

# The “Social Economy” in the time of crisis

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## **Abstract**

During the crisis (2008 - ) a “new Social Economy” seems to be emerging in the European Union. It supports “solidarity economy” by promoting enterprises mainly cooperatives into the “active welfare state”. The new forms of “Social Economy” were introduced in the Greek public policy through the European Strategy 2020 (“Europe 2020”), recorded by the Law 4019/2011 and reflected in the national and regional strategic development frameworks for 2014-2020 through the adoption of specific objectives mainly related to the Social Cooperative Enterprises (Koin.S.Ep). The “new Social Economy” seeks to potentially be established as a core value of social policy in Greece in order to be the main element of the overall policy making that will potentially lead the Greek public administration to limit the consequences of the economic recession such as: unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

As part of the efforts made by the Greek public administration to the direction of combating poverty and social exclusion, the interest is focusing on the interpretation of the “Social Economy” in public policy and its specific institutional environment in

Greece. Given the fact that the “new Social Economy” is still at a very early stage of implementation the interest is enhanced by the ability to provide timely responses to policy making through the comprehension of the Greek social policy and administration. Since the “Social Economy” relates to social policy as a policy of “employability”, crucial issues on design and implementation of employment policy in Greece will be developed focusing on cooperatives. Particular interest will be given to the implementation of the “new Social Economy” at central and regional level due to the importance of the involvement of all actors in the construction of a “Social Economy” which potentially leads to an effective social administration for the benefit of unemployed.

**Key Words:** *Social Economy, Social Cooperative Enterprises, Public Policy, Social Services, Unemployed.*

## **1. The “Social Economy” in Public Policy. A Brief Historical Review.**

### **Introduction**

The "Social Economy" made its appearance in Europe in 18th century. Since then it may attributed to many different interpretations and approaches. The “Social Economy” is interpreted here as being part of the state’s relations with “significant others” of policy seeking to pursuit social cohesion and prosperity. “Social Economy” and “Social Policy” could be regarded as identical in this perspective.

The multi-interpretation of the “Social Economy” becomes apparent in the Greek Public Law 4019/2011 which gives to the term “Social Economy” a very broad definition which is: "*Social economy*" is the sum of financial, business, productive and social activities undertaken by legal persons or associations, whose statutory purpose is the pursuit of collective benefit and serve broader social interests" (N.4019 / 2011, Article 1, parag. 1). Under this scope, all potential forms of social and economic activity - by anyone acting as a legal entity and thus by the state - and through any form of provision of links between these forms, may serve the "Social Economy".

The “Social Economy” in public policy varies within the institutional environment and the current social system that is been constructed (sociological institutionalism) (Berger, & Luckmann, 1966, March & Olsen, 1989 & 2005, Muller & Surel, 2002, Vlasaki, 2012). It is also forms its particular content historically (historical institutionalism) (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, March & Olsen, 1989 & 2005, Pierson, 1996 & 1993, Muller & Surel, 2002, Vlasaki, 2012) through the relationship that the state develops with different actors and policy communities (*policy communities*) (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992, Smith in Hill (ed), 1998, Kenis et al, 1991, Vlasaki, 2012).

Public policy is attracted by the "Social Economy" over time due to ethics and morality symbolisms that the word “social” gives to the “economy” in capitalism. Its values of collectivity and solidarity towards poor and the excluded compose the content of this moralization and the efforts made by the state-actors relations to achieve prosperity and social cohesion in capitalism. Under this approach, the “Social

Economy” in Public Policy is theoretically tries to limit the consequences of capitalism, such as poverty and social exclusion.

### **1.1. The “Social Economy” in the Industrial Era.**

From the late 18th century to the early 19th, the "Social Economy" was connected with cooperatives, associations and mutual societies. They were self-help organizations, consisted by workers and other social groups that were needed care to face the hard living conditions of the industrialized and urban world (Monzon & Avila, 2012:13). The emergence of "Social Economy" through the vision of association had developed close links with the trade unions of the 19th century, as were the mutual societies (mutual insurance of workers) in England (Campos & Avila, 2012:14). The socialist ideas of cooperativism (associationism) which promoted the value of solidarity played a central role in the development of "Social Economy" of the time, as Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon's ideas did in France (Campos & Avila, 2012:15).

The term "Social Economy" probably first appeared in the economic thought in 1830. (Campos & Avila, 2012, Moulart & Ailenei, 2005). By 1860 the idea of social economists which was affected by T.R. Malthus and S. de Sismondi, attempted to restrict the free market economy by defending the introduction of human-liberal principles in it. Their attempt revolved around trying to create collective forms of liberal capitalism in a way of achieving social peace (Forni et al, 1998, Ewald, 2000:76 & 94-98, Brooke, 1970, Vlasaki, 2012:39) between the two sides of the wage labor: the workers and the employers/capitalists.

## 1.2. The “Social Economy” in the “Welfare State”

After the 2nd World War in Europe, the state, known as “welfare state”, becomes the main body of "Social Economy" drawing under the Keynesian economics and corporatism (Kaynes, 1936, Schmitter & Lahmbruch, 1979, Gravaris, 1997). Under the left parties and the trade union influences to European governance, state - trade unions - and employers agreed upon the "Social Economy organization" and to a kind of a state collective action (Vlasaki, 2012).

The state collectiveness constructed around social rights recognition and regulations on the wage labor concerned the social insurance system. Through the insurance system, the state proceeded to a redistribution of social services (health, education etc) and other social resources (unemployment allowance, pensions, maternity, children and elderly benefits) that compose a kind of *social property* (Castel, 2004, 2002, 1996, also Vlasaki, 2012) for workers.

