



## **41<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of Association d'Économie Sociale (AÉS)**

### ***SOCIAL ECONOMY AND 21<sup>st</sup>CENTURY CRISES***

**Grenoble, 8-9 September 2022**

**Centre of Research in Economics of Grenoble (CREG)**

### **Call for Papers**

The magnitude and characteristics of the 2020 crisis deserve special attention as they are unprecedented and of critical importance to the sustainability of our economies. The health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to singular policies seeking to protect the population. These policies also resulted, by mechanical effect, in a worldwide recession while the consequences of the 2007-2008 global financial crisis have not yet been counterbalanced by a strong economic recovery.

While the economic fragilities of the 2007-2008 crisis continue to haunt political and social stability around the world and push many governments towards protectionist solutions, the pandemic is traveling the world along the lines of trade and population movements. It raises economic questions similar to those that have existed since the 1970s. These reflections concern the conditions of stability and growth of a capitalism that evolves on a neo-liberal wave. They also require an in-depth reflection on social economics and on health and social policies. In an "unprecedented" way, the pandemic marked the primacy of health over the economy: governments agreed to block certain economic activities to preserve health.

As a major global social event, this pandemic marks, to the dismay of certain economic forces, the political choice to place the economy in the background of governmental concerns everywhere in the world. It also marks the end of the conservative rules of European economic regulation based on the withdrawal of the State and neo-liberal approaches. In the 1990s and 2000s, the state was a supervisor through economic austerity policies (conservative monetary policies, limitation of budget deficits and public debt, liberalization of financial markets, etc.). In the face of the recession, the European Central Bank has opened the credit floodgates to governments that provide support and emergency measures. The European Commission supports public spending plans of unprecedented magnitude, without any real change in the perception that public decision-makers and economic circles have of the functioning of the

economy and the needs of society. Do the practices inaugurated in 2020 herald a temporary increase in the share of public spending in GDP or a reconfiguration of the welfare state?

The old concepts of social market economy or social economy in the institutional sense of the term need to be revised in the light of the new challenges and the new prospects for economic recovery based on an economy moving towards ecological and digital transition.

In order to develop these issues, we are opening up 4 main lines of communication:

- 1) New socio-economic fragilities and gender inequalities
- 2) Social economy and development in the global South
- 3) Economic globalization, health globalization
- 4) Social economy, welfare state and ecological and digital transitions

### **1) New socio-economic fragilities and gender inequalities**

The ILO's regular reports draw attention to the reduction in working hours in 2020 and 2021. This recession is not just about unemployment in the conventional sense. Governments everywhere have adopted support plans to limit social interactions and thus production and trade. With the support of international organizations, public financial support was provided everywhere and has limited company closures and massive layoffs, at least in the beginning. The support did not prevent the reduction of activities, employment, and the critical situations linked to the interruption of tourist, agricultural, cultural and sporting activities, etc.

Most of the world's workers live in countries hit by massive downturns. At the global level, part of this slowdown resulted in job losses resulting in unemployment, in a reduction of working hours although the public authorities sought to preserve the overall level of employment. Thus, the usual mechanisms of social protection (unemployment insurance and minimum social benefits) are under pressure. The French reform of unemployment insurance has been delayed. How can we assess the resilience of social protection?

The first victims of the recession are not only wage-earners but also small self-employed workers, shopkeepers, etc. Social categories that were previously independent have been hit by the recession and are requiring new urgent social protection linked to the crisis. A related question is then: Has a new poverty been born, or will it recede with an economic recovery? The solidarity-social economy has been strongly solicited in the course of the recession: what place will it regain at the end of the 2020 recession (if there is an end in the near future)?

The mechanisms of lockdown, school closures, and the generalization of working from home have put pressure on women, whether employed or not, who are most often in a position to do most of the domestic work in the household. Has gender inequality increased temporarily or does it herald a more lasting upsurge? The social economy looks at the issues related to gender inequality.

### **2) Social economy and development in the global South**

In the South, the absence or great weakness of unemployment insurance systems raises very complex questions about the mechanisms of social exclusion. What social economy can be the departure point for development processes that could meet the needs of the population? In

the progressive changes of the 2010 decade and the brutal socio-economic degradation of 2020, the associative world is placed on the front line. Emergency social needs are above all covered by a complex world of non-governmental organizations and solidarity associations. The third sector is called upon to help new populations that are threatened by social exclusion and requiring urgent material support. In this emergency environment, new ways of social action in the North as well as in the South are developing. In particular, the organizations representing employees are looking for new forms of solidarity because the problems are posed in a new way. The crisis is health-related and international. Trade unions can hardly remain within the restricted perimeter of stable salaried work, even if essential questions arise, such as working from home and the impact of digital transformations. What are the new social solidarities at work? What about their international dimension?

