods distribution process, encouraging responsible consumption and even shifting the traditional schemes of financing activities. The SSE consists of cooperatives, associations, social enterprises and associations of informal workers, other grassroots groups and individuals which are all guided by principles of justice, democracy, cooperation, reciprocity, mutual aid and sustainability. The economic importance of the SSE is beyond any doubt, representing over 14 million jobs (6.5% of total employment in the EU) and having proved to be extraordinary resilient to the impacts of the crisis concerning unemployment. It is a booming sector, which generates qualitative benefits, which although difficult to be measured, have the potential to improve the quality of democracy while proposing frames of production and reproduction more compatible with more just and sustainable societies.

Therefore, the GUE / NGL has set as one of its main goals for 2016 the organisation of the First European Forum of Social and Solidarity Economy (1EFSSE), aiming at promoting an exchange of experiences among the different experiences of the SSE in Europe. It will try to highlight the problems faced by the sector, as well as its potential in tackling the crisis effects. Specific actions of political impact will be proposed intended to foster the consolidation and expansion of the SSE within the EU.

On 3rd September 2015, Chris Gordon and Stuart Frasier on behalf of the Irish Social Enterprise Network and Inchicore & Bluebell Community Addiction Team, met with the GUE/NGL political grouping to talk about potential partnerships for social enterprise across the EU.

It was proposed that a diverse meeting would take place on the 28th January in 2016 in the EU Parliament to convene some of the leaders in the space across Ireland to showcase their work and lobby to create a coherent message for the diverse sector.

If you would like to apply to attend, please contact us on [info@socent.ie](mailto:info@socent.ie)