

# APTE



## APTE : A pathway to employment



work for social  
Tudásra építünk a közös jövőért



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

# TABLE OF CONTENT

---

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1. The project	1
2. The partners	1
3. The report	3
<b>WHAT IS SOCIAL ECONOMY ?</b>	<b>4</b>
1. Social economy in Europe	4
1.1. Elements of definition	4
1.2. Current socio-professional challenges	6
1.3. European strategy	7
2. Social economy and employment in partners country	8
2.1. Belgium	8
2.2. France	9
2.3. Hungary	10
2.4. Spain	11
<b>HOW TO ACCOMPANY JOBSEEKERS ?</b>	<b>12</b>
1. APTE: survey and focus group	12
1.1. Overview	12
1.2. Demographic analysis	14
1.3. Main results	16
2. Take aways for a pathway to employment	19
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>22</b>





Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

## Partners

Groupe One, *Belgium*

Pour la Solidarité-PLS, *Belgium*

Pro Bono Lab, *France*

Onkentes, *Hungary*

Work for Social, *Spain*

## Coordinator

Pro Bono Lab

## Design

Pour la Solidarité - PLS, 2023

Project Number : 2021-1-FR01-KA220-ADU-000029505

*This project has been funded with support from the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Programme. This publication reflects the views only of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

# INTRODUCTION

---

## 1. THE PROJECT

APTE (a pathway to employment) is a European project that wants to enable young people with few or no qualifications as well as adults over 45 who are looking for jobs to integrate socially and professionally thanks to an innovative program. This pathway will focus on discovering and learning about the social and sustainable economy, through theory in workshops, and through practice by getting involved with NGOs. **Mentoring, pro bono missions and various workshops**, will be used as tools to open up the field of possibilities, make those jobseekers aware of their skills and facilitate their access to employment in sectors of the future. The mixing of these two groups, young people between 18-25 years old and adults over 45, allows for the creation of intergenerational links through peer mentoring, but also, since they are looking for work, to help them discover a sector and professions of the future.

To achieve our objectives :

1. We carried out a **survey** that allowed the publication of this report on the needs, desires and motivations of young and low-skilled jobseekers as well as those over 45 years old.
2. We will **create tools** to set up an employability pathway focused on the discovery of the social and sustainable economy. This pathway will be set up and tested in 4 countries to anticipate different situations and environments.
3. We will create complementary **tools to facilitate the duplication and dissemination** of the project for the actors accompanying jobseekers, those involved in mentoring and those in volunteering.

## 2. THE PARTNERS

This European project brings together 5 partner organisations with complementary expertise from 4 member states.

**Pro Bono Lab**, a France based organization, is the leader of this project. Established in 2011, Pro Bono Lab mobilises teams of volunteers to provide skills-based (i.e. pro bono) volunteering services to small and medium-sized non-profit organisations.

They are used to carrying out studies, measuring impact and producing resources that enable the duplication of a project. Over the years, they have acquired a methodology that ensures the relevance of a skills-based engagement format for both the beneficiary association and the volunteers involved. Pro Bono Lab has carried out engagement programmes for young people and jobseekers, and measured the benefits for them such as the fact that engagement helps to regain confidence and/or develop skills. They have carried out studies on the benefits for volunteers, organised workshops on identifying skills and they have conducted studies on the benefits for volunteers, organised workshops on identifying skills and want to go further in engaging vulnerable groups.

**Work for Social** is a non-profit association whose objective is to promote the practice of pro bono (professional volunteering) in different economic sectors, and therefore, to provide (professional volunteering) in different economic sectors, thus providing NGOs with talent and resources, minimising the talent gap between the social sector and the private sector. It is the first pro bono intermediary in Spain and the first in Spain to join the Global Pro Bono Network (in 2015). As an intermediary, it brings together NGOs and other social organisations with companies and individuals who are willing to offer their professional services free of charge to the former.

**Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány** (Volunteering Hungary - Centre for Social Innovation) - ÖKA was founded in 2002 as an independent NGO with the aim of developing and coordinating all efforts for a better volunteering environment and to encourage community participation in Hungary. Over the past 15 years, it has coordinated numerous local, national and international projects in the field of volunteer development and training. It has an extensive network of cooperation with NGOs, government agencies and the business community. ÖKA has extensive experience in supporting employment through volunteering and training.

**POUR LA SOLIDARITÉ (PLS)** is a European think & do tank, independent and committed to a Europe of solidarity and sustainability, which works to defend and consolidate the European social model, a subtle balance between economic development and social justice. PLS has almost twenty years of experience in the coordination and implementation of European projects. A pioneer in Brussels on the issue of mentoring, PLS is actively working on addressing the issues of access to employment for vulnerable groups, the integration of young people with few or no qualifications and the professional integration of people over 45 with unrecognised diplomas. They have already carried out mentoring programmes and have a methodology for creating relevant pairs. They now want to think of a different pathway by adding pro bono missions to enable beneficiaries to exercise their skills.

Founded in 1997, **GROUPE ONE ASBL** is an associative structure that supports self-creation of employment. It is based in Belgium, in both the Brussels and Walloon regions. Group One offers an approach based on active pedagogy through interactive role-playing, methods of change methods such as neuro-management and collective intelligence techniques. Groupe One offers a free professional support service to any project leader and particularly to job seekers to guide them in the creation of their business plan and their search for financing in a sustainable development approach. To this end, the association has developed a range of simple and innovative tools for and financial management tools, adapted to small businesses, to help them create sustainable and local jobs.

