



# **From Principle to Action**

Best Practices for Disability Inclusion

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## Foreword by Juan Antonio Pedreño

The social economy is a strategic pillar for the future of Europe. With 2.8 million enterprises and organisations, representing 8% of the EU's GDP and employing over 13.6 million people, it demonstrates its ability to generate inclusive growth, strengthen democratic values, and address major challenges such as inequality, climate change, and territorial cohesion.

As the EU reviews the Pillar of Social Rights, the European Disability Strategy and the Social Economy Action Plan, it is essential to remind policy-makers of the key role that the social economy plays in the social and labour inclusion of persons with disabilities. Indeed, this sector puts people and purpose above profit, reinvesting surpluses into collective goals and delivering innovative, people-centred solutions in areas such as healthcare, education, housing, clean energy, and the circular economy. It creates pathways to employment and provides accessible goods and services, proving its value as a driver of social cohesion and sustainable development.

Within the single market, these Social Economy Entities illustrate how economic performance and social impact advance together, driving resilience and sustainability. Moreover, by fostering innovation and solidarity, they offer a model that responds to today's challenges while shaping a fairer future for all.

In this perspective, the upcoming 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework represents a decisive moment for the social economy. Preserving the European Social Fund as a cornerstone of EU social priorities will be essential to ensure that inclusion remains at the heart of European policies.

To demonstrate that the link between social economy and disability is both strategic and effective, Social Economy Europe —through its Disability Working Group— has produced this guide of best practices. It showcases how cooperatives, associations, foundations, mutual societies, and D-WISEs across Europe contribute to inclusion through initiatives aligned with EU priorities in fields such as housing, new technologies, and quality employment.

The aim of this guide is to highlight the transformative potential of the disability–social economy nexus in building a more inclusive society. We must continue to build a favourable ecosystem for the social economy — one that recognises its value, supports its growth, and integrates it transversally into all EU policies. The economy of the future is the social economy: democratic, resilient, and committed to people and the planet.

**Madrid, December of 2025**

Juan Antonio Pedreño Frutos  
*President of Social Economy Europe*

## Foreword by Alberto Durán

From ONCE Foundation, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Social Economy Europe for its unwavering commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities. Especially, thanks to the Social Economy Europe's Disability Working Group, a long-standing and dynamic platform for peer learning and exchange, which is contributing to advance inclusion across Europe.

We also wish to acknowledge Inmaculada Placencia, Senior Expert at the European Commission, who first suggested the idea of compiling this collection of good practices and whose vision has been instrumental in shaping this guide.

The organizations featured in this guide deserve special recognition. Their practices demonstrate that social innovation and an inclusive economy are powerful drivers of change. The intersection of disability and the social economy not only improves lives but also delivers tangible value to Europe: it fuels inclusive innovation, strengthens the productive fabric, and contributes to a just transition.

Today, 107 million people in the European Union—one in four—live with some form of disability. Yet they continue to face structural barriers: unemployment among young people with disabilities reaches 17.7%, twice the rate of their peers without disability. This reality calls for urgent and sustainable

responses. The European Social Fund (ESF) stands as a prime example of public private collaboration that multiplies social impact and generates economic returns—returns which, in the case of social economy entities, are reinvested directly into inclusion. The upcoming discussions on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028–2034 offer a crucial opportunity to reaffirm the centrality of social priorities by strengthening the European Social Fund, a cornerstone of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The European Disability Strategy 2021–2030 provides a clear roadmap to ensure rights, participation, and equal opportunities. One tangible achievement of this strategy is AccessibleEU, the European Commission's accessibility resource center, led by Fundación ONCE. This initiative exemplifies what can be achieved when policy, expertise, and collaboration converge to remove barriers and promote universal design. In this scenario, the Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP) highlights the essential role of cooperatives, associations, foundations, mutual societies, and D-WISEs in integrating workers with disabilities and delivering accessible goods and services. These actors show that resilience and sustainability within the Single Market are possible through inclusion.

**Madrid, December of 2025**

Alberto Durán López

*Executive vice-president of Fundación ONCE*

## Introduction

The inclusion of persons with disability is often stated as a principle. This publication shows what it looks like in practice. The members of the Disability Working Group of Social Economy Europe have gathered 11 recent best practices from all families of the social economy in 7 countries and across key sectors, including employment, skills, new technologies, green transition and housing and also in the area Humanitarian crisis.

The objective is threefold: to showcase successful initiatives, to highlight the strength and diversity of Europe's social economy, and to inform ongoing and upcoming EU debates, notably the Multiannual Financial Framework after 2027, the mid-term review of the European Disability Strategy and the Social Economy Action Plan, as well as wider European discussions where the social economy demonstrates that economic value and social inclusion can advance together.