The state insurance system represents an act of collective responsibility where workers and employers contribute, by insurance contribution, to the protection of the workers from the labor risks, as unemployment. Through legal paths of work regulations the state appears obliged to serve the society and restore the lost "moral community" in the industrialized & modern world, forming a set of obligations and rights binding organic relations between the two sides of wage labor (organic solidarity) (Durkheim, 1984). Social solidarity in the organic pattern is becoming political process in a way where the state seeks to elevate a primitive human element of solidarity (the man is a social being by nature) to a political one in order to cover

the anomie phenomenon of industrialization. At the anomie situation according to Durkheim, individuals released from moral and social rules of traditional community. A distinguished "deficit" regulation of social behavior occurred, which led to the deregulation of social and collective forms of human relations. Deregulation refers to the first phase of societies' individualization (Beck, 1996, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) where solidarity of industrialized or modern societies is compromised or changed content due heterogeneity and the diversity of their members.

The welfare state is constructing around the insurance system legal and political forms of social solidarity (Spanou 2005: 121-122) and represented in collective consciousness as a social construct through which the workers can exchange their services and meet their collective needs (Vlasaki, 2012: 49). In its context of collectivity and social economy the 'welfare state' was largely based on a profound restructuring of the system of political representations (Chevallier, 1993, 160). Making use of the concept of "organic solidarity" (Durkheim, 1984) in the construction of the legal theory of "public service" (Chevallier, 1993: 160-162) the state legalized the dissemination of its services to the private sphere and its domination to the regulation of social relations. In symbolic terms, the post war state is depicting the society as a whole and ideologically presents itself as a single entity, placed above all (market, family, community, religion, other private actors) able to satisfy all the needs of citizens and serve the public interest (Vlasaki, 2012: 48).

The state collective action based on the social insurance system of the post war era acquits the affected by the risks of the wage labor from the state protection. This

means that if a person had a duty to carry out his/her work to society he/she has the right to ask society to give him/her its protection. The unemployment for instance is a socially accepted and recognized condition where the unemployed have the right to seek an allowance (unemployment allowance) and society perceives their request not as a burden to itself but as an obligation of to its members. In his sense the unemployment is unintended (Gravaris, 2003) and the unemployed is not responsible for his/her unemployment.

The collectivity which attempted to be establishing by the post-war state through the legal regulations of work are inherent elements of the conversion of the labor force in liberal market principles. Characteristic in this respect is the fact that a reciprocal relationship formed between the two sides of the economy on the basis of the contribution and collective responsibility, are inseparable from the logic of economic efficiency, according to which, a worker free and protected produces twice than a illiberal and unsafe worker (Floreal H. Forni, Ada Freytes Frey, Germán Quaranta, 1998) (Vlasaki, 2012: 51-52).

Under a vision of a "positive individualization" of workers passive employment policies (allowance benefits) perceive an active character. They contribute to the reproduction of the working class offering them a minimum living conditions as long as they are out of the production process, they maintain their purchasing power as income public assistance provided to them is reinvesting in the economy through their consumption. Consumption enhances the range of entrepreneurship in the logic of the coverage of the additional consumption of the population which contributes to new

jobs creation. Tackling unemployment is therefore part of this continuous movement of the economy which creates business conditions and labor demand. In the same logic, the unemployment benefits preserve the autonomy of the individuals in multiple ways such as the reinvestment of the unemployed into work, by enriching their skills and providing them with prospective job mobility in the labor market, which are fundamental factors of capitalist activity. From this perspective, the passive employment policies not only recommended as ineffective models of economic efficiency in the administrative function but instead contribute to this direction while proposing reliable solutions to unemployment (Vlasaki, 2012: 51-52).

The “Social Economy” of the post war era was an effort taken by the state to the direction of offering a minimum protection to those affected by the risks and damages of the wage labor and capitalism, such as unemployed workers. The social policy of the time was making around a set of passive and active employment policies based on the insurance protection system and labor inclusion in order however to achieve social cohesion and capitalistic growth.

### **1.3. The “Social Economy” in the “Active Welfare State”**

Since the early 80s, a gradual liberalization of the postwar "welfare state" is taking place, under the scope of the right political thought, neo-liberal economics and globalization. The time is characterized by a constant and extensive process of individualization of the collective mechanisms of the state (state social insurance system) due to the state's regulations of deregulation of the labor market. The deregulation of the "welfare state" began in the late 70s and 80s with the resurgence



of liberal ideology which opposed to public service as a value in itself (Spanou, 2005:129), that the state cannot serve the public interest and defend the values of solidarity, equality and justice.

Under the neo-liberal context a new social policy is framing in the EU that is characterized as “active welfare state” (Vlasaki, 2012). The EU "active welfare state” (European Commission COM (2009) 58 final, European Parliament, 2000) organizes new forms of governance and political communities concerning mostly the state, the employers and the actors of the third sector as NGOs, volunteers and other associations and private actors. In this context, part of the state social services, such as social protection, active measures in the labor market, training and health services, transferring to the third sector’s and private actors.

The state maintains headquarters and supportive role in social policy where many and different actors around the state are playing significant role in social integration. A new form of governance pursued which shows a somewhat managerial logic (managerial state) (Clarke & Newman, 1997) in which the state seeks to include and mobilize all the actors even the individuals to the direction of making the EU the most competitive economy in the World.