### 3.THE REPORT

With this report, we want **to raise awareness and highlight** the potential of a **social** and sustainable **economy** in Europe, with a specific emphasis on each partners countries. Indeed to achieve the objectives of sustainable development, citizens must become aware of the social, societal and environmental challenges facing our societies. Hopefully we will be able to spark interest in the sectors of the future. We also want **to understand the needs, desires and motivations** of the primary beneficiaries and target of this project which are young jobseekers with few qualifications or jobseekers over 45 years old. To achieve that we held focus groups with professionals and organisations working with our target audience. We also conducted a more quantitative study with a questionnaire distributed to low-skilled young jobseekers and over 45 years old. Furthermore, we want to make **recommendations and complement the resources of social economy actors** and organisations who accompany these people or wish to do so (especially actors of mentoring) so that they have advocacy elements to support their action. Finally, this report will be **the basis on which our actions for this project will be built**. If we have strong intuitions about the tools to be put in place to create an innovative and relevant pathway, we also want to confirm them with concrete figures and identify elements that would improve this pathway and make it realistic for better duplication.

# WHAT IS SOCIAL ECONOMY ?

The objective of the APTE project is to raise awareness about the social and sustainable economy among jobseekers to broaden their horizons and open up new professional perspectives. Indirectly, we also want to promote the development of this sector by attracting a diversity of profiles. This is why, in the following section, we will try to define the social economy, the opportunities it offers and the challenges it faces at the European level and at the national level for each of the countries in the consortium

## 1. SOCIAL ECONOMY IN EUROPE

### 1.1. ELEMENTS OF DEFINITION

#### Social Economy

In 2011, the European Commission presented the Social Business Initiative (SBI). This SBI sets out action at European level through concrete measures to establish a favourable environment for social enterprises. The work carried out over the following 10 years has resulted in the European Action Plan[1] for the Social Economy (SE) in December 2021. This plan organises the actions to be taken by both the Commission and the member states and stakeholders to develop SE in the next ten years.

Traditionally, the term social economy refers to four main types of entities providing goods and services to their members or society at large: cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations (including charities), and foundations. They are private entities, independent of public authorities and with specific legal forms. Social enterprises are now generally understood as part of the social economy.[2]

More recently, in June 2022, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) provided the first tripartite definition[3] of the **social and solidarity economy (SSE)**. According to this definition, “the SSE encompasses enterprises, organizations and other entities that are engaged in economic, social, and environmental activities to serve the collective and/or general interest, which are based on the principles of voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, democratic and/or participatory governance, autonomy and independence, and the primacy of people and social purpose over capital in the distribution and use of surpluses and/or profits as well as assets. SSE entities aspire to long-term viability and sustainability, and to the transition from the informal to the formal economy and operate in all sectors of the economy”[4].

[1] European Commission (December, 2021) : *Social Economy Action Plan*

[2] Ibid.

[3] The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is the only United Nations agency whose members are representatives of governments, employers and workers.

[4] ILO (June, 2022), *Resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy*

[5] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (July 2020), *Social economy and the COVID-19 crisis: current and future roles*

Social economy plays **two main roles** in the economic system: first a **repairing role** by addressing social needs not covered by the market economy and public actions ; secondly a **transforming role** by experimenting and implementing innovative ways to organize economic activity in a more inclusive and sustainable way.[5]

## Entities

In Europe, social economy mainly refers to : cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations (including charities), foundations and social enterprises.[6]

**Cooperatives** designate people-centred enterprises jointly owned and democratically controlled by and for their members to achieve common social and economic objectives. They provide a solution for workers wishing to jointly buy their company. **Mutual benefit societies** are private entities owned and governed by their members. They play an important role in health insurance and in providing good, affordable and universally accessible health, long-term care and other social security services. They are driven by the principles of solidarity, affordability, non-discrimination and non-exclusion and are often key partners for public authorities, providing innovative social services, such as healthcare and general care services. **Associations** offer a unique space where citizens engage in common interests and generate social cohesion and mutual understanding. **Public-benefit foundations** are asset-based and purpose-driven and focus on areas ranging from the environment, social services, health and education, to science, research, arts and culture. Now **social enterprises** are also considered as part of the social economy. They operate by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and often innovative fashion, having social and/or environmental objectives as the reason for their commercial activity. Profits are mainly reinvested with a view to achieving their societal objective.

## Key figures

The social economy is a major socio-economic actor in the European economy. There are **2.8 million social economy enterprises and organisations**, ranging from small to large European groups [7]. All sectors combined, social economy actors employ **13.6 million people** (about 6.2% of the EU workforce) and account for 8% of the EU's gross domestic product (GDP). This sector also mobilises many volunteers. Indeed, no less than the equivalent of **5.5 million full-time workers** are mobilised around SSE actors. Furthermore in Europe, more than 232 million are members of cooperatives, mutuals or similar entities.

[6] Ibid. p.4

[7] Ibid. p.4



## 1.2.CURRENT SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

Social and solidarity economy is a source of direct and indirect employment. Some jobs are created directly within SSE entities. Others are created and sustained through goods and services provided by these entities in various sectors, ranging from food and housing to child and elderly care and financial services. Although the social and solidarity economy plays a role in creating employment and income, major challenges remain [8].

### Financing

Despite its ambition to offer an alternative, the social and solidarity economy is developing in a context of capitalist economy and its market logic [9]. Thus, access to finance is a major challenge for the development of the social economy. Some characteristics of SSE entities facilitate access to forms of financing such as grants, subsidies, affordable government loans, or complementary currency systems. On the other hand, the access of these SSE units to the traditional banking system is often very limited. They face similar obstacles to those frequently encountered by small and medium enterprises. Furthermore, the lack of information on support programmes and the high cost of consultancy services are important obstacles to the development of SSE. However, there is still a fear that the use of conventional funding mechanisms may undermine the values and practices of the social and solidarity economy, especially with regard to democratic governance and the limitation of profit distribution. At a time when SSE units in different sectors are developing and diversifying their activities and their need for capital seems likely to increase, it will most likely be necessary to ensure that these units have access to a wider range of financial instruments.