The social economy, encompassing cooperatives, mutual societies, associations, foundations, and social enterprises, plays a critical role in the social and labour inclusion of persons with disability. It employs around 13.6 million people across the EU and contributes roughly 8% of EU GDP. Meanwhile, nearly one in four people aged 16+ (23.9%) report a disability, and barely half of working-age people with disability are in paid employment.

The practices collected here also align with major EU priorities such as the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030, the Union of Skills, the Green Deal, and the Digital Decade, showing that inclusion and innovation can advance together, and that the social economy is uniquely positioned to translate European commitments and aspirations into concrete results for people.

### **About the Working Group on Disability of Social Economy Europe:**

This publication is an initiative of the Social Economy Europe Working Group on Disability, of which the following organisations are members: Fundación ONCE, Philea – Philanthropy Europe Association, Alaturi de Voi (ADV), Association Internationale de la Mutualité (AIM), the Alliance for Social Economy in Slovakia (ASES), the European Confederation of Industrial and Service Cooperatives (CECOP–CICOPA Europe), the West Pomeranian Network of Social Economy (SZOWES), the European Network of Social Integration Enterprises (ENSIE), Pase Kalo – Panhellenic Confederation of Social Economy Unions and Concertation des Organisations Représentatives de l'Économie Sociale (CONCERTES).

Together, these organisations represent all the families of the social economy: cooperatives, mutuals, associations, foundations, and social enterprises. The group's mission

is to raise the visibility of the role and potential of social economy enterprises in creating quality employment for persons with disabilities and to promote their social and labour inclusion across Europe.

### How to read this publication:

Each practice follows a common structure: project name, social economy family, location, initiative summary, EU policy alignment, objectives, model used, stakeholders involved, results and added value.

## 1. Humanitarian Emergencies

Ukraine: Humanitarian action with long-term inclusion

*Submitted by Fundacion ONCE*

- » **Location:** Spain and Ukraine (support provided within Spain and at refugee camps in Ukraine and neighbouring countries).
- » **Social Economy Family:** Foundation / Social enterprises (Grupo Social ONCE, Fundación ONCE, Ilunion).
- » **Brief description:** Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022, Grupo Social ONCE has provided sustained humanitarian support both within Spain and across borders. It has delivered more than 850 tonnes of aid, mobilised volunteers, opened Ilunion hotels to refugee families, and created jobs for Ukrainian people with disability. The initiative combines emergency relief with long-term social and labour inclusion, demonstrating how the social economy can partner up with different actors to respond with resources and flexibility in times of crisis while upholding dignity and accessibility.
- » **Alignment with EU Policy Priorities:** European Pillar of Social Rights; EU Disability Strategy 2021-2030; EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid; Social Economy Action Plan.

- » **Objective:** The initiative aims to provide immediate humanitarian relief for people fleeing the war, with particular focus on people with disability and their families, while ensuring longer-term integration through housing, employment, interpretation, and social support services.
- » **Model used:** The response mobilised the three operational arms of Grupo Social ONCE: ONCE (volunteers and advocacy), Fundación ONCE (coordination of aid and refugee support), and Ilunion (hotels, employment, and logistics). It involved donations of essential goods, financial contributions, hosting refugees in hotels, employing people with disability, and coordinating with national and international partners to channel aid where it was most needed..
- » **Stakeholders involved:** Fundación ONCE; ONCE; Ilunion; Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (CERMI); NGOs including Mensajeros de la Paz and Rehabilitation of Marginalized People (REMAR); European partners such as European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), European Disability Forum (EDF), International Disability Alliance (IDA), and European Blind Union (EBU); local authorities; and private companies including Leroy Merlin, El Corte Inglés, Decathlon, Iberdrola, Unilever, and many others that contributed goods and equipment.

- » **Impact:** More than 1,000 Ukrainian families were housed in 14 Ilunion hotels, representing over 35,000 stays. Around 30 refugees, including people with disability, found jobs within Ilunion and ONCE services. 26 trucks carrying 850 tonnes of food, medicines, and essential supplies were delivered to Ukraine and neighbouring refugee camps. Volunteers provided interpretation, psychosocial support, and integration assistance. In total, thousands of refugees benefited from a combination of emergency aid and longer-term opportunities for inclusion in Spain.
- » **Added Value:** This initiative stands out as an example of the strength of the social economy in responding to humanitarian crises by linking humanitarian action with employment and social inclusion. Unlike many emergency responses limited to short-term aid, Grupo Social ONCE combined relief with job creation, housing, and long-term support. By doing so, it showed how the social economy can bridge humanitarian action and integration, placing people with disability at the centre of a dignified, inclusive response.



