

nº2  
newsletter

# SOCENT SPAs

Interreg Europe

SOCENT SPAs improves the effectiveness of regional policies in sparsely populated areas to actively support social economy and social entrepreneurs as a driver to regional competitiveness and inclusive growth

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SME  
competitiveness



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

[www.interregeurope.eu/socentspas](http://www.interregeurope.eu/socentspas)

# *Contents*

- 1. What SocentSPAs is?*
- 2. What have we done the last semester?*



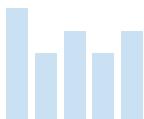
## *What SocentSPAs is?*

*SOCENT SPAs is fostering interregional cooperation among six public/private entities of Finland, Germany, Slovakia and Spain in a view to improve the effectiveness of regional policies in actively supporting the visibility, incubation and acceleration of social entrepreneurs in sparsely populated areas (SPAs) as a driver to regional competitiveness and inclusive growth.*

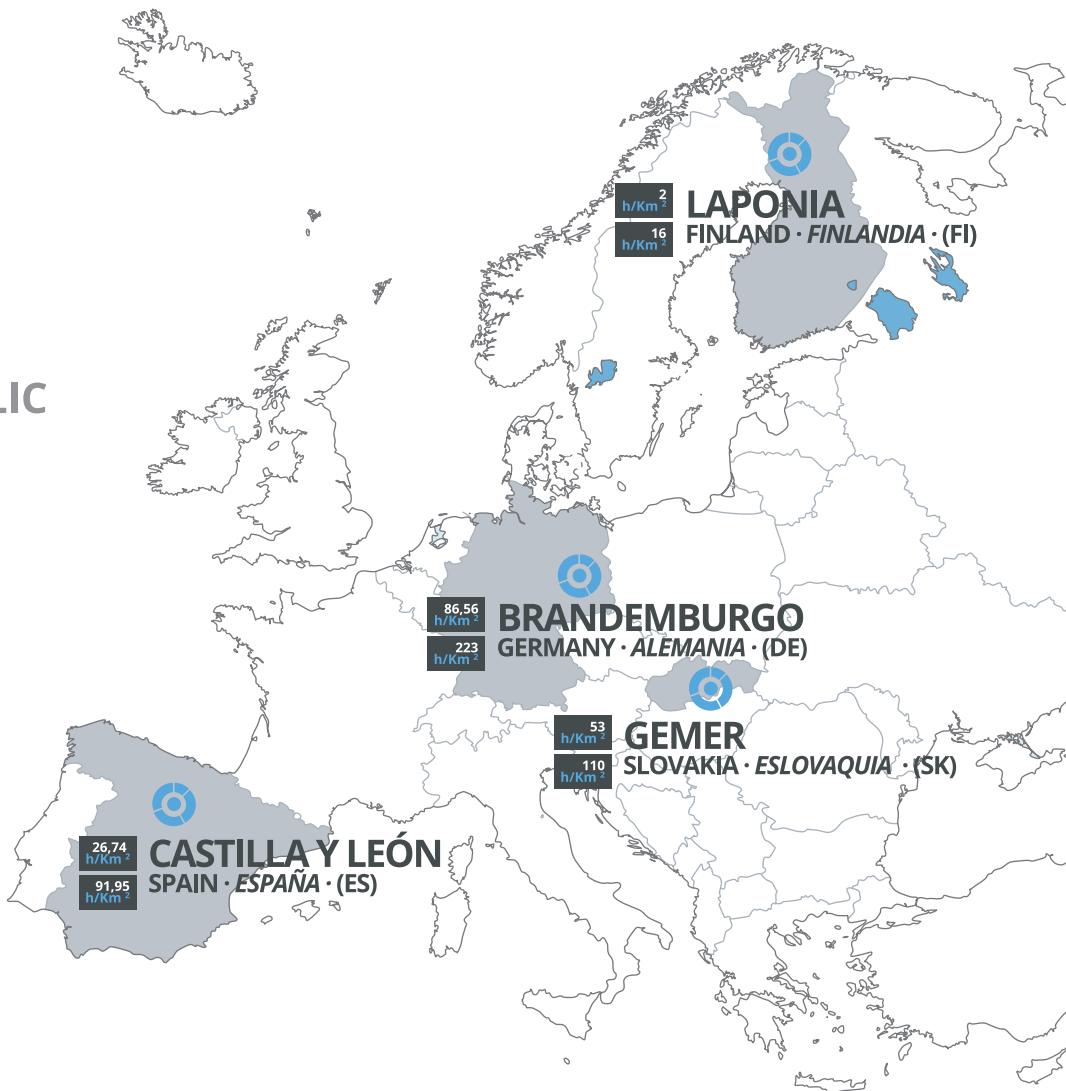
### *A particular challenge*

*In SPAs, demographic trends are a particular challenge. As counter-measure, social innovation needs to be developed to promote employment and competitiveness as it can make a real difference as a source of innovative approaches for resolving societal challenges through mobilizing civil society to further inclusive socioeconomic development. Social Enterprises (SEs) directly benefit local development and correct major socioeconomic imbalances while benefiting local communities, a crucial asset to secure the population in SPAs. However, bespoke support for SEs is limited; policymakers can play a significant role by setting up the right legal framework.*

DEUTSCHLAND  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
SPAIN  
FINLAND



TOPIC  
SME competitiveness



## *Interregional exchange of knowledge*

*Thus, to influence policies in a view to enhance SEs' visibility and competitiveness whilst taking into account SPAs' conditions, interregional exchange of knowledge and successful experiences/good practices are fundamental. With an integrated approach, a comprehensive learning process based on identification, analysis and transfer will be implemented through workshops, site visits and meetings with stakeholders. Based on the learning acquired, action plans aiming at integrating SEs in SPAs support schemes into policies will be developed. Communication will play a crucial role in supporting the action.*