### Double transition : digital and ecological

#### Digital

Like traditional businesses, social economy organisations are also taking advantage of the opportunities offered by digitalisation [10]. Social economy entities are helping to make digital transitions more equitable. By connecting businesses and customers directly with employees, digital work platforms are transforming business processes and have profound implications for the future of work.[11] Like commercial platforms, co-operative platforms use websites, or mobile applications to sell goods or services. Like commercial platforms, co-operative platforms use websites, or mobile applications to sell goods or services. Their main difference from commercial platforms is that they are based on democratic management and/or shared ownership. Although digitalisation brings enormous benefits, a digital divide exists, especially among those segments of the community that lack the necessary skills or equipment. The COVID-19 crisis made this digital divide even more visible. Therefore, the digital transition of the ecosystem has many barriers and challenges to overcome.

[8] Ibid p.4

[9] Marian de Foy (September, 2021), *Le financement de l'économie sociale*

[10] European Commission (December, 2021), *Staff working document on the transition pathway*

[11] ILO (June, 2022), *Resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy*

Four key areas have been identified [12]:

1. Training and skills to foster social inclusions
2. Access to affordable, adapted and open/shared advanced technology
3. Investment in operability, scaling and visibility
4. Investment in decentralized storage infrastructure and data management analysis

### **Ecological**

Social and solidarity economy units contribute to a just transition to environmental sustainability. Although cooperatives and other social economy entities require special attention and assistance to carry out a just transition to environmentally sustainable economies, green transition is often not prioritised in terms of time, investment, and organisation capacity. Green skills defined as the knowledge, abilities, values, and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society are lacking in proximity and social economy entities. Lack of skills need to be tackled at all layers of the enterprise: management (process, governance, impacts etc.), employees (design, process, communication etc.), but also peers (awareness) [13].

### **Recognition**

The social and solidarity economy suffers from a lack of recognition of its contributions by citizens, social and financial partners. Many consumers want to buy more consciously, in terms of the origin of the goods and services they wish to purchase, but they do not always know how to do so. Therefore, the Commission commits itself to strengthen its communication activities, to facilitate the development of specific statistical data on SSE and to contribute to the development of comparative studies covering all Member States [14].

## **1.3. EUROPEAN STRATEGY**

In November 2017, the European Commission adopted a European Pillar of Social Rights in order to relaunch a more social Europe through budgetary commitments, legislative initiatives or the coordination of national policies [15]. The principles and rights of the European Pillar are structured around **three axes: (1) equal opportunities and access to the labour market, (2) fair working conditions, (3) social protection and social inclusion**. This provides a common framework for the social rights of European citizens and has led to a new Action Plan for Social Economy adopted in December 2021. The plan aims to boost social innovation, support the development of the social economy and to strengthen its power of social and economic transformation. It proposes a series of actions for the period 2021-2030.

[12] European Commission (November, 2022), *Transition pathway for proximity and social economy*

[13] Ibid

[14] Ibid

[15] European Commission (December, 2021), *Social Economy Action Plan*

The Action Plan and its various actions have three main objectives [16] :

- (1) Establish a supporting policy and legal framework for the development of the SE <sup>2</sup>
- (2) Offer social economy organisations the opportunity to start up and expand
- (3) Ensure recognition of the SE and its potential

## 2.SOCIAL ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT IN PARTNERS COUNTRY

### 2.1. BELGIUM

In Belgium, economy and employment are the competence of the regions. The three regions of Flanders, Brussels Capital and Wallonia therefore have specific public policies concerning the promotion of the social economy. In Wallonia and Brussels, the social economy is defined in a rather similar way as at the European level, namely any “economic activity developed by associations, cooperatives, mutuals and foundations and not aiming for profit maximization” [17]. In 2018, a decree was passed in Brussels to define what a social enterprise is based on the EMES criteria. According to this network of researchers, “a social enterprise complies with the following principles: (a) the implementation of an economic project; (b) the pursuit of a social purpose; (c) the exercise of democratic governance”. In these two regions of Belgium, social enterprise and social economy are often used as synonyms which is not the case in Flanders. Indeed, historically the social economy in Flanders tended to be restricted to the integration of low-skilled workers on the labour market (WISEs - Work Integration Social Enterprises), but this has evolved over time. The social economy is legally defined since 2012 by a decree (Ondersteuningsdecreet [18]) as a set of "social entrepreneurial values" developed within various organisational forms and sectors of activity.

The social economy is therefore seen as a subset of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. Nevertheless, these differences in interpretation between the regions tend to fade away, in the light of the work of uniformisation of this concept both at European and international level.[19]

### DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT BY LEGAL FORM (2020)

	BRUSSELS	WALLONIA
	NUMBER OF WORKERS	
ASSOCIATIONS	81 216	136 301
COOPERATIVES	2 305	2 338
FOUNDATIONS	2 542	2 034
MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES	6 107	4 040
SOCIAL ENTERPRISES	705	9 707
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92 875</b>	<b>154 420</b>

[16] Le Labo de l'Economie sociale et solidaire (January, 2022), *Analyse du plan d'action européen pour l'économie sociale*

[17] Publications catalogue - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission (europa.eu)

[18] Vlaanderen Overheid (2012), *Ondersteuningsdecreet*

[19] European Commission (March, 2020) *Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe. Updated Country report Belgium*

Associations employ the vast majority of social economy workers (88%). Mutual societies (4.1%) and social purpose companies (4%) complete the podium, ahead of cooperatives (1.9%) and foundations (1.9%) [20].