The EU “active welfare state” is mainly directed by the logic of employability which becomes the basic principle of social integration. In this sense, the social integration is becoming almost identical to work inclusion of unemployed which is not necessarily linked to social rights coming from their (paid) work (Vlasaki, 2012). Unemployed regarded all those who are not working (workless). They represent almost the entire

population at working age (15-64) and are belonging to the so called “vulnerable groups” such as, the long-term unemployed men & women, women mostly 45 years and over, Roma, immigrants and young people seeking their first job, and those who have dismissed and did not have to retire, older people due to the increase in the retirement age, elderly, disabled, addicted to substances, and other social groups.

The policy re-framing of the EU context is mainly legitimized by the re-definition of unemployment as structural and intended (Gravaris, 2003:340-341) in the sense that unemployment is primarily a problem of the labor supply and demand mismatch (structural unemployment) and the unemployment a matter of responsibility of the individual (intended unemployment). The structural approach assumed that there are available vacancies on the labor market but the unemployed are not able to fill them in. The mismatch attributed to the weaknesses and vulnerability of the unemployed associated with their lack of skills, adaptability and flexibility, with psychological factors and even with the unemployed reluctance to work.

A series of active methods and techniques has been adopted by the state and other actors playing the third sector in the way of promoting the unemployed in the labor market, known as active employment policies. These active tools are related to individualized intervention to unemployment, counseling, job placement, training, New Enterprises, new jobs creation and work experience programs (Vlasaki, 2012).

The «active welfare state» seeks to become a supportive mechanism which is offering services to the extent that the individuals are able to overcome their dependence to the state. In this context, as an unemployed is considered dependent on welfare, the active state provides all the skills, employability even psychological

support (counseling) to increase self-esteem and get his/her life in his/her hands. Such a procedure ensures individuals the treatment of their dependency on the state protection and what he considers the Bauman as a basic principle of ensuring the liberal rights: "freedom from need and fear of need, freedom from laziness and fear of sloth which compels unemployment» (Bauman, 2004, 137).

The “active welfare state’s” support mechanism is related to the way the state stabilize discontinuous temporary and uncertain career path of the unemployed covering a kind of "vulnerability". This “vulnerability” is connected to the population that is not able to follow the competitiveness of globalization and to be adaptable to the requirements of the flexible labor market. The active state intervenes individualized in the process of employment promotion in a way of strengthening the individualization of the unemployed in a competitive environment of globalized and liberal capitalism (Foucault in Sharma & Gupta (eds), 2006, Vlasaki, 2012:36).The supportive mechanism despite stabilizing the personal paths of work is being an educational mechanism showing to unemployed the way to individualization where each one has to learn how to be an autonomous individual. The goal is the moralization of the individual, the reminding of his duties, to show him/her that he/she holds his/her fate in his/her hands and must work. It is an intervention to persons’ mind for the establishment of the unemployed as a self-regulated person and as a subject who learns to recognize unemployment as his/her own case. This is not only an individualistic process but also a process of a further individualization more compatible to the norms of free market domination in neo-liberal capitalism over public policy.

This development shows that there is a tense for more and more unemployed out of social protection. A “negative individualization” is the consequence where the more and more unemployed left alone without financial assistance by the state. The problem is exacerbated because of rising unemployment and declining of social spending of the active state. In the context of cut public spending the active state intervenes to “those most needed” or the “most vulnerable” putting eligibility criteria for the beneficiaries. However, the distinction between «the most and less vulnerable» is abstract and may reduce the aid recipients of the state. Also, it may undermines the social rights of the middle and working class marginalizing and stigmatizing people receiving financial assistance from the state (Rogers et al, 1995, Karamesini in Petmezidou & Papatheodorou, 2004). The gap left by the non presence of the state in the social protection is doubtful - especially in the time of crisis - whether it can be effectively covered by the third sector. This happens because these bodies are strongly depended on temporarily EU and state funding. Under the circumstances of a continuous decline of the social state intervention, the individualization and a discontinuity of the social intervention of third sector bodies, the cohesion and prosperity of the EU societies are at seriously threat.

The “Social Economy” in the EU “active welfare state” consisted by a pluralistic frame of policy making with the participation of many actors and the state as executive body of the networking governance. The state has the task of directing the actors to contribute to the integration of the unemployed into work where the social inclusion of vulnerable groups is identical with their work inclusion not necessarily connected to social rights coming from their work. The work first is the logic of this

pluralistic system of policy making that are facing with a serious threat of social cohesion due to individualization process of protection system of the post war welfare state, the shrinking of social spending and the temporality of EU funding of third sector bodies.

## **2. The “Social Economy” in the Time of Crisis.**

In the time of crisis (2008 - ) "a new Social Economy seems to be emerging in the EU member states. It supports «solidarity economy» by promoting enterprises mainly cooperatives to the third sector of the «active welfare state». The “new Social Economy” intensifies in other the privatization of the “active welfare state” by activating the Social Enterprises into the third sector of social services provision. The social enterprises have commercial activity in social services provision and development. They are cooperatives and associations combined also by social groups (disabled for instance) which sale social services, not necessarily in low cost. The state contracting out social services to social enterprises and subsidizes only the most vulnerable groups according to income and personal eligibility criteria.

This shift in EU policy agenda becomes clear in 2011 (Monzon & Chaves, 2012:99) however gradually consolidated and expended in the national policies through the EU strategy "Europe 2020", for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth 2014-2020. Under the scope of the EU policy the Social Economy was formally established in Greece in 2011 by the Law N. 4019/2011. The Social Cooperative Enterprises defined by this Law as the main actor of the Social Economy in Greece.