In the South, raising the issue of social inclusion and actions on this subject is a good way to question social action, which is too often reduced to formulas that can limit social work to a limited “reparation” action. Working on social inclusion makes it possible to link this work to actions in favour of development as close as possible to the ground, the concerns of territorial development and social action actors. The question of budgetary limits to social policies is a key issue here, and requires that increased spending be justified by a convincing justification of expenditure. Does the notion of social investment provide a key word for social action in this constrained economic context?

### **3) Economic Globalization, Health Globalization**

In 2021, economic globalization is being impacted by global population health issues. Wealthy economies have been quick to respond to national health issues, but health issues are taking on a different scope. Is the health economy going global?

An increased role for the social state is often expected to counterbalance the effects of the global recession. Public health priorities are reinforced by the global pandemic. Can they call for a new way of thinking about health policies at a supranational level?

The pandemic also brings to light an urgent need to think about democratic solutions at different territorial levels ranging from local life to global organization, depending on the issues to be resolved. The governance of economic and social affairs is then questioned.

The practices of corporate social responsibility towards their stakeholders and towards the goals of economic recovery that would be consistent with environmental requirements should also be examined.

The notion of the common good is being questioned, as is the issue of corporate participation in the construction of this common good. The alternative ways of organizing cooperative, solidarity-based and social enterprises are to be reinterpreted in the context of the pandemic: what new “social contract” can be derived from the need to support private enterprises and to preserve employment level, and to frame relevant models of organization of humanly sustainable homeworking relations? What are the new social compromises that are being put in place?

### **4) Social economy, welfare state and ecological and digital transitions**

Will the post-crisis period of 2020-2021 be a repeat of the post-crisis period of 2007-2008? Public support for companies and financial markets would quickly be followed by the return

of high-yield speculative activities. Can we imagine an economic recovery that generates jobs and sustainable income without an alternative financing model that generates well-being for the world's populations? The mobilization of citizens acting at the local level to innovate and implement social change can bring alternatives based on citizen projects. The aspiration to a circular, solidarity-based and social economy does point to such alternatives. The development of local currencies might be regarded as an illustration. In a world undergoing digital, ecological and energetic transitions, the pandemic is leading us to rethink the modes of development based on the unsustainable exploitation of environmental resources. This evolution has multiplied the emergence of new global risks such as pathogenic contacts between wild animals and humans. Many initiatives aim to establish new models of development reconfiguring the relationship between humans and the environment (ecofeminism, short circuits, etc.), alternative models for financing medium and long-term societal transition projects. What analysis can be made of these models?

The new means of macroeconomic and financial regulation - which could be implemented in both developed and emerging countries- are still very uncertain. What are the roles of international organizations and central banks beyond immediate support for economic activity and the financial system, what new articulations between monetary and budgetary policies, and what is the future of international agreements such as the Eurozone, the European Union and the Franc Zone? Are we moving towards a redefinition of the international balance of power, both at the level of countries and institutions, and the creditors who are in a position to impose their logic? These are all questions that should be posed again in light of the current health crisis.

Is the reflection on modes of development, based on a new social economy, breaking radically with the (neo)liberal ideology of the 1990s and 2000s on the agenda?

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Beyond these core topics of the meeting, other proposals falling within the usual fields of the social economy, are also expected (health, housing, employment, public services, education etc.). The conference is open to different disciplines such as economics, sociology, political science, law, history, management sciences, life sciences, etc.

**Standard requirements for the proposal submission:**

Paper proposals must be presented according to the following standard plan (2-3 pages maximum):

→ First page: title of the paper, name(s) of author(s); postal and e-mail address(es) of author(s) [in case of co-authors, underline the name of the correspondent], affiliation of the author(s).

The paper proposal should include the following points:

- brief statement of the issue studied and its stakes;
- for papers falling within the main themes of the conference, number of the theme and links with the proposed problem;
- originality of the paper regarding the existing literature;

- nature of the paper: theoretical, empirical;
- methodological approach: sources and tools;
- selective bibliography (5 to 10 references)

These proposals must be submitted electronically before Monday, January 10, 2022, on the conference website: <http://aes2022.sciencesconf.org>. This website brings together all the information related to the 41<sup>st</sup> AÉS conference.

**Timetable:**

- January 10, 2022: deadline for paper proposals
- January 31, 2022: reply from the scientific committee to the authors
- March 24, 2022: deadline for final full texts for a possible publication (more information will be provided later).

Articles that are received by March 24, 2022 at the latest on the conference website and that meet the standards available on the conference website are eligible for publication. Texts not selected for publication in the proceedings and texts received after March 24, 2022 will be posted on the website: <http://aes2022.sciencesconf.org>

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**Contact:** <http://aes2022.sciencesconf.org>

It is possible to contact the meeting organizers via the link above.