## 2.2. FRANCE

The origins of the social economy can be found in France as early as the 19th century. The concept has been progressively institutionalised in the country, first with the creation of state secretariats for the social economy in 1984, then for the solidarity economy in 2000, all consolidated by a law in 2014[21]. Since July 2014, a framework Law on Social and Solidarity Economy defines the social and solidarity economy in France[22]. This law aims to identify common points and interests among actors in different sectors of activity. The French law outlines 4 principles at the foundation of the social economy and that social enterprises must respect :

- The pursuit of social utility
- The search for a viable economic model
- Democratic governance
- Limited profitability or profitability at the service of the social purpose

As identified by the European Commission, the field of social and solidarity economy in France includes associations, cooperatives, mutual societies, foundations and social and solidarity enterprises. In addition, the French law includes also organisations that operate under a commercial status, while observing in their operating rules several fundamental features such as democratic governance, search of a social utility, limited distribution of profit by statutory rules etc.

This is what the law defines as the social utility status of an organisation, which means that their main social mission is to support people in vulnerable situations, to fight against exclusion and inequality, to promote education for citizenship, social cohesion and sustainable development. [23]

### DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT BY LEGAL FORM (2020) [24]

ASSOCIATIONS	1.852 MILLIONS
COOPERATIVES	308 532
FOUNDATIONS	85 771
MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES	138 415
TOTAL	<b>2.4 MILLION WORKERS</b>

[20] L'état des lieux de l'Economie sociale 2019-2020

[21] L'institutionnalisation de l'économie sociale et solidaire : Etat et société civile organisée en France de 1981 à 2017

[22] ESS: de quoi parle-t-on? | Avise.org

[23] FR-Social enterprises and their ecosystems.pdf

## 2.3. HUNGARY

Hungary is one of the EU countries where the recognition of the concept of social economy by the actors of the sector themselves is very low. This is accentuated by the lack of consensus on the different legal forms that social enterprises can take. The concept cannot narrow down to one single legal form, but can be identified in the simultaneous presence of social aims and business activities (Grants Europe 2018)[25]. They therefore use the regulations on the different legal forms used (e.g. association, foundation, non-profit company or social cooperative) and on public interest activities to recognise, finance and regulate social enterprises. Based on this information, the social economy in the country can be described as “a set of non-profit, consumer-oriented economic activities, limited in time and space, carried out by non-governmental and non-profit (NGO) actors within a market economy framework, and focused on innovative ways to meet the unmet needs of the other two sectors.” [26] These enterprises operate mainly in the social and utilities sectors. Their economic activity is aimed at complementing private donations and public tenders.

### DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT BY LEGAL FORM (date?)

COOPERATIVES AND ASSOCIATIONS	28 177
FOUNDATIONS	19 689
MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES	12 807
SOCIAL ENTERPRISES	5 159
TOTAL	65 832

[24] ESS France Atlas infographie 1.pdf (ess-france.org)

[25] Grants Europe Consulting Kft. (2018), „Pénzügyi eszközök és pénzügyi eszközök kihelyezése társadalmi vállalkozásokhoz” kutatás, Budapest: OFA.

[26] Lipták-Siposné-Nagy: Áttekintés a magyarországi szociális gazdaságról és gazdasági szervezeteiről 2019

## 2.4. SPAIN

Social economy in Spain is defined as the set of economic and entrepreneurial activities that entities from the private sector do following the general economic and social interest. This concept has achieved public recognition and has been explicitly regulated by law since 2011. This law builds a legal framework for all entities that form the social economy. This law does not create (or regulate) a new legal entity type but simply groups together (for identification and promotional purposes) entities with specific legal forms that existed previously. However, it stipulates that all entities included in this sector should follow values based on certain principles such as :

- the supremacy of the person/social goal over capital
- the distribution of profits that are not according to capital provision
- devotion to social sectors
- independence from public power

Moreover, the Law of 2011 acknowledges entities that have traditionally formed part of the social economy, such as cooperatives, mutual insurance organisations, WISEs and associations and foundations engaged in economic activities, among others. However, the law also includes in social economy "all those enterprises whose economic activity is based on principles presented previously".

In contrast, the social enterprise concept has received less public recognition, with inadequate development of explicit regulation. However, even when social enterprises are not recognised by a specific law, it does not mean that there is no legal framework for organisations that could be defined as social enterprises. In fact, social enterprises can be included in the general Law on Social Economy.

### DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT BY LEGAL FORM (date?)

	<u>NUMBER</u>
<u>COOPERATIVES</u>	20,348
<u>FOUNDATIONS</u>	14,729
<u>SOCIAL ENTERPRISES</u>	10,313
<u>INSERTION ENTERPRISES</u>	7,134
TOTAL	<b>52 524</b>

# HOW TO ACCOMPANY JOBSEEKERS ?

---

## 1. APTE: SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP

### 1.1. OVERVIEW

The project APTE wants to enable young people with few or no qualifications as well as adults over 45 who are looking for jobs to integrate socially and professionally thanks to an innovative programme. The mixing of these two groups allows for the creation of intergenerational links through mutual mentoring, but also, since they are looking for work, to help them discover a sector and professions of the future. This pathway will focus on discovering and learning about the social and sustainable economy, through theory in workshops, and through practice by getting involved with NGOs. Through 3 types of activities - mentoring, learning module/workshops and pro bono missions - we want to open up their field of possibilities, make them aware of their skills and facilitate their access to employment in sectors of the future.

The following section consists of a comparative analysis of the data collected in the four countries (Belgium, France, Hungary and Spain) in which the most marked similarities and differences are highlighted. All the data and figures were analysed and elaborated to be included in this report and it covers both survey and focus groups.

### METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve our objectives, the first intellectual output (IO1) of this project was implemented using a qualitative approach – desk research and focus group with professionals working with jobseekers - and quantitative approach – online survey for jobseekers. The main objective of the focus groups was to get the point of view of professional social workers on the reality of support and job search for job seekers over 45 years old and young and low qualified job seekers. The meetings with these professionals were held either remotely via Zoom or in person for up to 3 hours. The questions asked were designed to :

- identify the obstacles and difficulties encountered by the structures in the support of 45+ job seekers and low qualified young job seekers
- identify the obstacles and difficulties encountered by 45+ job seekers and low qualified young job seekers as perceived by the support structures
- anticipate the needs of 45+ job seekers and low-skilled young job seekers as perceived by the support structures
- identify the barriers to employment for 45+ jobseekers and low-skilled young jobseekers
- identify the required investments (time/resources/staff) to get 45+ and low skilled young people into employment

The different questions were first dealt within sub-groups before being discussed in plenary with all the participants in order to gather the different proposals.

