

8th RESSOR Grand Est Conference
Training and Research Network on the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)
Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 November 2025
University of Strasbourg – MISHA

*Cooperating for Sustainable Development:
How do Social and Solidarity Economy actors inspire and support the
implementation of public policies?*

The 8th RESSOR Grand Est Conference is distinctive this year in that it forms part of a broader initiative launched by a consortium of researchers (coordinated by Philippe Hamman and Sophie Michel from the University of Strasbourg), focused on the theme of sustainable development, particularly within food supply chains. Following the completion of a project that brought together researchers from Upper Rhine universities, institutions, and activist and citizen-led associations – which resulted in a symposium on food democracy and the publication of a book (EPURE editions, RESSOR collection) – a new project began last October. This new initiative focuses on the supply chains of canteens and retail stores, with the aim of increasing access to healthy, local food for all, notably through the development of vegetarian menus. Preliminary research findings highlight the crucial role played by actors in the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) in giving voice to the perspectives of “eaters”. The initiatives documented by researchers – and also promoted by activists – have inspired public authorities in the development of new regulations (Dalimier et al., 2025). These actors have also contributed to improving local institutional mechanisms through an ongoing process of innovation (Michel, 2022).

Thus, it appears that cooperation between actors in the SSE, public institutions, and for-profit businesses is possible, as demonstrated by the experience of Territorial Food Projects (Projets Alimentaires Territoriaux – PAT). These actors, despite their differing cultures and constraints, are learning to work together and to understand one another in order to address a challenge as crucial as sustainable development (Berkowitz & Dumez, 2016). Analyzing these forms of cooperation – along with their successes and failures – emerges as a valuable subject for all stakeholders, including researchers, institutions, and both for-profit and non-profit organizations. Cooperation is a concept shared across multiple social science disciplines. It requires clarification to distinguish it from related notions such as collaboration or coordination. Trapido (2013), for example, defines cooperation as “informal behavior based on mutual aid and

embedded in networks of social relations”, whereas coordination is typically more formal and contractual. Cooperation refers to a process involving the “sharing of resources, commitment to common goals, and distribution of costs and risks” (Rosenkopf & Padula, 2008). Numerous promising research avenues are emerging (Castaner & Oliveira, 2020), in which researchers – particularly those focusing on sustainable development and the role of SSE structures – can engage and contribute.

Researchers from the RESSOR network, along with participants in the Interreg project “Strengthening Food SMEs in the Upper Rhine by Developing Sustainable Supply Chains for Vegetarian Meals in Canteens and Retail Stores”, are invited to present their work in collaboration with all SSE actors and public institutions interested in the topic, in order to foster collective discussion. The theme is intentionally broad to allow everyone to share perspectives on the role of the SSE within an ecosystem made up of public institutions and for-profit enterprises – across its political, entrepreneurial, economic, and social dimensions. **The aim of this 8th RESSOR conference is to foster debate on the forms of cooperation in which SSE structures are engaged to address the challenges of sustainable development.**

Contributors are invited to present their work related to this theme, including preliminary findings from ongoing research. It is also noted that, as part of these regional meetings, contributions on other topics related to the SSE are equally welcome. The event is open to organizations, researchers, and students in the social sciences who are engaged with issues related to the SSE, and more broadly, to questions of sustainable development.

Timeline:

- Submission of an abstract (maximum 2 pages) by **June 30, 2025** – to be sent to: sustainablefood@misha.fr
- Submission of the written contribution (in accordance with Épure formatting guidelines): by **September 15, 2025**
- Feedback to authors and preliminary program draft: by **October 15, 2025**

Program:

The two-day event will be held at the Maison Interuniversitaire des Sciences de l'Homme Alsace (MISHA): 5 Allée du Général Rouvillois, 67083 Strasbourg

Wednesday, November 12

- 1:30 PM: Welcome
- 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM: Workshops with research presentations
- 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM: Break with coffee
- 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM: Roundtable discussion on Sustainable Development in the Food Sector: A Review of the EGALIM Law

Thursday, November 13

- 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM: Morning coffee and continuation of workshops
- 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM: RESSOR General Assembly
- 1:00 PM: Buffet lunch
- 2:30 PM: Closing session of the conference

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