## *Four implemented action plans*

*The main outputs will be a best practices guide for SEs in SPAs and 4 implemented action plans to promote the SEs in SPAs. The main results is being policymakers' awareness raised on SEs as a driver to inclusive growth and their capacities increased in identifying SEs' needs and addressing these adequately in their policies to create an enabling legal environment for SEs.*

## *European Social Economy Regions event hosted by the Regional Council of Lapland in Rovaniemi*

*On the 18th of June, the SOCENT SPAs project participated in the European Social Economy Regions event hosted by the Regional Council of Lapland in Rovaniemi. Participants were introduced to the development of Social Economy on an EU-level by Zuzana Dutkova, Policy officer at the European Commission (DG Grow). Furthermore, a panel discussion on the future of social economy in Lapland was held, featuring representatives from the social economy in Lapland, such as Pirjo Lehtola from the Saura foundation/Uurto cooperative and Nina-Maria Möykkynen from Leader Fell-Lapland. The afternoon was spent brainstorming what shape the social economy in Lapland should take in future and which prerequisites are needed to achieve this. The outcomes of the workshop are an important part of the project's Action Plan, which will be devised individually for all participating regions.*



## *Annual kick-off meeting of the municipal employment promoting organisations in Brandenburg regarding the topic of Social Innovations*

*Last week of february our project partners of Social Impact, Germany, participated at the "Annual kick-off meeting of the municipal employment promoting organisations in Brandenburg regarding the topic of Social Innovations". There, we learned about the opportunities and pitfalls of implementing state support measures for social innovations to promote jobs and inclusive entrepreneurship. Here, it seems crucial to focus on a relatively high thematic scope for promoting creative approaches, emphasize regional solutions and innovation as well as applying an open and experimental approach to include all projects offering promising social innovations to alleviate structural weaknesses in sparsely populated areas.*