The results from the focus groups of each country were shared (in English or French) in a word or powerpoint presentation document.

The **quantitative approach** of this report was based on an online questionnaire for job seekers. The questionnaire was aimed at more than current job seekers. Indeed, we included in our survey young people with low qualifications and 45+ who have been recently in such a situation, even if they were currently in employment. Through this questionnaire, we sought to identify :

- the obstacles and difficulties they may have faced during their job search
- the needs and expectations in terms of support during their job search
- their motivation to find a job
- their interest in a programme such as the one proposed by APTE offering mentoring, discovery of sectors related to sustainable development and social economy, and probono mission

The questionnaire was designed in English by PLS with input from all partners. Each country was responsible for the translation into their own language and for the digital or physical dissemination of the questionnaire to the target audience. The different results were shared (in English or French) using an Excel file.

By taking into account the reality of the professionals but also of the persons most directly involved in the job search, we hope to be able to collect information that completes, contradicts or overlaps each other. Those informations will be useful for the implementation of an ambitious support programme as APTE. Our programme wants to offer the most adequate responses to the needs and expectations of job seekers but also tries to overcome the difficulties and obstacles usually encountered by job seekers and local actors.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

For the focus groups, we interviewed a total of 32 professionals from 25 different organisations across three of the consortium countries. These people have various profiles. They range from trainers to local employment agency managers to actors from the voluntary sector working with people with a migration background. For the questionnaire, we didn't reach our initial objective of 200 respondents (50/countries) but we still managed to obtain responses from 129 people. The profile of the respondents will be detailed below.

Summary of the audience reached by the consortium partner for this IO1:

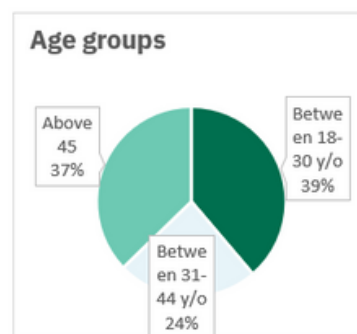
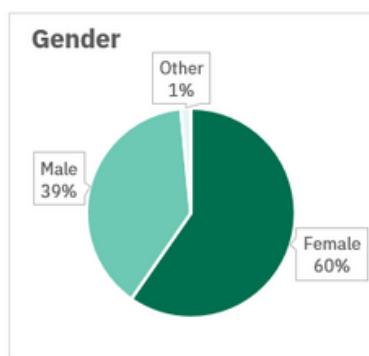
	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Focus Groups</i>
PLS & G1 - Belgium	43	13 participants / 13 organisations
PBL - France	30	11 participants / 6 organisations
OKA - Hungary	16	No focus group
WFS - Spain	40	8 participants / 6 organisations
Total	129	32 participants / 25 organisations



## 1.2. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

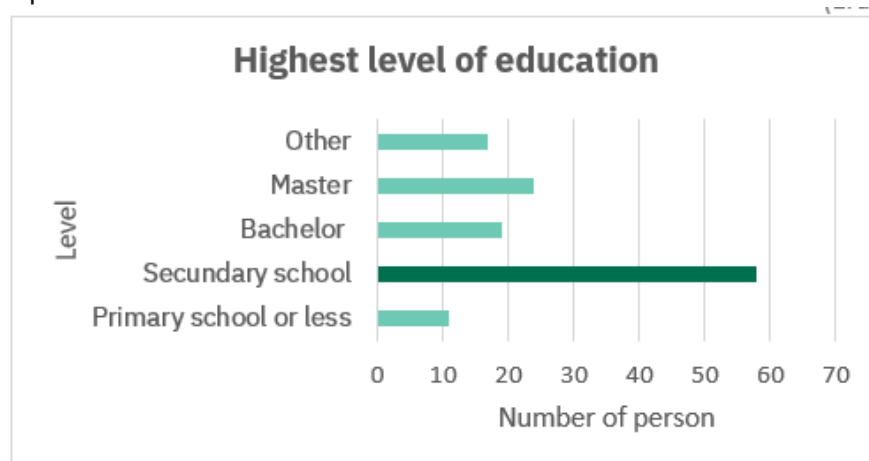
### Age and gender

A total of 129 people responded to the survey from Belgium, France, Spain and Hungary. Of these, 77 were women and 50 were men, with the remaining 2 identifying themselves as 'other' or 'non-binary'. In terms of the age of these respondents, 50 were in the 18-30 age group and 48 in the over 45 age group, while the rest were in the 31-44 age group (31). A small majority of participants indicated that they were single (51.2%), followed by those who indicated that they were married or cohabiting (30.1%), divorced (10.6%), and widowed (2.5%). Although the pathway we want to develop with this project is aimed at job seekers of a specific age category (18-25 and over 45) with few or no qualifications. The questionnaire was aimed at a wider audience of people who are looking for a job or have recently been in this situation. Furthermore, the majority of respondents have the nationality (102 out of 129) of the European country where the survey was carried out and are fluent in the language or one of the official languages of that country.

