

SPECIAL EUROBAROMETER 567

Social economy in the life of Europeans

Fieldwork: May-June 2025

Social economy organisations prioritise people, communities and the environment over profits.

In Europe, over 4 million of them employ 11.5 million people in a variety of sectors such as social services, healthcare, social housing, renewable energy, circular economy, agriculture, media and recreation.

They play a crucial role in tackling societal challenges and promote fair working conditions by involving employees in governance. They often create opportunities for underrepresented groups, such as women and young people, and many work to make the digital and green transitions fair and inclusive.

3 in 4

Europeans believe the social economy is **important for the well-being of society**



They say the social economy makes the biggest difference in...



Health
58%



Education
44%



Culture
42%



Environment & energy
36%



Agriculture & food
35%

Social economy organisations are widely recognised,
although only about half of Europeans are familiar with the term “social economy”.

The most recognised social economy organisations are...

73%

Associations



69%

Foundations



56%

Cooperatives



50%

Mutual societies



47%

Social enterprises



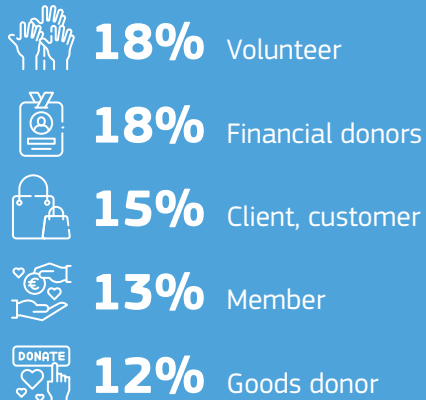
* Respondents were subsequently provided with a definition of “social economy” during the survey.
This informed their responses to follow-up questions, including those regarding the importance of the social economy.

The social economy is present in the everyday life of Europeans



Half of all Europeans

engaged with social economy organisations in the last 5 years as...



1 in 3 receive help from social economy organisations



93%
Europeans want business to reflect social economy values

- Social and environmental purpose
- Reinvestment of profits
- Democratic or participatory governance

Most Europeans support measures to help social economy organisations thrive, including:



Resources and funding

EU funding is available through programmes such as the [European Social Fund Plus](#), the [European Regional Development Fund](#), [Horizon Europe](#), the [Single Market Programme](#), [Erasmus+](#) and the [LIFE programme](#).

[EU Social Economy Gateway](#) one-stop-shop website for EU funding, training, events, country-specific info, and capacity-building information and resources

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Catalogue number: KE-01-25-241-EN-N
ISBN: 978-92-68-33019-7 | DOI: 10.2767/6220506