The “Social Economy” and Social Cooperative Enterprises in the EU and in Greece are placed within the policy context of the «active welfare state» specifically in the third sector of the economy (Explanation Memorandum of the Greek Law 4019/2011 for Social Economy and Social Enterprises). The policy seeks to strengthen the local economy and create new jobs in an era of economic recession and very high unemployment rates in Greece (24% & 48,9% youth unemployment, Eurostat)<sup>1</sup>. It also seeks to socially integrate vulnerable groups of the population “mainly through the integration and promotion of employment” (Law 4019/2011, article 1). The legitimized policy discourse for the necessity of this measure to be taken by the Greek Public Administration is based on the sustainability and resilience that these Enterprises in EU are displaying against the economic crisis. In the same line, cooperatives are also presented by this discourse as good practices throughout Europe for new jobs creation, for solidarity, and the National Domestic Product growth (Explanatory Memorandum of the Law 4019/2011). In the realm of the EU policy, this kind of enterprises seems to be more resilient to economic crisis mostly because they are not depended by the public funding as other actors of the Social Economy as NGO’s are.

The Social Cooperatives are commercially and socially active which gives greater perspective and freedom in privatization and shrinking the “welfare state”. The state in this case does not necessarily support the third sector bodies through grants and funding for the implementation of their mission. In the time of crisis and the state

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<sup>1</sup> These percentages are based on data of December 2015. Greece displays the highest rates of unemployment in the EU28.

budgetary constraints, this independence seems a good and relieving solution for social public administration sustainability although in fact legitimizes and consolidates the liberal “active welfare state” in the EU.

## **2.1 The Social Cooperative Enterprises in Greece. The General Profile.**

The Social Cooperative Enterprise (Koin.S.Ep.) is a civil law cooperative with social mission and commercial activity (Law 4019/2011). It is equally managed by its members. Its operation is based on the pursuit of collective benefit, whereas profit is the result of actions that serve the public interest exclusively. Specifically, the characteristics of the Koin.S.Ep. are the following:

- A. At least five members or seven members needed for Koin.S.Ep establishment.
- B. Its members are belonging to “vulnerable” social groups (“groups whose participation in social and economic life is difficult either because of social and economic problems, either due to semantic or psychological or mental disability or unforeseeable events which affect the proper functioning of the local and regional economy” (Law 4019/2011, article 1).
- C. Members of Koin.S.Ep. can be either natural persons, either natural or legal persons
- D. The participation of legal entities may not exceed the rate of 1/3 of their members
- E. There are three categories of Koin.S.Ep.:**

### ***i. Koin.S.Ep. of Integration***

Their aim is the integration in the economic and social life of persons belonging to “vulnerable” groups such as: disabled, addicted to substances, ex-

prisoners, seropositive, juvenile offenders. A minimum 40% of workers should belong to the mentioned population groups, on a permanent basis. Their establishing required at least seven persons.

**ii. *Koin.S.Ep. of Social Care***

Their aim it to produce and provide social - welfare character products and services to specific population groups such as elderly, infants, children, disabled and people with chronic diseases. Their establishment required at least five persons.

**iii. *Koin.S.Ep. of collective and productive purpose***

Their aim is the promotion of local and collective interest, employment, strengthening social cohesion and local or regional development. Involving the production of goods and services in areas such as culture, environment, education, utility benefits, local products, maintain of traditional activities and professions. Their establishing required at least five persons.

- F. The Koin.S.Ep. should be registered to the Record of Social Economy of the Ministry of Labor
- G. Model of statute of the Koin.S.Ep. is available through the website of the Ministry of Labor
- H. Local Authorities Organizations (OTA) and their public entities cannot be members of the Koin.S.Ep., except in cases of the “Koin.S.Ep. of inclusion” that they can participate under the condition of prior approval by their organizations
- I. Each member must have at least one mandatory cooperative share and up to five optional cooperative shares



- J. All members are entitled to one vote (one member one vote)
- K. 5% of the profit per year of the Koin.S.Ep, should be available for reserve formation
- L. Up to 35% of the profit distributed among the employees of the enterprise as motivation of productivity
- M. The remaining (at least 60%) of the profit is available for the activities of the Koin.S.Ep. and new jobs creation.
- N. According to the Law 4019/2011, article 7 & 10, the Koin.S.Ep. are not subjected to income tax on reserve formation and on its activities and the new jobs creation however this regulation is not implemented. It was canceled by the Law 4110/2013 “Income tax adjustments”, article 2.
- O. The Koin.S.Ep. subjected to income tax 10% for its activities about the new jobs creation
- P. The Koin.S.Ep. can be part of networks and partnerships within a specific legal entity
- Q. Employees of Koin.S.Ep. who belong to vulnerable population groups and receive welfare benefits or any other benefit, continue to receive such benefits together with their salary.
- R. The Koin.S.Ep. have access to the Social Economy Fund (which is still pending)
- S. The Koin.S.Ep. may be integrated into entrepreneurship support programs, OAED programs and active employment policies.

T. The Koin.S.Ep. may conclude programmatic contracts with the State, the public sector and local authorities first and second degree (municipalities and regions).

U. The Koin.S.Ep. may be included at the beginning of the operation in co-funded European projects implemented by the Secretary General Management of European Funds, OAED and other competent bodies.

### **2.1.1. Social Cooperative Enterprises' Cases in Greece**

Cases that depict the general profile of the Koin.S.Ep. in Greece are related to: the nurseries and kindergartens, tutorial, counseling, cafes, traditional dishes and pastries, cultural activities, mechanical and plumbing, daily care of the elderly, children, people with disabilities and special groups and home care, cultivation and sale of local products, cultural education, theater, development of enterprises, social care, preparation and parenthood (pregnancy), hand loom products, educational-tourism, gastronomy, rescuing monuments. Structures of Reception & Accommodations for unemployed, homeless, refugees, battered women, people, minors, mentally ill. Structures for: a) Environment and ecology b) Green growth c) Recycling d) Clean & repairs e) Cultures & green maintenance, social press (design and production of any kind of form (newspapers, magazines, prospectus, etc.), creation and promotion of websites, special internet applications and social media, counseling and organizing professional communication).