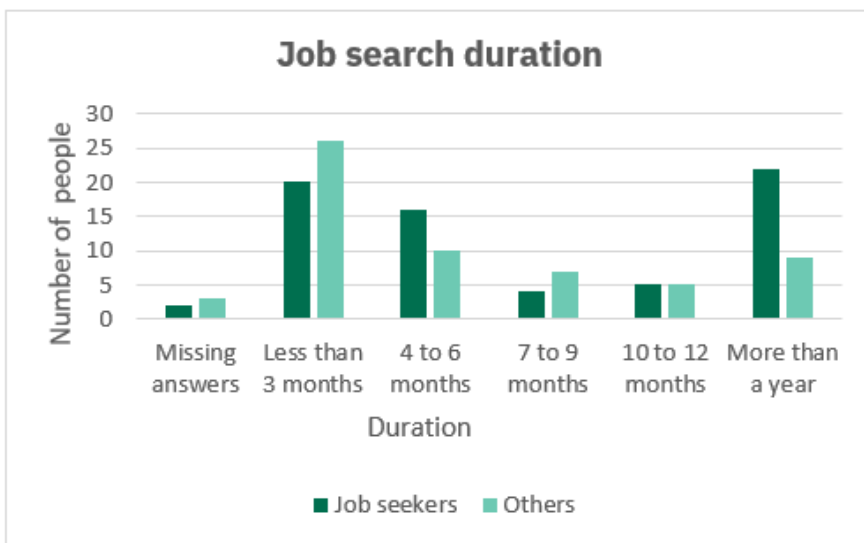


### Education and employability

Less than half of the respondents of the questionnaire (58 participants) have secondary level of education as their highest qualification. Of these people, 65% (38/58) are job seekers. Although the pathway that will be developed in this project is aimed at jobseekers over 45 and those under 25 with few or no qualifications, we decided to target a wider sample. Of those who responded to the questionnaire, 69 persons were currently looking for a job. For 20 of them the job search duration was less than 3 months and for 22 of them this duration was more than a year. Overall, the jobseekers in our questionnaire are low-skilled people, which corresponds to the audience of the pathway we want to develop.



The rest of the participants (60 persons) were mainly workers (employed or self-employed) or students. Of these 60 non- jobseekers, when asked to indicate the time it took for them to find their current or last job, more than a third of them (26/60) indicated that it took less than 3 months.



### Experience

Of our 69 jobseeker respondents, 22 (32%) have less than one year of work experience and 27 (39%) have more than 5 years of experience. As for the duration of the job search, we observe that the extreme values ( not very experienced vs. very experienced; brief duration of job search vs. long duration of job search) are those where the majority of the participants are located. These values can be related to the audiences we are interested in for our pathway. Young people with few qualifications are generally inexperienced, which hinders their entry into the world of work. Whereas people over 45 years of age who are looking for work have experience but their age may prevent them from re-entering the labour market.



## 1.3. MAIN RESULTS

### Challenges

To assess the challenges faced during the job search, the participants were asked to identify up to 3 challenges they face during the job search. The prevalence of the type of challenges and difficulties encountered varies according to the participants countries of origin. Nevertheless, in all the countries the **lack of experience** seems to be one of the main challenge faced during the job search. Another challenge that is common to most of the partner countries is the ability to **find job offers**.

If we look more closely into the different partners country, we see that in Hungary, more than half of the job seekers interviewed identified the lack of **relevance of their qualifications** to the labour market as the main difficulty in their job search (10 out of 16). Other difficulties from participants from Hungary included **little or no recognition of skills** and the low salary offered. Other reasons were also given, such as not being Hungarian, non-recognition of skills by employers or the lack of experience in job search, but with less frequency.

For the French respondents of the survey, finding job offers was the main difficulty they faced during their job search. The lack of experience, **geographic mobility** and being from a foreign origin were equally mentioned as challenges faced by jobseekers. Other observations made during the focus groups in France should also be added to these, such as: lack of knowledge of the way to approach the job market, lack of knowledge of company codes, lack of methodology in the job search, lack of a network, but also lack of confidence and difficulty in making the most of one's career. Linked to this last observation, professionals also observe that these young or older jobseekers tend to focus on "negative" elements related to their profile, which can lead them to self-limiting or self-depreciating. For the Spanish respondents of the survey **finding job offers** was the main difficulty they faced during their job search. The lack of experience, geographic mobility and insufficient salary were equally mentioned as faced challenges by jobseekers. During the focus groups, the professionals also pointed out the social difficulties which mean that the public, especially young people with few qualifications, often have subsistence jobs. They are trapped in a lower network of equals, which leads to precarious, non-regulated jobs, which impede a long-run professional project. This urgency to work therefore reduces their personal and professional development. In addition, these populations cannot overcome prejudices and stereotypes, so they end up feeling **identified** with those precarious jobs. In Belgium, the **lack of experience** is the main difficulty faced by people while looking for a job. Finding job offers, the lack of recognition of the level of study or the inequation of the formation were equally mentioned as difficulties by respondents. These different reasons were also mentioned during the focus groups. The professionals also added that one of the difficulties of younger people is that they do not know what they want to do. As identified in France and Spain, the stereotypes and prejudice faced by these groups, and in particular by young people, demotivate them due to the discrimination they cause.

	1 <sup>st</sup> Challenge	2 <sup>nd</sup> Challenge	3 <sup>rd</sup> Challenge
<b>Belgium</b>	Lack of experience	Finding job offers	Little to no recognition of the diploma
<b>France</b>	Finding job offers	Lack of experience	Geographical mobility
<b>Hungary</b>	Qualifications not relevant to the labour market	Lack of experience	Little or no recognition of skills
<b>Spain</b>	Finding job offers	Lack of experience	Geographical mobility

## Support

Overall across the four countries of the consortium, job seekers expressed that they felt **well supported during their job search**. This is explained in particular by the quality of the support received from an individual point of view. Indeed, jobseekers seem to be more satisfied with their support, when different resources are made available to them, a relationship of trust is established and the support structures provide assistance tailored to their needs. **Jobseekers who do not feel supported** mainly point to the lack of interaction, especially of the large regional/local structures, during their job search. They point out that these structures do not often contact them or do not offer solutions corresponding to their skills or interests.