» **Multimedia:**



## 2. New Technologies

Sens

*Submitted by Mutualité Française*

- » **Location:** Pays de la Loire, France.
- » **Social Economy Family:** Mutuals.
- » **Brief description:** Sens is a mobile application for young people with visual or hearing disability developed by VYV3, Pays de la Loire, the healthcare and social-care arm of the VYV Group, one of the largest mutualist organisations in France. It was born from the observation that many young people felt unsupported after leaving specialised institutions. Co-designed with health professionals and users, the app addresses eight key life themes, offering tailored advice and interactive guidance to help them live more independently day to day.
- » **Alignment with EU Policy Priorities:** EU Disability Strategy 2021–2030; Digital Decade; European Pillar of Social Rights.
- » **Objective:** The application seeks to support young people with sensory disability in improving their career prospects and quality of life. Its main goal is to facilitate independence in working and daily life, using a peer-to-

peer model that allows users to exchange experiences, advice, and role models with others facing similar challenges.

- » **Model used:** Sens is a project designed and managed by VYV3 Pays de la Loire, a private, non-profit mutualist organisation which develops and manages the VYV Group's care and support services in the Pays de la Loire region. The app is continuously updated with feedback from users and professionals, ensuring its content evolves with changing needs and best practices.
- » **Stakeholders involved:** The initiative involves the VYV Group as sponsor, Mutualité Française (FNMF), the Pays de la Loire Regional Health Agency, healthcare professionals, the French Ministry of Solidarity and Health, and several foundations (Visio, Fondation de l'Audition, Fondation de l'Avenir). Beneficiaries and their families play an active role, alongside partners such as the national deafness information centre and Streetco, a mobility application.
- » **Impact:** Since its launch, Sens has achieved an average rating of 4.7 out of 5 on app platforms and was awarded the PARI (Prix Avenir Recherche Innovation). It has helped young users access reliable information and build independence, while fostering a culture of peer support in the disability community.

- » **Added Value:** Sens stands out for being created by users for users. This participative approach, combining mutualist governance with user-led design, ensures the app remains relevant, practical, and replicable. It shows how digital tools can empower young people with disability to live more autonomously and contribute to broader social innovation.
- » **Multimedia:**



### 3. Environment

#### ILUNION Reciclados

*Submitted by Fundacion ONCE*

- » **Location:** Madrid and León, Spain.
- » **Social Economy Family:** Social enterprises / Special Employment Centres.
- » **Brief description:** ILUNION Reciclados is one of Europe's most advanced electronic waste recycling plants, managed by ILUNION, the social enterprise group of Fundación ONCE. Located in León, it operates at industrial scale while ensuring that more than 70% of its workforce are people with disability, many of them employed in technical roles. The plant integrates state-of-the-art recycling technologies with inclusive employment practices, proving that circular economy solutions can also be powerful engines of social inclusion.
- » **Alignment with EU Policy Priorities:** European Green Deal (Circular Economy); EU Disability Strategy 2021–2030; Union of Skills; European Pillar of Social Rights, Union of Skills.
- » **Objective:** The project has a dual purpose. First, to recycle electronic waste efficiently, ensuring that

valuable raw materials are recovered and reintroduced into the production cycle while reducing environmental impact. Second, to create stable, quality jobs for people with disability, demonstrating that the transition to a green economy can be made more inclusive by design. ILUNION Reciclados also seeks to pioneer accessible green jobs, positioning workers with disability at the forefront of one of Europe's most critical transitions.

- » **Model used:** ILUNION Reciclados operates as a Special Employment Centre, a legal form in Spain designed to guarantee that a majority of the workforce are people with disability. Its model adapts industrial processes to the needs of its employees: workstations are ergonomically designed, assembly lines are supported by clear signage and easy-to-understand protocols, and training programmes are tailored to a range of intellectual, sensory, and physical disabilities. Beyond accessibility, the model emphasises professional growth. Workers receive continuous training and opportunities to reskill, ensuring their participation in higher value-added roles such as quality control, technical maintenance, and environmental monitoring. This combination of social enterprise governance and industrial know-how makes the plant both competitive and inclusive.
- » **Stakeholders involved:** ILUNION (management and operation), the ONCE Social Group (ownership

and governance), electronics manufacturers and distributors who channel waste into the plant, local and regional authorities supporting collection networks, and vocational training providers who collaborate on upskilling programmes. Partnerships with universities and R&D centres also contribute to innovation in recycling technologies and workplace accessibility.