## *Meeting in Slovakia*

*On April 11 and 12 we gathered again all the project teams, this time in Rožnava (Slovakia). Our host city is approximately 71 kilometres (44 miles) by road from Košice in the Košice Region, and has a population of 19,505.*

*The town is an economic and tourist centre of the Gemer. Rožňava is now a popular tourist attraction with a beautiful historic town centre. The town is an episcopal seat. It has above all food, textile and remnants of mining industries. First day of workshop offered space for sharing information on legal framework and financial instruments in all project partner countries. Partners from Slovakia, Germany, Finland and Spain presented current legal status for social economy, defined strenghts, weaknesses and challenges. As we have seen, every country is in completely different position.*

*Group work focused on development of training business plan brought various ideas for every projectre gion that are comingout of regional reference basis in Brandenburg (Germany), Lapland (Finland), Soria (Spain) and Gemer (Slovakia).*

*All partners presented good practices/examples from their region. As for Slovakia, we visited social entrepreneurship Laundry and Ironing provided by The Association of Young Roma in Valaska (photo).*



*The Association of Young Roma is a non-profit organization, which enters actively into all processes connected with Roma communities in Slovakia. AYR realised a research on the Roma population living style and conditions to find as exact picture about the situation of Roma population in Slovakia.*

*The principal goal of AYR is to unify the intellectual potential of young Roma generation and the direct help with the social and working inclusion into society. The philosophy is based on the systematic and long-term influence on Roma population, physically and socially disadvantaged citizens and low-income families through various projects and programs.*



## *Breakfast on financial instruments in Rožnava*



*Representatives of municipalities, regions, local and regional NGOs were invited to Business Breakfast focused on Financial Instruments for Social Entrepreneurship. The event was organized in Rožnava, Gemer region, Slovakia 10th April 2018. Almost 40 participants took part.*

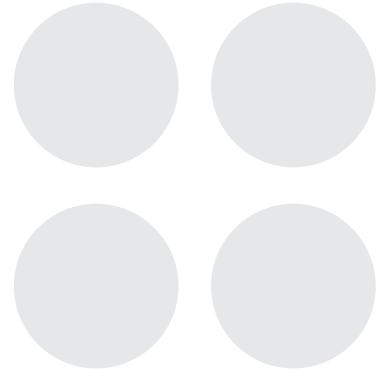
*Four speakers introduced themselves and their role in SEenvironment. First of them Michal Polak, representative of Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic was involved into the working group developing new Act on Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurs. He presented financial instruments available after implementation of legislation.*

*Acting mayor of the municipality of Raslavice, Marek Rakos, introduced good practice and example of Raslavice municipality where he started municipal social entrepreneurship three years ago and now this social enterprise employs 90 people who were somehow disadvantaged for open labour market.*



## *Steering Group meeting of the Start-up Network Brandenburg*

*On April, 27 Social Impact's Florian Birk went to the Ministry for Social & Labour Affairs in Brandenburg to present our project to the Steering Group meeting of the Start-up Network Brandenburg. The network encompasses the main representatives of the start-up landscape in Brandenburg. It consults the regional government on its start-up and business succession policies. In the meeting they learned more about the pressing issues affecting sparsely populated areas in Germany and beyond. In addition, Florian introduced them to the myriad ways Social Entrepreneurship can help solve many of these challenges.*



## *International workshop in Valdeavellano*

*The meeting took place on May 8 and 9 in the village of Valdeavellano de Tera, Region of Castile and Leon, with the participation of 28 attendants, including key stakeholders from SOCENT SPAs participating regions and representants of the partnering organizations.*

*The dynamics of the workshop were really interesting. Of course, nothing boring. Walking in pairs, group exchanges, face to face ... all with the aim of generating ideas against depopulation.*

