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The Social Economy and the R Principles in Third Sector Organizations in the District of Setúbal

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze how non-profit and public utility organizations in the district of Setúbal promote a Circular Economy and apply the R principles and sustainability policy.

Motivated by the lack of previous studies that relate Social Economy (SE), Circular Economy (CE), R Principles and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) applicable to the Social Economy, the following question arose: in what way are non-profit and public utility organizations concerned with the fulfillment of the new Sustainable Development Agenda entitled “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, published in 2015 by the United Nations (UN) and to be implemented by 2030.

A survey was sent to a random sample of 100 organizations, obtained by cross-referencing a list from Social Security in Portugal with the Portuguese Tributary and Customs Authority’s list of entities receiving the 0.5% remittance of Personal Income Tax (PIT). The survey questions focused on the 10 Rs of sustainability policy, and how the SDGs are relevant to their mission.

The results show that there is some knowledge on the subject, and attempts to implement it, but the resistance encountered discourages its application. SE can be a pillar for the development of the CE, but this will require measures to encourage stakeholder involvement, through information targeted at this socio-economic sector.

Keywords: Circular Economy, Social Economy, Sustainability, SDG.