- » **Impact:** Each year, ILUNION Reciclados processes more than 200,000 tons of electronic waste, preventing hazardous materials from entering the environment and contributing significantly to Spain's recycling targets. Hundreds of people with disability are employed in technical and operational positions, gaining stable income and career progression in a sector where they are often underrepresented. The project has been recognised as a European reference point for inclusive circular economy initiatives, showing how social enterprises can operate at scale without compromising on competitiveness or inclusion.
- » **Added Value:** The strength of ILUNION Reciclados lies in its triple impact. Environmentally, it reduces waste and supports Europe's resource efficiency goals. Socially, it creates dignified, skilled jobs for people with disability in a growing green industry. Economically, it demonstrates that social enterprises can be competitive in capital-intensive, high-tech markets, turning inclusion

into a source of resilience and innovation. The initiative illustrates how the social economy can serve as a bridge between Europe's climate ambitions and its social commitments, offering a replicable model of inclusive green transition.

» **Multimedia:**



## 4. Housing

### Senior Living

*Submitted by Fundacion ONCE*

- » **Location:** Pontevedra, Spain.
- » **Social Economy Family:** Social enterprise.
- » **Brief description:** Senior Living is ILUNION's answer to one of Spain's most urgent demographic shifts: nearly 22% of the population is now over 65, and the vast majority want to remain independent while feeling safe and supported. Senior Living offers modern, accessible apartments where older people, including those with disability, live independently but can access a wide range of optional services, from healthcare and physiotherapy to meals, cleaning, and leisure activities. Unlike traditional residences, this is not a medicalised setting: it is a community-based model of housing and care designed around autonomy, choice, and dignity.
- » **Alignment with EU Policy Priorities:** European Pillar of Social Rights; EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disability 2021–2030; European Care); European Green Deal.

- » **Objective:** The main goal of Senior Living is to create dignified, accessible, and sustainable housing solutions that allow older people and persons with disability to maintain independence while accessing tailored support when needed. It seeks to reduce social isolation, strengthen community living, and support families by providing reliable care infrastructure. More broadly, the initiative aims to modernise Spain's eldercare system by offering an intermediate solution between home care and full institutionalisation.
- » **Model used:** The project is developed and managed by ILUNION VidaSénior, the care division of the ONCE Group. It follows a service-apartment model that combines housing with a flexible menu of personalised services, ranging from cleaning and catering to physiotherapy, medical support, and leisure activities. The Pontevedra complex is being developed in partnership with Thor Private Equity Spain and constructed under rigorous sustainability standards, targeting BREEAM Excellent certification. Employment within the complex will prioritise people with disability, in line with ILUNION's role as a social enterprise.
- » **Stakeholders involved:** ILUNION VidaSénior (management and service provision), Thor Private Equity Spain (development and financing partner), local authorities in Pontevedra (urban integration and



licensing), architects and contractors specialised in universal design, and the wider ILUNION care ecosystem, which already manages residences, day centres, teleassistance, and home care services across Spain. Families of residents and local community organisations will also play a role in co-designing activities and services.

- » **Impact:** The Pontevedra site will open with 24 fully accessible apartments and 150 residential care places, creating around 100 new jobs, with more than 40% expected to be filled by people with disability. Over the medium term, Senior Living will expand to other Spanish regions, responding to the rising demand for alternatives to traditional residencies. For residents, the model ensures independence, social participation, and personalised support; for families, it offers peace of mind and respite. At a systemic level, it introduces a replicable blueprint for inclusive housing and care that balances ageing, disability, and sustainability.
- » **Added Value:** The initiative stands out for combining inclusive housing with disability employment, creating a double social impact. It also demonstrates how social economy enterprises can deliver sustainable care models that respond to Europe's demographic ageing while ensuring accessibility, dignity, and inclusion.

» **Multimedia:**



## 5. Employment

### JobDirect

*Submitted by Alături de Voi Foundation (ADV Romania)*

- » **Location:** Iași, Romania.
- » **Brief description:** JobDirect is the only social enterprise in Romania specialized in recruitment, placement, and job support for persons with disability. Developed by the “Alături de Voi” Romania Foundation (ADV Romania) since 2016, the initiative combines in-person and digital services to help individuals with disabilities access the labour market through professional counselling, skills assessment, vocational training, and job-coaching, all delivered through a one-stop-shop model.
- » **Social Economy Family:** Social Economy Enterprise.
- » **Alignment with EU Policy Priorities:** European Pillar of Social Rights; EU Disability Strategy 2021–2030; Union of Skills.
- » **Objective:** JobDirect pursues a dual objective. On the one hand, it seeks to improve the employability and social inclusion of persons with disability and other vulnerable groups, particularly those facing multiple disadvantages. On the other, it aims to strengthen Romania’s labour

market infrastructure by equipping employers with the tools, knowledge, and support they need to recruit and retain employees with disability. In doing so, it contributes to closing the country’s persistent disability employment gap and aligns local practice with EU-level ambitions for inclusive growth.