There are also self managed factories as the case of the BIOME (Labor Union in Industrial Mining) where the workers have taken the management of the factory in their own hands producing natural cleaners. They also promote their products through

e-commerce. The BIOME became a social enterprise after the bankrupt of the factory. The transition of bankrupt enterprises into social cooperatives where the workers are the owners of the enterprise seems to be a strategic choice of the Greek policy to restrain unemployment.

The general characteristics & profile of the Koin.S.Ep indicate that a new process of labor & production relations has begun in the time of crisis which introduces a societal transformation based on entrepreneurship of unemployed. The self-managed factories, the fact that the owners of the social enterprises are at the same time the wage laborers, the fact that the social enterprises produce and sell all sectors' products and services (education, care, environment, culture) introduces us a different paradigm of social and economic organization. Even in case of trade unionism there is a small scale paradigm instead of the large trade unions that could be enough to renew syndicalism?.

### **2.1.2. The Experience of a Social Entrepreneur in Greece**

The Experience of a social entrepreneur in Greece shows the absence of the Greek public administration from preparing, supporting and guidance of unemployed to the “Social Economy”. According to the Social Entrepreneur:

*“It is really interesting to collaborate with other people at work. This indeed is one form of solidarity that one counts on another. But the problems are quite a lot concerning our sustainability which consists of a series of contradictions that are related to the fact there is not tax incentives for social enterprises. We are treated as*

*any other enterprise. We do not have the knowledge on how to set up and how to build and keep the sustainability of an enterprise or how to found a funding. There is no cooperation with the public and especially there is no way to access public funding and overcoming local lobby. While we must operate as a common enterprise to be competitive in the market, we do not have the right to make a profit. But we cannot survive this way and we do not have any motive to be social entrepreneurs”.*

## **2.2. The Institutional Framework of “Social Economy” and “Social Enterprises” Policy in Greece**

By the year 2011, when the Law 4019 adopted by the Greek government, there was not a concrete and coherent institutional framework for the “Social Economy” and the “Social Entrepreneurship” Policy in Greece despite the fact that these terms as policy measures are not a new in the Greek Public Administration under the EU influence.

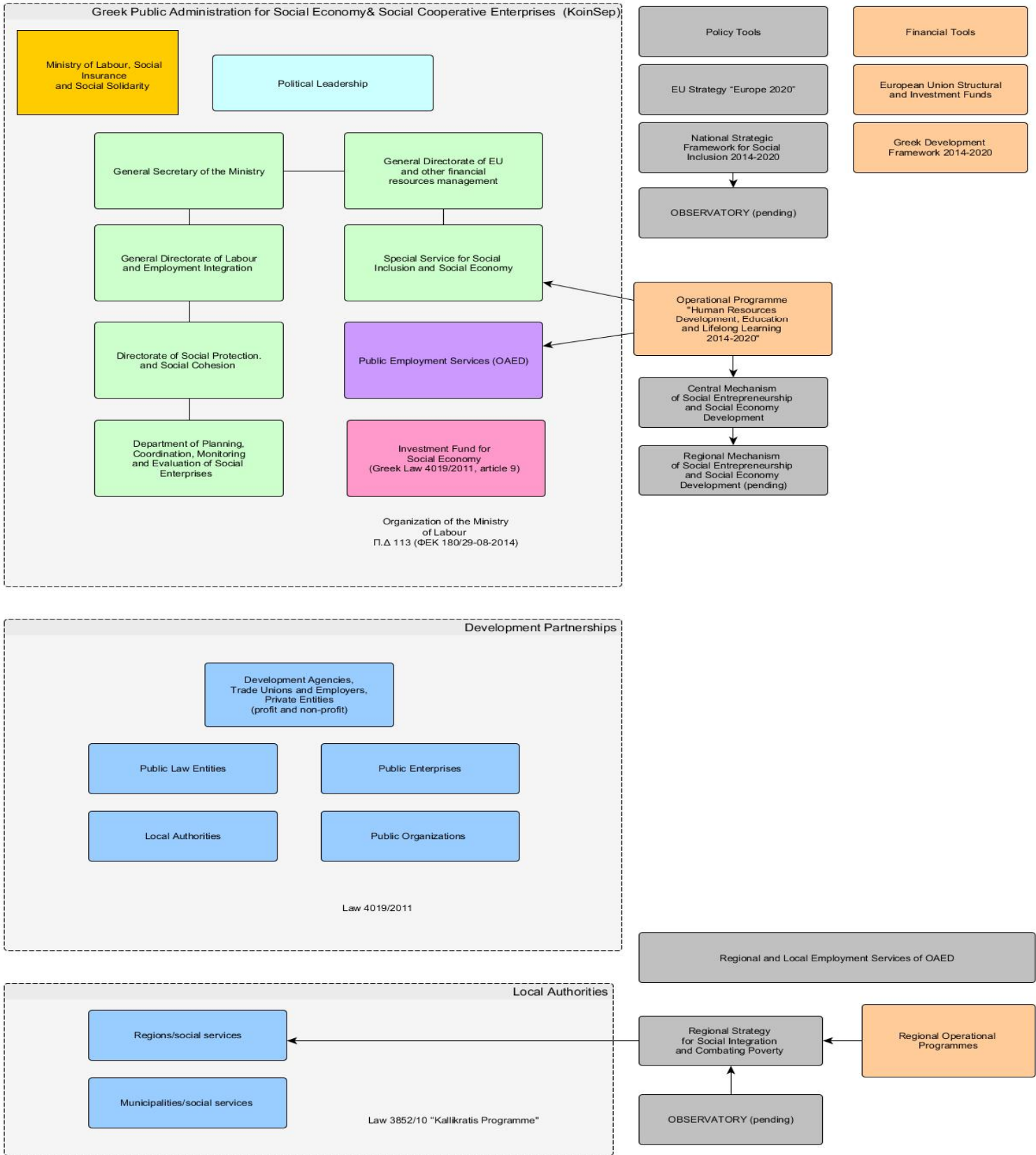
The Social Cooperatives were introduced in the Greek state, under the EU policy, (through the Community Initiative “EQUAL” (2001-2013) of the Ministry of Labor co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). Also through the Community Initiative “LEADER” (Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l’ Economie Rurale – links between actions for the development of the economy of rural areas) of the Ministry of Agriculture Development co-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) (1991 - ). The Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) also promotes cooperative enterprises through the Employment Programs of Enterprises co-funded also by the EU (1998 - ). It was the period of Europeanization of the Greek Public Administration ( Featherstone & Papadimitriou,

