Social Good Accelerator EU
European Movement for Acceleration Tech of organisations of general interest

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Position paper

European Commission's Data Strategy

Paris-Brussels, May 2020

The Data Strategy and the White Paper on Artificial Intelligence are the first pillars of the European Commission's new Digital Agenda 2021-2027. They both emphasise the need to give priority to people in the development of technology, as well as the need to defend and promote European values and rights in the way technology is designed, manufactured and deployed in the real economy.

The European Data Strategy aims to create a single market for data that will ensure Europe's global competitiveness and data sovereignty. Common European Data Spaces will ensure that more data will be available for use in the economy and society, while retaining control over the companies and individuals that generate the data.

The European Commission thus presents data as "an essential resource for economic growth, competitiveness, innovation, job creation and the progress of society in general".

The Social Good Accelerator EU, considering that these objectives must absolutely integrate the actors of the Social Economy and Civil society, which the Commission has also recognised since 2011 as one of the levers of "intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth". This sector of limited profitability, which seeks to reconcile solidarity, economic performance and social utility, demonstrates a certain resilience in the face of crises - it has again demonstrated this during the COVID crisis19 - and contributes greatly to mitigating their social effects. It brings together a wide range of economic sectors (10% of European GDP), and today provides a growing number of jobs in Europe (11M workers, i.e. 4.5% of the population and up to 11% in some countries). ¼ of the new organisations created each year or even ⅓ in some countries belong to this sector (source: ESF).

On reading the White Paper on the Data Strategy of the new European Commission, it seems fundamental to us to recall the key role of Social Economy and European Civil society organisations in defining the creation of economic, social and environmental value linked to the new data economy and its democratic governance. We are therefore drawing up several proposals

I. Involve closely the European Social Economy and Civil society representation networks in the definition of the cross-sectoral governance framework for data access and use.

The Social Economy and Civil society represents a particularly innovative sector and must also have access to more data of "social and environmental utility" in order to better and more effectively design social innovations by promoting uses and regulations that respect users, the diversity of social situations, environmental sobriety and democratic vitality. Social Economy and Civil society organisations must be associated with this governance as particularly vigilant interlocutors in the fields of ethics and personal data protection.

In this respect, a distinction should be made between :

a) aggregated" data which are collected and processed by public actors for the purpose of making them available through open data (public data sets): this use can be the subject of a closer partnership between the Commission, the Member States and the producers/users of Social Economy data

b) and the use of personal data by economic actors for profit and by states for surveillance purposes, against which the vast majority of SSE actors protest. A distinction must be made here between intimate data, the sharing of which must be based on an informed decision by the user, means of controlling their use, and total transparency by third parties who use them. The SSE actors we interviewed feel a certain mistrust of the data economy. They are very cautious on the issue of personal data and plead for European digital sovereignty, the corollary of reliable protection of intimate data. A non-negligible part of the group is moving towards open source solutions, which would deserve more public investment, particularly to solve the problems of design (UX design) and accessibility still too often encountered with open source solutions. They also wonder about the economic opportunities of Big Data for the sector: it is a collaborative project, which would deserve the setting up of a working group as well as a specific European regulatory framework and investment. The benefits, beyond the preservation and upgrading of the sector, would be to enable new sources of financing and cooperation to be found and to propose an alternative technological offer to that of the traditional market.

II. Closely associate the Social Economy and Civil society sector to propose a legislative framework for the governance of common European datasets and adopt an implementing act on high-value datasets.

The Social Economy and Civil society sector will also need to be closely involved in the analysis of the importance of data in the digital economy (through the Observatory of the Online Platform Economy), the review of the existing policy framework in the context of the Digital Services Act package and the proposal of the Data Act, 2021.

The European networks of the Social Economy and Civil society can act as catalysts and help define plans for investment in data, data processing and data use. As actors of general interest, they must contribute to the structuring of data sets to guarantee their quality, availability, accessibility and interoperability.

For **social economy** and Civil society organisations, the priority areas for the creation of these common European data spaces are health & medico-social (with strong guarantees on the protection of personal data), employment and access to rights, citizenship, mobility, the fight against social and digital inequalities, but also the fight against global warming and preservation of the environment, the circular economy and green energy.

Actors of the Social Economy and Civil society, guarantors of democratic vitality and of the European social model, should be represented in European data governance mechanisms, in particular to promote fair, accountable and democratic use.

The Common Good should be more often considered as an objective when producing data to provide better mobility services, reduce energy consumption, provide better access to health services, improve public services, reduce social inequalities, facilitate access to knowledge and objective information.