- » **Model used:** Operating as a social enterprise, JobDirect integrates economic sustainability with social innovation. It offers tailored counselling and professional orientation, specialised assessments to identify job–skill matches, and accredited vocational training programmes. Its digital platform provides accessible recruitment and job posting, while personalised job coaching supports individuals for up to 12 months after placement to ensure retention. The model also leverages public–private partnerships, engaging employers, local authorities, and European programmes such as the ALMA Initiative, which enables young people with disability and NEETs to gain experience abroad.
- » **Stakeholders involved:** ADV Romania leads the initiative in collaboration with national networks such as RISE Romania (work integration social enterprises) and FONSS (social service NGOs). Local authorities and agencies, including the County Employment Agency, the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection, and

Iași City Hall, support implementation, while schools and universities contribute to training pathways.

- » **Impact:** Since 2016, JobDirect has supported more than 500 people with disability and other vulnerable groups, achieving a 50% employment rate and 90% job retention in the first six months. Its digital platform has scaled nationally, and the ESF+-funded pilot “JobDirect for NEETs Youth within the ALMA Initiative!” has introduced European mobility into inclusive employment strategies. The initiative has been recognised as a pioneering model in Romania, with strong potential to influence national policy and inspire replication across Europe.
- » **Added Value:** JobDirect stands out as the only fully integrated employment pathway for persons with disability in Romania. It combines social innovation with measurable impact: counselling and assessments tailored to each individual, a dedicated digital platform, and rare long-term job coaching that ensures sustainability. For employers, it offers practical solutions for inclusive recruitment and retention. For policymakers, it provides a replicable model that bridges local challenges and EU priorities, showing how social enterprises can modernise labour markets while empowering vulnerable groups.

## Solea

*Submitted by CECOP*

- » **Location:** Rybník, Czech Republic.
- » **Social Economy Family:** Cooperative.
- » **Brief description:** Solea is a cooperative manufacturing plastics and metal components for the automotive, engineering, and electrical industries. Founded in 2000 in eastern Czechia, it produces both simple and complex units, with products found in cars from BMW, Audi, Bentley, Range Rover, and Aston Martin. From the outset, the cooperative’s mission has been to create employment opportunities for persons with disability in competitive manufacturing sectors. Today, over 75% of its 180 workers are people with disability, making Solea one of the country’s largest inclusive employers in industry.
- » **Alignment with EU Policy Priorities:** European Pillar of Social Rights; EU Disability Strategy 2021–2030; EU Employment Guidelines; EU Industrial Strategy.
- » **Objective:** Solea’s main goal is to provide stable, quality jobs for persons with disability while remaining competitive in high-demand markets such as automotive and electronics. By reinvesting surpluses into the cooperative, it seeks to secure long-term sustainability,



expand employment opportunities, and demonstrate that inclusion and industrial competitiveness can go hand in hand.

- » **Model used:** Organised as a cooperative, Solea follows democratic governance, with members making key decisions in General Assemblies. It offers flexible work arrangements, including part-time roles adapted to diverse needs, under agreements with the Czech Labour Office on employment recognition. Alongside industrial production, Solea actively supports local development by meeting regularly with municipal authorities and contributing financial and material support to voluntary organisations. Its operations also integrate environmentally conscious practices, such as energy-efficient appliances, recycling, and the use of degradable materials.
- » **Stakeholders involved:** Solea cooperative members (workers and management), the Czech Labour Office, local municipalities in Rybník, major automotive and engineering clients, suppliers and contractors, and local voluntary organisations.
- » **Impact:** Solea started with three employees in 2000 and has grown into a cooperative employing 180 workers, three-quarters of whom are persons with disability. Beyond job creation, it has become a cornerstone of

the local community, sustaining economic activity in Rybník and providing consistent support to voluntary organisations.

- » **Added Value:** Solea demonstrates that the cooperative model can succeed in highly competitive, export-oriented industries while prioritising inclusion. By reinvesting profits into its growth, it secures long-term sustainability and continuous job creation for persons with disability. With over two decades of experience, it has built strong expertise both in industrial production and in inclusive employment, offering a replicable model for other regions. Its combination of economic competitiveness, social inclusion, and community embeddedness positions Solea as a leading example of the social economy's role in Europe's industrial landscape.