2008, Featherstone & Radaelli, (eds), 2003, Sotiropoulos, 2004) All these programs were running under the general scope of the active employment policies (Gravaris, 2003, Vlasaki, 2012) namely the promotion of employment inclusion and employability based on the active labor market policies.

The cooperatives of that time were related mostly to the women's cooperative enterprises in agriculture. Regarding the cooperatives developed in the context of the Community Initiative "EQUAL" they were unsustainable after the end of their finance (Adam, 2012:114). Their activities were developed mainly in agriculture, agro-artisanship, cottage production (mainly food, textiles, ceramics) and agrotourism (hostels, bars) (Adam, 2012:85). "Most women's cooperatives have chosen the legal form of the agricultural cooperative and some others the legal form of civil cooperative" (Koutsou et al, 2003, in Adam, 2012: 85 ).

In this context, there is no specific and uniform institutional framework for social cooperatives' policy. An overall an integrated policy is still in ambiguity because the legal and institutional framework of Koin.S.Ep. is under revision by the government in the context of the EU strategy, the national Agreement Programme of Greece for 2012 and the National and Regional Strategies for Social Inclusion & Combating Poverty. However, the current situation of the organizational model of the Social Cooperatives Policy in Greece is depicted in the figure below.

The Current Public Administrative Model for Social Enterprises in Greece



### **2.2.1. The Ministry of Labor, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity**

The Ministry of Labor, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity is responsible for the “Social Economy” and “Social Enterprises” policy making in Greece, specifically for policy planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation. The general directions of the policy planning are reflected in the National Strategic Framework for Social Inclusion 2014-2020. The policy is placed in the context of the achievement of the goals of the National Strategic Framework for Social Inclusion 2014-2020 (Hellenic Ministry of Labor) and the National Strategy and Action Plan on Social Economy of the Special Service for Social Integration and the Social Economy of the Ministry of Labor.

The competences of the Ministry of Labor, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity that are related to the Koin.S.Ep. include:

- i. The promotion of social reference contracts of the Koin.S.Ep.
- ii. The monitoring of their (Koin.S.Ep.) institutional framework
- iii. The development of the necessary tools for their operation
- iv. Their visibility and networking with other European institutions
- v. Their introduction of Social Economy and entrepreneurship at all levels of education
- vi. Their participation in European and international institutions
- vii. The Social Economy Registry operation
- viii. The monitoring of Social Economy to the conditions of the law 4019/2011
- ix. The information provision to citizens on their establishment and operation

Under the general scope of social integration policy, the Ministry incorporates the creation of Observatories that are going to operate at central and regional level. The Observatories will provide the state with significant information for “social economy” and its impact to the social integration policy implementation. The regional Observatories will contribute to policy making by giving to the state a feedback on local policy implementation and a perspective for further redesigns and improvements. In this perspective, the observatories could be a good opportunity for the policy making in Greece to elaborate real data and knowledge in order to be able to redesign its actions on a basis more oriented to the real needs of unemployed. The central and regional Observatories however have not yet started to operate.

### **2.2.2. The Role of the Regional Administrations**

The Regions have a crucial role to play in the Greek policy for “Social Economy & Enterprises”. They will support social entrepreneurship through the Regional Operation Programs 2014-2020. The Regions have adopted the Regional Strategies for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion as a pre-condition of the EU funding to the Greek Development Agreement for 2014-2020.

In the case of the Region of Crete, the Regional Strategy of Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty provides the establishment of coordinating and advisory bodies in decision making of the Regional Administration in order the Region of Crete to be able to effectively finance and monitor all the actions of the strategy taken by all the stakeholders in Crete. These administrative bodies are the “Social Inclusion



Committee” and “the Social Inclusion Working Group”. A monitoring process has also planned which will be supported by an Integrated Information System and the Regional Observatory (<http://www.pepkritis.gr>). This process will be a significant and strategic tool for policy making of the Greek state both for Social Enterprises and social integration. The actions mentioned in the case of the Region of Crete are in the initial phase of the process of implementation.

