

Membership and Structure

Membership

- **Full membership** is open to individuals and organisations from EU Member States.
The membership fees are
150,- € for organisations,
40,- € for individuals.
- **Associate membership** is open to individuals and organisations from non-EU countries.
The same membership fees apply as for full members.
Under certain circumstances a reduced membership fee can be arranged.

Structure

The Network's management structure consists of the **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**, the **Network Council** and the **Executive Committee**.

The Network Council is made up of representatives of the regional contact offices. The Executive Committee consists of three members elected by the Annual General Meeting.

Executive Committee and Coordinating Office

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European Network for Economic Self-Help and Local Development

The members of the *European Network* regard their work as a contribution to the global movement for a socially and environmentally useful 'new economics'.

- Mobilizing local resources
- Investing in the skills of local people
- Financing socially and environmentally useful work instead of unemployment
- Strengthening and revitalizing the structures of local and regional economic circulation

The Economic Crisis as a Chance for a New Beginning

European-wide we are nowadays confronted with a continually increasing mass unemployment, with poverty and environmental damage - phenomena which furthermore show a highly unbalanced regional distribution. The decline of individual industries and types of production has spread over whole cities, communities and regions.

The actual forms and effects of the crisis vary from country to country but not, however, in their basic structure. We call it a *split economy* - divided into zones of prosperity on the one hand and crisis regions on the other.

The subsequent disintegration of the pertaining social and economic mesh which was often perceived as an omnipotent and ever-present framework can at the same time be understood as a chance for a new beginning.

For this to happen, a change in perspective is required: away from the dominant, exogenous-oriented philosophy of development and towards independent strategies for economic self-help and local development.

The many original ideas and forms of economic self-help which have already developed throughout European crisis regions represent more than just a temporary response to an emergency: they involve positive, future-orientated proposals which contain the germ of a new, *community- and solidarity-based economy*.

People Involved in the Network

Subsequent to the informal inaugural meeting in November 1992, the Network was based primarily in Berlin until the first formal structures were agreed upon in Dessau in September 1994.

Since then, individuals and organisations who are working on the practical and theoretical aspects of the development and application of local economic strategies coming from various European regions have joined the Network.

They generally operate via not-for-profit organisations which range from the small, local self-help group or cooperative to development agencies, employment creation bodies and academic/research institutions as well as regional and nationwide networks and associations. Many of our members work in public agencies, primarily local authorities.

The members' areas of activity can be divided into the following categories:

- Research, consultancy and training geared to local employment and economic regeneration as well as social forms of technology;
- developing and realizing projects and enterprises within the social economy, partly on the basis of community work, including alternative finance instruments;
- local/regional networking of and lobbying for local development and economic self-help.

Aims and Activities

The aims of the European Network are the promotion of a *transnational cooperation* by organisations and campaigns working for economic self-help and local development as well as the enabling of joint project work and the creation of a strong lobby in Europe for our interests.

The *exchange of experiences* takes place in the form of

- Information services and publications,
- direct visits, work placement programmes and study/research trips,
- meetings, seminars and conferences,
- transnational research projects and working groups.

Up to now, the major activity fields were:

- Local Partnerships
- Key values, structures and concepts of a Social Economy
- Community economic development and Social Enterprises
- Third System and employment
- Training of local actors
- East-West-European cooperation
- North-South-cooperation
- Social Capital
- Acting locally for employment

Participation in the above-mentioned work groups and forming new ones is extremely welcomed.