## Łaźnia Cooperative

*Submitted by ENSIE*

- » **Location:** Szczecin, Poland.
- » **Social Economy Family:** Cooperative / Social enterprise.
- » **Brief description:** The Łaźnia Cooperative was co-founded by the 4C Social Economy Centre and the Pod Aniołem Foundation to create an inclusive space in the historic former municipal bathhouse in Szczecin. It hosts both the Łaźnia Social Integration Centre and a set of social enterprise activities, including a second-hand social shop, a café and catering service, small repair workshops, and spaces for training and community events. Its mission is to support individuals with disabilities, particularly those with mental health conditions, in regaining confidence, skills, and social habits needed to re-enter the labour market or stabilise their everyday lives.
- » **Alignment with EU Policy Priorities:** European Pillar of Social Rights; EU Disability Strategy 2021–2030; Union of Skills.
- » **Objective:** The cooperative aims to increase employability for persons with disability and other groups excluded from the labour market due to long-term illness,

mental health crises, or prolonged unemployment. It provides a safe environment to relearn essential habits such as punctuality, teamwork, and regular participation, while also offering personalised support during periods of crisis. For some, the cooperative serves as a transitional step towards the open labour market; for others, especially older participants, it provides meaningful employment until retirement.

- » **Model used:** Organised as a cooperative and social enterprise, Łaźnia integrates social support and economic activity in one space. Participants work in accessible workshops, cafés, or the second-hand shop while receiving professional and social guidance. The model combines horizontal management, where staff, volunteers, and participants collaborate without rigid hierarchies, with open-market operations that generate income and reduce dependency on external funding.
- » **Stakeholders involved:** The initiative was established by 4C Social Economy Centre Ltd. non-profit and the Pod Aniołem Foundation. It works closely with the Municipality of Szczecin, local social assistance offices (MOPR), health and social service providers, volunteers from the community, and local NGOs supporting people with disability and mental health conditions. Families of participants are also engaged in reinforcing social reintegration.

- » **Impact:** In its first five years, around 70 individuals participated in supported employment programmes at Łaźnia. Of these, around 20 re-entered the open labour market, while about 30 others stabilised their family and social situations or continued their education. In 2024, the Social Integration Centre planned to host about 15 participants with mental health conditions, with an average of 11 actively engaged per month. All participants strengthened their qualifications, social skills, and confidence to re-establish life routines.
- » **Added Value:** Łaźnia stands out for its non-segregated, community-based approach. People with disability, those recovering from crises, volunteers, and professionals work side by side, creating an environment of mutual support and shared responsibility. Operating from a symbolic public space, the cooperative integrates its social mission into everyday economic activity, showing that reintegration, inclusion, and entrepreneurship can reinforce each other. Its combination of heritage location, open-market activity, and tailored support makes it a replicable model for urban social innovation across Europe.

## » Multimedia:



## Mandelík

Submitted by ENSIE

- » **Location:** Prague, Czech Republic.
- » **Social Economy Family:** Social enterprise.
- » **Brief description:** Mandelík is a laundry operated by Fokus Praha, a mental health charity. It was established in 2011 when Fokus Praha took over a failing laundry business. After renovating the premises and installing new equipment, Fokus Praha relaunched the enterprise as a workplace for people with disability, with a focus on those with mental health conditions. Today, Mandelík runs two branches in Prague, offering professional laundry services to local residents and businesses.
- » **Alignment with EU Policy Priorities:** European Pillar of Social Rights; EU Disability Strategy 2021–2030; Union of Skills.
- » **Objective:** The initiative seeks to provide accessible, stable jobs for people with disability, particularly those recovering from mental health conditions. Its aim is not only to create employment but also to support reintegration into daily routines, teamwork, and community life. The cooperative environment promotes inclusion by involving staff directly in operations while

keeping recruitment open and without formal entry barriers.

- » **Model used:** Mandelík functions as a social enterprise embedded in the wider NGO structure of Fokus Praha. Employees are recruited locally and trained in tasks such as washing, ironing, and small repairs, with opportunities to contribute to customer service. The business also offers collection and delivery services to widen its client base. Income is generated through trading, supplemented by public funding and support from projects that promote inclusive employment.
- » **Stakeholders involved:** The initiative is managed by Fokus Praha, with support from public authorities such as the Job Centre, which co-finance part of its operations. Local residents and businesses are both clients and supporters, while NGOs and community organisations collaborate in promoting social inclusion.
- » **Impact:** In 2021, Mandelík created meaningful jobs for 14 people, including 11 people with mental health conditions and two people with physical disability. Employees gained stability, skills, and social connection through everyday work such as washing, pressing, ironing, and minor repairs. The laundry also serves local residents and reaches clients further afield through its collection and delivery service. Financially, the business generated

€52,000 in trading income, covering almost half of its costs, with the remaining €56,000 supported by the Job Centre.

- » **Added Value:** Mandelík is distinctive for embedding social inclusion within a mainstream business model. By lowering barriers to entry, it makes employment accessible to people who are often excluded from the labour market. Its integration into Fokus Praha ensures continuity of support, linking work opportunities with wider social and health services. The model demonstrates how social enterprises can combine financial viability with inclusive practices in a practical, replicable way.