### **2.2.3. The Central and Regional Mechanism for “Social Economy” and “Social Enterprises”**

The Central and Regional Mechanisms of Social Economy and Enterprises is a useful tool for the state in order to prepare the unemployed in social entrepreneurship’s knowledge, methods and techniques, in the whole country. This mechanism could be very useful not only for unemployed but also for the local authorities, regions and municipalities that have to be educated on how to prepare unemployed to open and operate a social enterprise. The everyday experience of local authorities shows that while unemployed are interested in creating social cooperative enterprises the local authorities do not have the knowledge to show them the way and to support them in this effort. The mechanisms co-funded by the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020" and supported by the Special Service of Social Integration and Social Economy of the Ministry of Labor, Social Insurance & Social Solidarity. The mission of these mechanisms described below:

#### **2.2.3.i. Central Mechanism**

Key actions of the Central Support Mechanism of the Koin.S.Ep are:

- a. The scientific and advisory support to regional mechanisms
- b. The human resources training
- c. The scientific and advisory support of the Special Service of Social Economy of the Ministry of Labor for the development and promotion of the Koin.S.Ep. and the Social Economy
- d. The transnational cooperation

### **2.2.3.ii. Regional Mechanisms**

The Regional Mechanisms will cover the whole country. One in each region will provide one-stop services (one stop shop) for social entrepreneurs and social enterprises providing services for:

- a. Information about the characteristics and purposes of Social Entrepreneurship
- b. Support and counseling for the creation of Social Cooperatives

In addition, the Regional Mechanisms will seek to:

1. Enhance the business of Social Enterprises, through the promotion of local cooperation agreements (local pacts) between social enterprises and public bodies or private enterprises
2. Network the Koin.S.Ep. locally and creating clusters (clusters) of social enterprises
3. Support transnational cooperation with social entrepreneurship entities abroad
4. Support young social entrepreneurs regarding their participation in ERASMUS-type programs

Main implementation bodies of the regional social entrepreneurship mechanism are the Development Partnership Agreements (Law 4019/2011).

#### **2.2.4. The Development Partnership Agreements**

The mission of the Development Partnership Agreements is the implementation of the actions provided by the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020", of the Ministry of Labor, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity (Law 4019/2011). One of these actions is related to the implementation of the Regional Mechanisms of Social Economy. The Partnerships include public entities, Local Authorities (OTA A' and B' grade/Municipalities and Regions), public organizations and public enterprises, development agencies, private entities (profit or non-profit) trade unions and unions of employers. The Partnerships coordinated only by the Development Agencies, the Private Entities, the Trade Unions and the Unions of the employees.

The regional mechanisms have not yet been assigned to the Development Partnerships thus; the supportive mechanism of the Social Enterprises Policy in Greece is still remaining inactive.

#### **2.2.5. The Public Social Reference Contracts**

The Public Social Reference Contracts (Law 4019/2011, article 16) related to those contracts that the public authorities in procurement phase take into account important social aspects as award criteria, such as: a. employment opportunities b. social

integration of vulnerable groups c. equal opportunities d. accessibility for all e. sustainability and ethical trade g. social responsibility of enterprises.

The criteria have not yet been incorporated into the legal framework of the public procurement processes. The Independent Public Procurement Authority of Greece has put in consultation a draft of the new Law "award and execution of works contracts, consultancy, supply, goods and services", where social characteristics of the public contracting out are specialized mainly in:

- a) Employees belonging to vulnerable groups of the population as the paragraph 4 of Article 1 of Law 4019/2011 (A 216) defines for a period of at least twelve (12) months before the participation of the economic operators in the procurement procedure of a public contract
- b) Facilitating the social and/or employment inclusion of persons from vulnerable groups,
- c) Anti-discrimination and/or
- d) Promoting equality between men and women

The incorporation of social criteria in the procurement process is significant in the sense that Koin.S.Ep. could be advantaged in the competition process of the public contracting out and funding. However, the new Law of public procurement is still pending due to the fact that it has to be approved by the Greek Parliament. The current situation is that these social criteria are not part of the competence of the public services and most importantly they have not become part of the public services' culture. The social services also express a slight resistance to social

enterprises. They face them as a threat to their existence due to the forthcoming enlargement of privatization of the social public administration. Under these circumstances there are not indications at the moment that they can prove any kind of cooperation or relationship that could develop between the public services and the social enterprises in Greece.

### **2.2.6. The Public Employment Services (PES) in Greece: The Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED)**

The Public Employment Services (PES) in Greece is represented by the Manpower Employment Organization (OAED). OAED is supervised by the Ministry of Labor, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity and is directed by its Governor and Administrative Board. The Public Employment Services (PES) implements passive and active labor market policies. The active employment policies include personalized intervention in unemployment, counseling, job placement, training, New Enterprises and new jobs creation, work experience (STAGE)<sup>2</sup>. The employment services of OAED are extended across the country. OAED provides also services to special social groups of unemployed that are faced with the risk of social exclusion. These groups are:

- People with disabilities
- Ex-convicts
- Ex-drug addicts
- Young and other people at social risk
- Other “vulnerable groups”

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<sup>2</sup> More information about the active employment policy and the role of the Greek Public Employment Services (PES) of OAED in the labor market and social administration and policy, see Vlasaki, 2012.

The Social Cooperatives could be benefit by the active labor market policies of OAED. One of the main dysfunctions OAED currently faces in its efforts to develop the ability of the unemployed to become entrepreneurs is that the unemployed usually do not have the capital (even low) to invest to start-ups. The subsidies of the New Enterprises program are eligible only for pre-paid expenditures of the start-ups. This is the main reason for unemployed poor to not invest in their entrepreneurship. They usually do not invest also to innovative ideas that could have a sustainability prospect in the labor market. They often choose to open cafes and hairdressers (OAED, 2015).

### 3. Conclusions

The “Social Economy” in the time of crisis refers to the public administration has been developed in Europe since the late '70s, influenced by the right political thought, neo-liberal economics and globalization. A constant and extensive process of individualization of the collective mechanism (the social insurance system for instance) of the “welfare state” has been launched in the EU since then leading to the construction of the “active welfare state”.

