

# CHARTER FOR SOCIAL COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The values of cooperation are intrinsic to society. Over time, many types of societies have developed collaboration and mutual support systems to manage the affairs of shared life. Cooperation is therefore a type of social heritage; an intangible asset that has guaranteed the possibility of life itself throughout history.

Nowadays, in all European cities it is common to see how groups of citizens associate and cooperate to find alternatives that respond to their daily wants and needs in areas like mobility, food, leisure, or consumption. One example is the increasingly frequent presence of collaborative projects related to the collaborative economy, such as time banks, urban gardens, housing cooperatives, couchsurfing, or cooperative parenting groups.



In this sense, cooperative citizen practices are socially innovative and provide responses to changes and social needs resulting from economic, social, and environmental challenges. As a result, today, a large number of collective practices proliferate. Moreover, institutions and systems based on standards cooperation and mutual trust are managing urban commons resources in a non-commercial way.

Hence, citizen cooperation is a real bottom up economy and social policy, because it addresses needs not only through social innovation, but also with great potential as its DNA is open-source and it can easily be managed virally.

Despite all this power, social cooperation requires certain conditions for its development: it requires recognition of its social value and its actions that complement public policy; it requires legal frameworks that promote the collective ownership and management of goods and services; it requires shared cities where public services and facilities are not commercialised; and, it also requires strategies for the promotion and development of social cooperation. Many of these actions are being promoted by the same cooperative citizen practices in several European cities, but it is necessary that local and European governments facilitate and promote the existence of social cooperation by creating an ecosystem that enables and facilitates its progress.

Social cooperation should be recognised as a true political and social actor whose capacity for action and influence goes beyond government action. Since the purpose of the state is to provide universal services, it perfectly complements the action of these communities that are creating *new types of political and social institutions*.

That is why *we appeal* to local and European governments to act so that community action is *publically, transparently, and democratically* ensured both in relation to the *social value of cooperation* and its integration into policy and legal frameworks at a European level.