» **Multimedia:**



## ŠENT

*Submitted by ENSIE*

- » **Location:** Slovenia (39 locations nationwide).
- » **Social Economy Family:** Association.
- » **Brief description:** ŠENT is a humanitarian non-profit association that has been providing community-based mental health support across Slovenia since 1993. It helps people with disability, in particular those with mental health conditions, to build the skills for independent living, avoid repeated hospitalisation, and access meaningful jobs. ŠENT operates free day centres, residential support for independent living, harm-reduction programmes, and employment initiatives through social enterprises that reinvest profits to create new jobs. It also leads peer advocacy for human rights, contributes to policy development, and organises public events to reduce stigma around mental health. The association employs 292 people, including 153 people with disability, and has an annual turnover of €6 million.
- » **Alignment with EU Policy Priorities:** European Pillar of Social Rights; EU Disability Strategy 2021–2030; EU Employment Guidelines; Union of Skills.

- » **Objective:** ŠENT's goal is to enable people with disability to break cycles of exclusion, hospitalisation, or long-term unemployment by gaining the skills and support needed for independence. Its services provide pathways to employment, supported living, community participation, and rights advocacy, ensuring that each individual can develop autonomy and confidence.
- » **Model used:** ŠENT operates through a network of legal entities, including seven employment centres, two social enterprises, and a vocational rehabilitation and education centre. This structure allows it to integrate mental health support, employment opportunities, and advocacy into one comprehensive model.
- » **Stakeholders involved:** Key stakeholders include the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; the Social Chamber; municipalities; the Association of Employment Rehabilitation; the Association of Social Firms (ZIPS); and the cooperative engagement of members and families.
- » **Impact:** ŠENT has become a cornerstone of community-based mental health in Slovenia. It employs 292 people, with 153 people with disability, reflecting its strong commitment to inclusive hiring. Its 39 centres provide thousands of individuals with access to day activities, counselling, and supported living. Its social enterprises

create work integration pathways, while advocacy programmes empower people with disability to know and claim their rights. Public events, conferences, and festivals help challenge stigma and promote understanding of mental health across society.

- » **Added Value:** ŠENT is unique in combining inclusive employment, independent living support, and rights advocacy under one umbrella. By addressing employment, social care, and community participation together, it offers a holistic approach to inclusion. Its reinvestment of profits into new jobs ensures sustainability, while its active role in policymaking and public debate demonstrates how associations can shape both practice and legislation. The model shows how people with disability can lead change when services are designed around dignity, empowerment, and community.



» **Multimedia:**



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## 6. Accessible Health and Care

Oxance

*Submitted by Mutualité Française*

- » **Location:** France.
- » **Social Economy Family:** Mutuals.
- » **Alignment with EU Policy Priorities:** European Care Strategy; European Pillar of Social Rights; EU Disability Strategy 2021–2030.
- » **Brief description:** Oxance Mutuelles de France is a major actor in the French healthcare sector. Created through the merger of several unions of mutuals, Oxance offers concrete solutions to address public health challenges. Its network comprises almost 130 establishments implanted in 17 départements and 5 regions. Oxance offers a wide range of services: medical, dental, optical and hearing care, as well as medico-social services for the elderly and people with disabilities.
- » **Objective:** The main objective is to offer effective, affordable and high-quality solutions for all. As a mutualist actor, Oxance is committed to reducing inequalities of access to healthcare by developing services throughout the whole territory, including “medical deserts”.

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- » **Model used:** Oxance is a non-profit mutual group committed to providing healthcare services that are accessible to all. Its structures apply controlled tariffs (sector 1, without any out-of-pocket money) and without any advance expenses for patients. Oxance is also acting to provide solutions in under-service areas. Example: the opening of a health center in Alès in 2023, with the objective to meet the needs of the urban agglomeration severely affected by the lack of healthcare professionals.
- » **Stakeholders involved:** Oxance mobilise a wide variety of actors: mutualist adherents, patients and users, families and caregivers, Mutualité Française and collaborators and healthcare professionals.
- » **Impact:** Oxance employing more than 1.500 employees, 1 million people are welcomed each year within the whole healthcare centers, medical-social, optical and hearing centers.
- » **Added Value:** This initiative is characterized by a dual complementary approach. Internally, the creation of a care assistant's aide position specifically dedicated to the nursing service helps to streamline the care pathway, by ensuring rigorous follow-up of consultations, efficient coordination with relatives and appointment scheduling. Externally, systematic follow-up on medical consultations ensures appropriate communication with healthcare

professionals and limits the loss of information. The continuity of support provided by the care assistant or another member of the team, is an essential asset to provide equal access to care.