A pluralistic model of governance is drawing around the “active welfare state” with the participation of private and third sector actors (NGO's, volunteers, associations, etc) in the network. The state relations with “significant others” of policy in the EU has been transformed into a managerial network of policy making. This policy making is being in the process to manage societal issues coming up from the liberal globalized capitalism, such as poverty and social exclusion.

Employability and work inclusion of unemployed is becoming the only means to the state networking management where the social policy in the EU prospect could be regarded as almost identical to the policy of employment. Unemployed are considered all those who are workless namely all those at working age (15-64) seeking for a paid work, such as: women, Roma, immigrants, young people, elderly, disabled, addicted to substances, mentally ill, and other social groups. To the direction of work inclusion, a series of active methods and techniques (training, job search, entrepreneurship, job experience, counseling, etc) are offered by the state to the adaptability of unemployed in the competitive and flexible needs of the labor market.

Unemployed are educated by the state in this process in order to be able to take their situation in their own hands and be not dependent on the public assistance. State assistance is offered only to those most needed or to the so called “most vulnerable” with a large part of the population however to be remaining without protection leading to the challenging of social cohesion and prosperity.

In the time of crisis, the “new Social Economy” intensifies the liberalization of the “welfare state” by activating the Social Cooperative Enterprises into the third sector of social policy network. Under the scope of the European Strategy “Europe 2020” the Social Cooperative Enterprises are regarded by the EU as significant actors of social policy. The “Social Cooperative Enterprises” as the main representative of the “Social Economy” in Greece formally inserted into the Greek Social Administration by the Law 4019/2011. Although both “The Social Economy” and “The Social Cooperative Enterprises” are not new in the Greek Public Administration experience under the EU influence from the early 90’s, are getting now a more strategic role in social policy in Greece under the “Europe 2020”.

The Greek policy objective is fighting unemployment for combating poverty and social exclusion. The promotion of poor unemployed in the labor market as independent & successful entrepreneurs is also its policy mission. Unemployed in this prospect invited by the public administration to be able to build a series of technical skills and active employment measures, such as to plan their commercial sustainability enterprises in the labour market, to find and manage specific financial tools offered by the Greek state and the EU.



Several institutional interventions have been adopted by the Greek public administration to achieve the policy goal and the mission of promoting unemployed in the labour market as social entrepreneurs. These interventions are mainly based on policy and financial tools offered by the Greek Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 (New ESPA) co-funded by the EU structural and investment funds, referring to: the national and regional strategies for social inclusion and combating poverty, the Observatories as monitoring and evaluation systems of policy at national and regional level, the central and regional mechanisms for entrepreneurship's education of unemployed, a set of state rules of coordination, monitoring, and evaluation as well as a set of social contracting out principles of public services. The current policy system could potentially lead to a more integrated and effective "Social Economy & Enterprises" policy in Greece for the benefit of unemployed.

Despite the policy prospects, several policy constraints are also observed indicating that the Social Entrepreneurs in Greece are staying without public support by the Public Administration which seriously threatens their survival within an inactive economic environment and a limited and competitive access to public funding. Specifically:

- a. There is a blurred institutional environment that is not fully implemented yet: the Law for the Social Economy and Social Cooperative Enterprises is under revision, the central and regional mechanisms, the Social Enterprises Fund, the regional strategies, the Observatories, the Public Social Reference Contracts are still pending.

- b. The policy for social enterprises is fully depended on EU funding which does not ensure its long sustainability.
- c. There are different actors with the same mission such as the Public Employment Services (OAED) and the Development Partnership Agreements that may lead to dysfunctions in policy coordination and effect.
- d. The role of public bodies in the Development Partnership Agreements should be strengthened by the Law, like the role of the Public Employment Services and the Regions for instance.
- e. The Local Authorities do not have the knowledge to support social enterprises. They resist to the social enterprises' development treated them as a threat to their own existence in the social services provision.
- f. The public administration has not yet adopted the social reference contracts thus, social criteria in the public procurement process have not become yet part of the public services competences and most importantly they do not become part of the public services culture.
- g. There are not tax incentives for social enterprises.

Regarding the general profile of social cooperatives, a new process of labor & production relations seems to derive during the crisis that may introduces a societal transformation based on cooperatives of unemployed. The self-managed factories, the fact that the wage laborers are the owners as well of the bankrupted factories or enterprises, the production & marketing of all products and services (education, care, environment, culture) by social cooperatives represent a small scale paradigm of social and economic re-organization starting by unemployed from the local.

However it is quite assure that this process is leading towards a policy that attempts to transcend the new-liberalism capitalism and the consequences of unemployment (poverty & exclusion). The indications of the so-called “active welfare state” in the EU, where the “Social Economy” is incorporated into its institutional environment, are not positive as led to the expansion of unemployment and poverty. It has also been constructed a temporary and flexible labor market and an institutional environment that reduces public expenditures & social rights, fragments syndicalism, leaving unemployed and wage employees increasingly powerless to claim their social protection. It also individualizes unemployed promoting them as free movers in the competitiveness of the labor market leading to what a Social Entrepreneur in Greece claims: *“while we are treated by the Law as common businesses in the free market competition without state support we are obliged not to seek for a profit. But we cannot survive this way and we do not have any motive to be social entrepreneurs”*.

Under these circumstances, the “Social Economy” in the time of crisis may opens a window to a wider commoditization of the labor and the social services provision. It may also leads to a further shrinking of social protection of unemployed leaving the social cohesion and prosperity in ambiguity.

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