



New technologies and digitalisation: opportunities and challenges for the social economy

Dr Ulla ENGELMANN

Head of Unit GROW F2

Clusters, Social Economy and Entrepreneurship



Entering a new economic era

- Digitalisation and new technologies shape society;
- Emergence of **online platforms** creates opportunities and challenges for social economy;
- Social economy should be **at the heart** of the digital transformation.



The collaborative economy

- The '*sharing economy*' enables people to share goods and services by using internet platforms;
- Lower prices and broader choice or imbalances and unfair competition?

*A European agenda for the collaborative economy -
Communication presented June 2016*

Cooperative platforms

Cooperatives can help improving the functioning of e-platforms by:

- ensuring that the financial and social value of a platform circulates among these participants;
- contributing to the commons for the purpose of fostering an equitable social and economic landscape.
- promoting a transparent, democratic and decentralised economy

E.g. Partago/Fairbooking



Disruptive technologies: the blockchain case (I)

- **Blockchain** offers the possibility for new forms of human collaboration and processes based on values of transparency and democracy;
- [BitGive Foundation](#) start-up, which has launched the [GiveTrack](#) platform. Bitcoins can be donated to **charitable causes** and these donations can be tracked in real time. Thus, it reduces the cost of international transfers, ensuring that the funds will reach the desired recipient, and users are permitted to see how their donations are spent.



Disruptive technologies: the blockchain case (II)

- The European Commission launched a **Blockchain Observatory and Forum** that highlights key developments of the technology in Europe.
- 22 European countries have signed a **Declaration on the establishment of a European Blockchain Partnership**. The Partnership will be a vehicle for cooperation amongst Member States
- **European Prize: *Blockchains for Social Good*** - a Horizon 2020 Prize launched December 2017.

Conclusion

- The social economy and social enterprises have to make the **most of the possibilities** that digitalisation creates so as to achieve their social and environmental objectives.
- Attention should not only be directed on the ways social economy actors could use the digital economy, but also on ensuring that social economy actors can participate in the Digital Single Market and help shape the way in which it functions.