## Motivations

This questionnaire dealt with job search motivation in **two different ways**. On the one hand, we wanted to identify the degree of importance that respondents attach to different elements related to the choice of their job (career opportunities, salary, working hours, social ties,...). On the other hand, we wanted to identify the concessions or compromises that participants were willing to accept and make to avoid unemployment. In both cases we could observe similarities but also elements which were more specific to certain countries. In all the countries of the consortium, an important motivation for the participants is **"job security"**. According to the French National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS)[27], job security refers to the fact that a person remains employed without any " long-term " interruption, even if there is a change of company. It can therefore refer but not necessarily to the type of contract (fixed/indefinite, temporary, part-time, etc.). Another element that seems central to the job sought in all countries, except Hungary, is the **social aspect** associated with the job sought. Participants seem to be looking for jobs that allow them to create social links and help others. For French and Belgian respondents, finding a **job** in which they are **interested** also seems to be important. The importance of the salary also stands out as a motivation, especially for the Spanish respondents. Concerning the motivations for leaving unemployment, two elements seem to be common to Belgian, French and Spanish respondents. Respondents in all three countries would be willing to **acquire new skills** (through training for example) and to accept a **lower salary**.

[27] IE 16 JANVIER 2008 (cnis.fr)- Une nouvelle définition de la sécurité de l'emploi- HRSquare

Another compromise common to Spain and Belgium concerns **geographical mobility**. Respondents in both countries seem to be open to the idea of working further away from home to avoid unemployment. Hungary differs from the other countries in that participants do **not** seem to **be in favour of any concessions in order to stop being unemployed**. On the contrary, Hungarians were strongly opposed to all the suggestions in the question, especially geographical mobility.

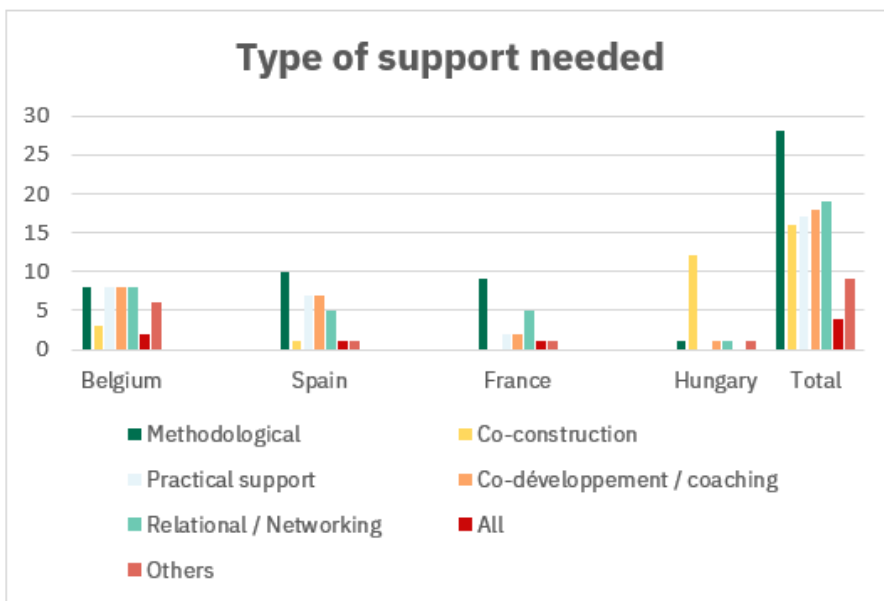
Motivations to choose a job			
	1 <sup>st</sup> motivation	2 <sup>nd</sup> motivation	3 <sup>rd</sup> motivation
<b>Belgium</b>	Interesting job	Job security	Social tie
<b>France</b>	Job security	Interesting job	Job that helps others
<b>Hungary</b>	High salary	Job security	Flexible schedule
<b>Spain</b>	Job security	Career opportunity	Useful job

Motivations to leave unemployment			
	1 <sup>st</sup> motivation	2 <sup>nd</sup> motivation	3 <sup>rd</sup> motivation
<b>Belgium</b>	New skills	Working further	Lower paid
<b>France</b>	Part-time job	New skills	Lower paid
<b>Spain</b>	New skills	Working further	Part-time and lower paid

## Needs

Of the 129 respondents, 111 shared the type of support they would like to receive during their job search. The participants were asked to choose one of the support mentioned or precise if they wanted a combination of two or more. The type of support that stands out is **methodological/technical support**. Indeed, a quarter of the respondents (28 participants) would like to benefit from tools to improve the quality of their job search by working on research methods and tools to find offers relevant to their profile, the CV, the interview. In second place (19 participants) is the need to open up their (professional) **network** such as meetings with recruiters and companies. Thirdly, there is a need for more personal support focusing on **self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation** (18 participants). Indeed, during the focus groups in all countries, it was often stressed that some of the obstacles encountered by job seekers are due to the prejudices that they themselves associate with their background. It is therefore interesting to note that the jobseekers are also willing to work on this more mental aspect of their situation. In addition, some participants (17 participants) also emphasized the need for a **more practical** support immersion in the professional world. As identified by the professionals in the focus groups, job seekers, especially the younger ones, lack knowledge of the codes associated with the workplace.

Others (16 participants) emphasized the need for more **transversal help** in the support offered, with assistance in the co-construction of their project and a joint analysis of needs. The rest of the participants either (13 participants) wanted a mix of all the support suggested or a combination of 2 or 3 of the support mentioned.



## 2. TAKE AWAYS FOR A PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

The aim of these surveys and focus groups were to understand and raise awareness of the needs, desires and motivations of young and low-skilled jobseekers and those over 45. Thanks to the questionnaire and the focus groups, we now have additional information that allows us to better adapt the activities of the pathway we will develop. These results also allow us to propose innovative solutions for the actors who accompany job seekers or wish to do so. The pathway that will be offered during this programme in the 4 countries of the consortium will propose reciprocal mentoring, workshops and pro bono missions to better answer and meet the expectations, challenges and needs identified.