Therefore, so that Social Economy and Civil society organisations can innovate more and better in the service of the Common Good, we propose the following:

> II.a) To create a working group bringing together social and solidarity-based economy organizations and institutional actors to draw up a reference framework for aggregating and structuring useful data in the areas of social and environmental utility.

> II.b) Open and facilitate access to publicly generated mega-data for all SSE actors, as well as strengthen accessible programming interfaces (APIs).

> III.c) To co-design a free (Creative Commons" type) licence for the provision of European "data sets" of general interest, with high social and environmental value.

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38 rue Marc Séguin 75018 Paris - France
www.socialgoodaccelerator.eu

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II. **Give all Social Economy and Civil society organisations, whatever their status, the means to act, invest in skills and create cooperation to unleash the full potential for economic, social and environmental value creation linked to the data economy in Europe.**

So we propose:

III. A) An ambitious plan for off and online training in data/digital culture for Social Economy and Civil society organisations (salaried employees and volunteer leaders).

The natural distrust of the sector with regard to the data economy is partly due to their democratic culture, which positions them as "watchdogs of the general interest and protection of individual freedoms, but also to the lack of continuous training on digital culture in the sector. And this at a time when the organisations of the Social Economy and Civil society act as digital mediators" with regard to populations suffering from the digital divide. As guarantors of the digital inclusion of all European citizens, they must benefit from a major training plan for their employees and volunteer leaders in order to be able to transmit and transform digital know-how and uses as closely as possible to the needs of the populations they support.

In this respect, the networks of Third Places, Fablabs and Makers, which demonstrated their capacity for citizen innovation during the covid crisis, could act as operators. They are for many "not for profit" and belong de facto to the Social Economy and Civil society sector in Europe.

III. B) A study on the opportunities for a "non for profit" economic model with high social and environmental value, based on Data and AI for the actors of the Social Solidarity Economy

III. C) Financing retraining and reintegration actions in the Data professions via SSE models (response to the Covid 19 unemployment wave) by relying on job integration companies (Simplon.co, Samaforce, etc.) and multi-partner programmes such as Territoires 0 chômeurs (France). This employment support plan will also aim to integrate more diversity, equity and non-discrimination in the production of AI and machine learning.

III. D) Propose a European model of Data/IA clusters or European competitiveness poles dedicated to the general interest, integrating researchers in human sciences and actors of the Social and Solidarity-based Economy.

III.E) Propose a European taxation on data to better finance public services and private partners of general interest represented by their organisations in the Social Solidarity Economy.

NB: Our proposals will be developed in the Position Paper on the European Commission's IA consultation, due on 14 June 2020.

The conditions of realization of this Position Paper

The Social Good Accelerator has launched a tailored consultation initiative on the European Commission's two-pronged Data and AI strategies:

→ **An online questionnaire**, available in French and English, received 22 responses from 4 European countries (Belgium, France, Sweden, Portugal). This public questionnaire was sent to our members and disseminated on our social networks to reach our entire European ecosystem.

→ **Interviews with experts:** special thanks for their insights go to Jean-Gabriel Ganascia (President of the Ethics Committee of the CNRS, France), Julie Prost (Impala Avocats), Melissa Boudes and Christine Balagué (Good in Tech Chair, France), Denis Pansu (Fondation Internet Nouvelle Generation-FING), Denis Stokkink (Think Tank Pour la Solidarité, Belgium) and Paul Duan (NGO Bayes Impact).

Who are we? - Social Good Accelerator EU: European movement for the technical transition of general interest organisations

The Social Good Accelerator is a European movement born in 2017 out of an observation: the technological transition of Social economy and Civil society organisations, which work and innovate every day for the general interest, is not yet sufficiently taken into account by public authorities, companies and investors. It is, however, a sine qua non for innovation and European competitiveness centred on respect for life, social justice and climate change. This technological transition, which leads to greater efficiency for the for-profit players in the sector, but also to new safeguards, must be accelerated and placed at the heart of European transition strategies, to steer our models towards greater inclusion and collective well-being.

The Social Good Accelerator EU collective has been federated into an association since 2018 and brings together more than 30 member organisations in 5 countries. It leads an advocacy, a community of solidarity and offers tools to support actors who need to better understand or wish to contribute more to the technological transition of general interest organisations in Europe.

We are working to increase the influence and knowledge of public interest organisations in Europe on issues of technological transition.

Our three pillars of action: Public Affairs (lobbying), Research and Community (knowledge sharing, networks, collective action).

We bring together more than 60 European members, representing more than 1500 organisations from the Social Economy and Civil society.

Partners in this contribution