Social economy: going local to achieve the Strategy Europe 2020. Romania Case.

Cristina Barna

1 University of Bucharest, Romania
Pro Global Science Association, Romania

Abstract. Social economy could be considered a response to the crisis in Europe, a new European economic system able to unlock social innovation, growth and jobs and to achieve the set of ambitious objectives to be reached by 2020 in the five main areas: employment, innovation, climate change, education and poverty. Its role is recognized at EU level: in April 2011 the European Commission delivered the final text of “Single Market Act – Twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence”, where lever 8 is “social business” with the goal to encourage social entrepreneurship, so all the actors of the single market who have chosen to pursue not only financial profits as a goal, but also social, environmental or ethical progress. Moreover, social economy is present in draft regulations regarding EU Cohesion policy 2014 – 2020. Support to social entrepreneurship figures among the future investment priorities of the Regulation of ESF and of the Regulation of ERDF. In this very supportive European context, in 2011 Romania begins to do the first steps towards the social economy, thanks to the SOP HRD 2007-2013 projects financed by ESF, Key Area of Intervention 6.1- “Developing Social Economy”. This paper presents also an overview of the conceptual framework of social economy, focusing on the emergence of social enterprise - an alternative model to the profit maximizing firm, not regulated yet in Romania, but more viable in the current socio-economic context: changes in the demand for and supply of welfare services, bottom-up mobilization, emergence of new types of enterprises and concepts. In the last part, the paper analyses in details the Romania case – the history of social economy in Romania, key-actors at present, the first statistics on social economy from “Atlas of Social Economy – Romania 2011”, the present challenges and the future directions.

Keywords: social economy, social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, Strategy Europe 2020

JEL Codes: L30, L31