

## Workshop on Tackling challenges of local communities through employee ownership in the EU

*Fringe event at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of Economic Democracy*

Tuesday, 1 October 2024, 14:00 – 16:00

@ Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

Dimičeva ulica 13, 1504 Ljubljana, Slovenia

### Background:

Over the past decades, European local communities have experienced increasing instability resulting from globalisation. Local businesses are increasingly being taken over by larger conglomerates or private equity firms. This trend weakens local economies and puts pressure on authorities as businesses are often at risk of relocating production.

Simultaneously, individuals increasingly seek opportunities abroad or in larger urban centers offering better career prospects. This migration leaves smaller towns and rural areas struggling to retain skilled workers and develop their economies organically. Unable to compete on salary alone, these communities must find alternative ways to encourage people to build their careers locally.

Employee ownership offers a solution by anchoring business ownership within local communities, aligning company interests with those of the broader community. It also attracts skilled workers by offering them a stake in their companies beyond just a paycheck, ensuring the long-term presence of businesses.

Many European municipalities have recognised the value of employee ownership in creating resilient and thriving local economies. Especially during times of austerity when national governments shy away from ambitious social programs, many cities have successfully promoted inclusive forms of business ownership to rebuild their economic and social fabric, improving local living standards.

In collaboration with the Institute of Economic Democracy (IED), the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and Open Society Foundations (OSF) organise a fringe event at the third Congress of Economic Democracy on **"Tackling Challenges of Local Communities Through Employee Ownership in the EU"**. This interactive workshop will bring together representatives from European municipalities that have pioneered policies promoting employee ownership, discussing their implementation, the strategies used, and the results achieved. Additionally, EU representatives will provide guidance on available tools and relevant EU legislation to design such policies.

**Programme:**

**14:00 – 14:10**

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

**Kosta JURI**, Head of Research and Policy, Institute for Economic Democracy

**14:10 – 14:40**

**EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED:**

**Municipalities pioneering employee ownership**

*with:*

**Pietro GHIRLANDA**, Research Fellow, University of Pavia

**14:40 – 15:00**

**POLICY TOOLS:**

**How can the EU support cities in the promotion of employee ownership?**

*with:*

**Tim CAULFIELD**, Director, European Urban Initiative

**15:00 – 15:50**

**Q&A WITH WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS**

**15:50 – 16:00**

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & CONCLUDING REMARKS**

**Kosta JURI**, Head of Research and Policy, Institute for Economic Democracy

**16:00**

**LATE-LUNCH NETWORKING**