

Employee Ownership: Bridging competitiveness and shared prosperity

3 November 2026

9:00 – 14:00

@ COMET Stephanie, Pl. Stéphanie 20, Brussels

Employee ownership is gaining momentum across Europe as a way to promote democratic control over the economy, better sharing of gains from economic activity, and as a means to improve productivity and sovereignty. Employee ownership is also an answer to the big and growing problem of business succession for a large number of European companies that are owned by private individuals and do not have immediate successors. When they are faced with an option to sell the business to private equity funds, employee ownership offers an attractive alternative. Moreover, the recent strategic turn of the global economic relations puts the question of who owns and controls European production in the spotlight.

In practice, employee ownership in Europe remains fragmented, advancing at different speeds country by country without the cross-border exchange of knowledge, models and policy tools that could accelerate its growth. There is clearly a case for better coordination and exchange on this topic that would feed into the elaboration of a supporting policy framework and the spread of best practices.

This event will bring together practitioners, policymakers, financial institutions, business owners, chambers of commerce, trade unions, advisors, and NGOs to explore how employee ownership can support economic democracy, competitiveness and strengthen the continent's economic sovereignty. It is part of "European EO Days"- a two-day series of events in Brussels.

*This fringe event is organised by **FEPS** in collaboration with **IED** and with the support of **FEBEA – European Federation of Ethical and Alternative Banks and Financiers**, **Fondazione Messina**, **Fundació Seira** and **SOCODEN**.*

Agenda

8:00 – 9:00 Coffee and Registrations

9:00 – 9:15 **Opening keynotes**

- Laszlo Andor, FEPS Secretary General
- Kosta Juri, Director of the Institute for Economic Democracy (IED)

9:15 – 10:30 **Bridging Competitiveness and Shared Prosperity**

- Christian Damholt, Danish Trade Union Confederation

- Liza Herzog, University of Groning
- Martin Stucki, Former CEO of Transitec Consulting Engineers

Moderated by Linda van Goor, Regulatory Communication

10:30 – 12:00

The state of employee ownership in the European Union

- Jone Nolte, Director of ASLE
- Francesca Montalti, CECOP
- Tej Gonza, IED

Moderated by Luca Pastorelli, DIESIS Network

12:00 – 14:00

Networking lunch

12:45 – 13:45

Presentation of case studies: France and Spain

- Rachel Bachman, IED
- Kosta Juri, IED

Sessions description:

Bridging Competitiveness and Shared Prosperity

The panel discussion will explore the potential of employee ownership (EO) as a tool for addressing the competitiveness gaps Europe faces in a way that ensures economic growth is shared widely across the population.

Questions for discussion:

- Why has policy support for EO gained traction in recent years?
- What role can EO play in striking a balance between fuelling innovation and growth while preserving the EU's distinct social model?
- What potential risks should policymakers keep in mind when designing pro-EO policies?

The state of employee ownership in the European Union

Europe – within and beyond the EU's borders – is experiencing an employee ownership renaissance. Inspired by the uptake of EOTs in the UK following their introduction in 2014, new legislation supporting employee buyouts as a succession tool has recently been passed in Slovenia (2026) and Denmark (2026). New legislative solutions supporting employee buyouts of healthy companies are also being seriously explored by governments in Ireland, Spain, and France.

In light of these developments, the panel will explore the following questions:

- What is the leitmotif of the legislative efforts taking place across European countries?
- How could governments and the EU further unlock the potential of employee ownership?
- To what extent are EO actors collaborating with one another, and what could be done differently to operate more effectively as a movement?