One of the central activities for this project are the collective activities proposed around the notion of social and sustainable economy. The aim of these workshops is to highlight lesser-known professions and sectors. With this programme, and as emphasised by many professionals during focus groups, the aim should not be to create new things. In fact, there are already many things in the area that should not be neglected and the workshops will be used in particular to carry out a real monitoring of existing solutions to see how they can be linked to each other in a continuous manner. As mentioned earlier, the social and sustainable economy sector is a sector that suffers from a lack of recognition by citizens. Although the issues raised by the sector are well known, many people are still unaware of how they can participate in and contribute to this sector through their professional choices. This project therefore proposes a series of workshops and learning modules to help job seekers discover the professional and personal development opportunities that lie behind this sector.

Mentoring is another pillar of the activities that the APTE programme will offer. Mentoring is a voluntary and free interpersonal relationship of support, exchange and learning in which an experienced person invests their expertise and time, in order to foster the development of another person who has skills and abilities to acquire and professional and/or personal goals to achieve.[28] What we will propose through this programme is reciprocal mentoring, i.e. between two job seekers, one of whom will be young and the other over 45. To our knowledge, such an approach has not yet been used in the countries of the consortium. We believe that this approach can help jobseekers feel useful by serving as a support and resource to another person in their situation. Mentoring can therefore be a way of working on the self-confidence of job seekers. Working in pairs can also be an opportunity for jobseekers to work on more concrete aspects of their job search - CV, cover letter or interview preparation – and have direct feedback. Thus, mentoring is one of the way we chose to address the need for both practical and more personal support identified during the focus groups and survey.

Finally Pro bono (in Latin, "pro bono publico", for the public good) is a voluntary act whereby professionals offer their professional skills and talents in different fields for the benefit of social projects. Pro bono work is usually carried out by business professionals who have a lot of technical knowledge in their field and who can have a great impact on the management of the social entity. The impact of a pro bono consultation for a social entity is usually high and is measured in the medium and long term. With this programme, we want to enable job seekers to identify their skills especially soft skills and put them to good use for an organisation. In this way, pro bono will address both the challenge of lack of experience that job seekers often seem to face and the opportunity to identify and develop skills. Finally, it will also be an opportunity to expand their professional network.

[28] Mentorat Québec: Définition et origine

# CONCLUSION

---

Overall through this project, we want young and low-skilled jobseekers and those over 45 years old to :

- Acquire knowledge about the social and sustainable economy,
- Identify and become aware of their skills,
- Identify the professions of the social and sustainable economy and that this will awaken vocations in some,
- Feel useful and capable thanks to the collective and individual pro bono missions (skills-based volunteering),
- Value this probono experience in their CV, during an interview, on LinkedIn for example,
- Be (more) open to exchanges with people of other generations,
- Find a job in the months following the course or enroll in a training course to reorient themselves or develop other skills..

This project is innovative because it allows for a complete pathway with awareness-raising workshops on transition themes (sustainable, digital), workshops on identifying skills, a commitment to an association to benefit from concrete field experience and it also allows for an intergenerational exchange between the two groups of job seekers.

It is also innovative in terms of the mentoring aspect since there will not be a mentor and a mentee but two people at the same level who will provide each other with support: reciprocal intergenerational mentoring.



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

## **OUVRAGES:**

- Duverger, Timothée., *L'institutionnalisation de l'économie sociale et solidaire : État et société civile organisée en France de 1981 à 2017* , Informations sociales, vol. 199, no. 1, 2019, pp. 28-35.

## **SOURCES INSTITUTIONNELLES :**

- European Commission (January 2020), *Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe – Comparative synthesis report*, available online <https://rb.gy/ycrx05>
- European Commission (December 2021), *Social Economy Action Plan*, available online <https://rb.gy/ajmnm6>
- European Commission (December 2021), *Question/Answers : Social Economy Action Plan*, available online <https://rb.gy/urddhm>
- European Commission (December 2021), *Commission presents Action Plan to boost the social economy and create jobs*, available online <https://rb.gy/grvzbm>
- European Commission (December 2021), *Staff working : Scenarios towards co-creation of a transition pathway for a more resilient, sustainable and digital Proximity and Social Economy industrial ecosystem*, available online <https://rb.gy/yxavqo>
- European Commission (November 2022), *Transition pathway for proximity and social economy*, available online <https://rb.gy/35xco4>
- International Labour Organisation (June 2022), *Resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy*, available online <https://rb.gy/fragnr>
- International Labour Organisation (June 2022), *Le travail décent et l'économie sociale et solidaire*, available online <https://rb.gy/g5ohca>
- Le Labo de l'économie sociale et solidaire (January 2022), *Analyse du plan d'action européen pour l'économie sociale*, available online <https://rb.gy/gjjqko>
- Observatoire de l'économie sociale (Juillet 2022), *L'état des lieux de l'économie sociale 2019-20*, available online <https://rb.gy/bcyvob>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (July 2020), *Social economy and the COVID-19 crisis: current and future roles* , available online <https://rb.gy/1wkajk>

## **WEBSITES:**

- Vlaanderen Sociale Economie, Ondersteuningdecreet, available online : <https://rb.gy/exmuu6>



Project Number : 2021-1-FR01-KA220-ADU-000029505

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission under the Erasmus + Programme. This publication reflects the views only of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

[www.apteprobono.eu](http://www.apteprobono.eu)

**Project coordinator: Pro Bono Lab**

Pro Bono Lab

6, Rue des Bateliers

92110 CLICHY

France

[www.probonolab.org](http://www.probonolab.org)