*This meeting helped to bring a deeper connection of the participants with the project and among themselves, exploring their personal and group interests and visions, and to reinforce the group relations with personal and group activities. A set of goals and priority actions for each of the pre-defined strategic lines were nailed down, serving as a basis for the design and definition of SOCENT SPAs' four regional Action Plans, process that will continue during the next months until June 2019 when these Action Plans shall be evaluated by Interreg Europe Joint Secretary and launched in each participating region.*

*Check all the conclusion here:*

*<https://www.interregeurope.eu/socentspas/news/news-article/3340/interregional-workshop-in-valdeavellano-spain-2/>*



## *IV Spring Meeting organized by El Hueco, in Soria*

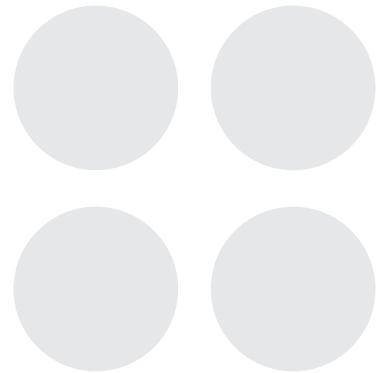
*All project teams participated in the IV Spring Meeting on Social Entrepreneurship, Social Finance and Depopulation organized by El Hueco, in Soria, held on May 9 and 10. The meeting was attended by more than one hundred people from different parts of Spain.*



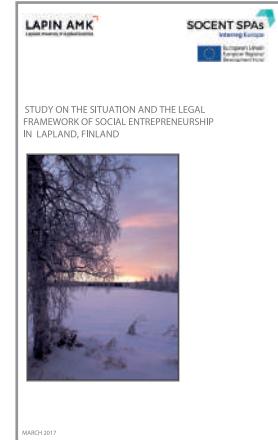
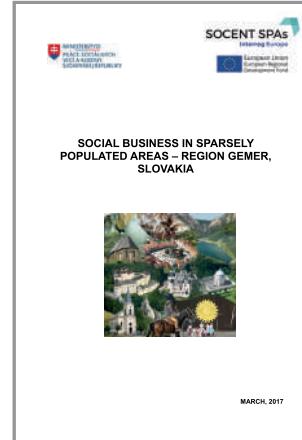
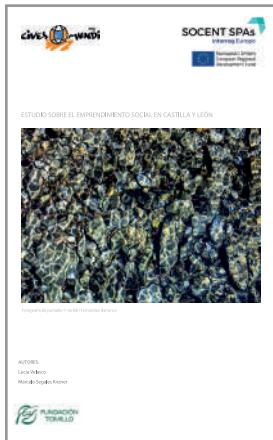
## *SOCENT SPAs in a monastery and in a church*

*On June Social Impact's Florian Birk attended the RurAction PhD Spring School in Zeitz entitled "Social Enterprises – Troubleshooter of Social Problems"? Here, PhD students of the EU's Marie Skłodowska-Curie doctorate programme deepened their insights on issues relating to social innovations in rural areas and learned first-hand about the difficult situation of rural areas in the German states of Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt. Surrounded by the wonderful atmosphere of Kloster Posa, a monastery, Florian had the opportunity to present SOCENT SPAs to showcase the variety of social innovations and the various notions relating to social entrepreneurship across Europe.*

*Some few days after, the director of Cives Mundi, Joaquín Alcalde, presented the project in a medieval church in Villadiego, a small village of Castille and Leon, in the course of a congress against depopulation.*



*Remember our four studies on the social entrepreneurship in Castile and leon, Brandenburg, Gemer Region and lapland*



<https://www.interregeurope.eu/socentspas/library/>  
(Folder: Studies on the social entrepreneurship)

**Project Partners**

**General Directorate for Social Economy and  
Self-Employed Persons - Regional Government of Castile and León (ES)**

NGOD Cives Mundi (ES)

Social Impact (DE)

Lapland University of Applied Sciences (FI)

Not-for-profit organization EPIC (SK)

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (SK)



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