» **Multimedia:**





## 7. Mobility and Personal Autonomy

Altéo

*Submitted by Association Internationale de la Mutualité (AIM)*

- » **Location:** Belgium.
- » **Social Economy Family:** Mutuels.
- » **Brief description:** Altéo, a social movement belonging to the Mutualité Chrétienne, is a support & transport service intended for members who need accompaniment (to move, to orient themselves, to understand information) and who do not have an alternative mobility solution.
- » **Alignment with EU Policy Priorities:** EU Disability Strategy 2021–2030; Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy; European Pillar of Social Rights.
- » **Objective:** The initiative seeks to improve mobility to enable people with disabilities to access healthcare services, social activities or any other services. This support and transportation of sick and disabled people enables the members to strengthen their autonomy. Volunteers offer their concrete services during a medical appointment, a formality to complete or simply to keep company. By offering this service, the initiative address

the difficulty for disabled people to find relatives to support them in their mobility and take part of the daily life.

- » **Model used:** This initiative runned by a social movement (association) uses membership fees, small financial contribution per kilometer, public subsidy for the organization and volunteers work.
- » **Stakeholders involved:** Main stakeholders include health mutuels, health mutuels movement (association), volunteers.
- » **Impact:** In one year, it is more than 6500 beneficiaries of the service thanks to 400 volunteers. Another 80 volunteers are managing the call centres to organize the transport. That represents 73000 missions a year for 2.500.000 km driven.
- » **Added Value:** This service is particularly effective because it brings together professionals hired by the social movement (association) supported by the health mutuels, volunteers and beneficiaries who are members of the associations. The volunteers are located throughout the territory and well trained to manage the call centre or as drivers. An efficient software helps them to run the demand for courses smoothly.

## » Multimedia:



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## Conclusions

This compilation of good practices demonstrates that the social economy is an essential player in moving towards a more inclusive, innovative and cohesive Europe. Through various models: foundations, cooperatives, mutual societies, associations, integration companies and special employment centres. These initiatives show that the inclusion of people with disabilities is not only a political objective, but a possible reality when economic structures place people at the centre.

The eleven examples presented show that the social economy can provide effective solutions in key areas for the European Union, such as the digital and green transitions, accessible housing, quality employment, personal autonomy and humanitarian response in crisis situations. They also demonstrate that inclusion is compatible with competitiveness, innovation and sustainable growth.

On the one hand, the guide shows that labour inclusion continues to be an essential driver for full participation in society. Experiences such as **Solea** in the Czech Republic and **JobDirect** in Romania prove that the social economy can create quality jobs in industrial, technological and service sectors, offering support, training pathways and accessible working environments. Other notable models include **Łaźnia Cooperative** in Poland and **Mandeliku**

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in the Czech Republic, which combine economic activity with socio-educational support to facilitate recovery, the development of professional itineraries and the transition to the labour market. These initiatives prove that, when designed with an inclusive approach, social economy enterprises can become true creators of talent and autonomy for people with disabilities.

On the other hand, the guide also brings together practices that go beyond employment, stating that inclusion is expressed in all dimensions of life. Projects such as **Sens** in France highlight the role of mutual societies in accessible digitalisation and community support. Initiatives such as **Senior Living**, promoted by ILUNION, or the **humanitarian action** of the ONCE Social Group in Ukraine, receiving support from Spain, show how the social economy can develop innovative responses in critical areas such as accessible housing, ageing and crisis care. The document also incorporates practices focused on healthcare access and inclusive mobility, such as **Oxance** in France and **Altéo** in Belgium. These initiatives help to reduce inequalities in healthcare access services and provide support for mobility and personal autonomy, especially for people in communities with limited resources. Ensuring accessible care and inclusive mobility is essential for exercising rights, maintaining independence, and actively participating in community life.

These practices confirm the value of the European social economy model in promoting quality employment, community participation, universal accessibility and the full exercise of rights. They also highlight the importance of strengthening partnerships between social economy organisations, public authorities and private actors in order to consolidate an ecosystem capable of generating real and lasting impact.

This guide comes at a key moment, as the European Union prepares to review the European Disability Strategy, the new Multiannual Financial Framework and the ongoing development of the Social Economy Action Plan. The practices collected here provide certainty to guide these policies and remind us that the inclusion of people with disabilities requires concrete, stable and sustainable solutions.

In short, these good practices show that the social economy, when based on values of solidarity, democracy, accessibility and innovation, is an essential driver for building a fairer Europe. The Social Economy Europe Disability Working Group, promoted by Fundación ONCE, reaffirms its commitment to continue fostering initiatives that combine social impact, inclusive employment and economic transformation, contributing to the transformation of European principles into tangible results for all people.

## Social Economy Europe Disability Working Group' members



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