



## **Social Good Accelerator EU**

### **European movement of acceleration Tech of general interest organisations**

#### **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 put people first in the development of technology, as well as the need to defend and promote European values and rights in the way technology is designed, built and deployed, including 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 is available for use in the economy and society, while retaining control over the companies and individuals who generate the data.

The European Commission thus presents data as "a key 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 and Solidarity Economy, which the Commission has recognised since 2011 as one of the levers of "intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth". This limited profit sector, which seeks to reconcile solidarity, economic performance and social usefulness, has shown a certain resistance to crises - as demonstrated once again during the COVID 19 crisis - 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 (11 million workers, i.e. 4.5% of the population, and up to 11% in some countries).  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the new organisations created each year, or even  $\frac{1}{3}$  in some countries, belong to this sector (source: ESF).

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

**I. Closely involve European Social Economy and Civil Society representative networks in the definition of the cross-sectoral governance framework for data access and use**

The Social Solidarity Economy is a particularly innovative sector and must also have access to more "social and environmental utility" data 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. The organisations of the social and solidarity economy 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 collected and processed by public actors and made available through open data (public datasets): 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 are opposed. A distinction must be made here between intimate data, the sharing of which must be based on an informed decision by the user, and means of controlling their use and total transparency by the third parties who use them. The SSE actors we interviewed feel a certain mistrust of the data

economy. They are very cautious about the issue of personal data and plead for European digital sovereignty, which is the corollary of reliable protection of intimate data. A significant proportion are moving towards open source solutions, which would benefit from more public investment, particularly to resolve the problems of design (UX design) and accessibility that are still too often encountered with open source solutions. They also questioned the economic opportunities of Big Data for the sector: this is a collaborative project which would merit the setting up of a working group as well as a specific regulatory framework and European investment. The benefits, beyond the preservation and upgrading of the sector, would be to find new sources of financing and cooperation and to propose an alternative technological offer to that of the traditional market.

**II. Closely involve the Social Solidarity Economy sector to propose a legislative framework for the governance of common European datasets and adopt an act of implementation on high value datasets.**

The Social Solidarity Economy sector should also 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 proposed Data Act, 2021.

The European networks of the Social Solidarity Economy can act as catalysts and help to define the plans for investment in data, data processing and data use. As actors of general interest, they should contribute to the structuring of datasets to ensure 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 and medico-social services (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 environmental preservation, the circular economy and green energy.

The actors of the Social Solidarity Economy, guarantors of democratic vitality and of the European social model, should be represented in the European data governance mechanisms, in particular to promote fair, responsible 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, in order for the organisations of the Social Solidarity Economy to be able to innovate more and better in the service of the Common Good, we propose :

II.a) To create a working group involving social and solidarity economy organisations and institutional players to draw up a reference framework for aggregating and structuring useful data in the fields of social and environmental utility

II.b) Open and facilitate access to megadata generated by the public sector for all SSE actors, as well as strengthen accessible APIs

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

**III. To give all the organisations of the Social Solidarity Economy, whatever their status, the means to act, to invest in skills and to create cooperations in order to unleash the full potential of economic, social and environmental value creation linked to the data economy in Europe**

We therefore propose :

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

The sector's natural mistrust of the data economy is partly due to their democratic culture, which positions them as "watchdogs for the general interest and the protection of individual freedoms, but also to the lack of ongoing training on digital culture in the sector. This is despite the fact that social and solidarity economy organisations act as "digital mediators" for 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 pass on and transform digital know-how and practices as close as possible to the needs of the populations they support.

In this respect, the networks of third places, Fablabs and Makers, which have demonstrated their capacity for citizen innovation during the crisis, could act as operators. Many of them are "non for profit" and belong to the Social Economy sector in Europe.

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

**III. C) Finance retraining/reintegration actions in the Data professions via SSE models** (response to the Covid 19 wave of unemployment) by focusing on work integration companies (Simplon.co, Samaforce...) 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 AI production and machine learning.

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

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

**NB: Our proposals will be developed in the Position Paper on the [European Commission's AI consultation](#), due on 14 June 2020.**

## **The conditions for the implementation of this Position Paper**

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

- **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**: we would particularly like to thank Jean-Gabriel Ganascia (Chairman of the CNRS Ethics Committee, 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) for their insights

## **Who are we? - Social Good Accelerator EU: European movement for the tech transition of non-profit organisations**

The Social Good Accelerator is a European movement born in 2017 from 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. Yet it is a sine qua non condition for innovation and European competitiveness centred on respect for the living world and social and climate justice. This technological transition, which leads to greater efficiency for the profit-making players in the sector, but also to new crazy guards, must be accelerated and placed at the heart of European transition strategies, in order to direct 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 solidarity community and offers tools to accompany 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 general interest organisations in Europe on technological transition issues.

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

We have more than 60 European members, representing more than 1,500 organisations in the social and solidarity economy.

## Partners in this contribution

