

# Social innovation: European vision, local action

FORUM OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS  
Brussels, 10 May 2011

The EU employment rate should grow from 69% to 75%. School drop out rate has to be reduced from 15% to 10%. About 20 million citizens must be helped out of poverty. These are some of the ambitious objectives of the recently launched Europe 2020 strategy.

The ambition of Europe 2020 is to guarantee a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for Europe in the next decade. The overall plan consists of clearly defined challenges for the EU, national, regional and local governments and their longterm policies. Apart from the well spread ambitions for the economy and the environment, the 2020 strategy explicitly focuses on an inclusive European society. Jobs and new skills, the fight against poverty, economic, social and territorial cohesion and the challenges stemming from ageing societies are at the heart of the EU agenda in this field.

It is in this context that social innovation is expected to cross-fertilise two main Flagship Initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy: Creating an innovative union and building up a platform against poverty.

The impact of ageing, unemployment or poverty is primarily felt at local level. Moreover national, regional and local authorities are at the forefront of implementing policy and proven incubators of social innovation. The experiences of regional and local governments are therefore of great value for joint efforts at EU level.

The Forum's ambition is to inform regional and local authorities about existing and new concepts in the field of social innovation and to give them insights in how to create and implement innovation in their social policy. The Forum will focus on the spearhead domains of poverty and the ageing population, with special attention to experimentations and new strategies for starting and financing regional and local initiatives.

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## PROGRAMME

### 10:00 – 10:45 Registration

Academic comment:

**Josef Hochgerner**, Centre for Social Innovation, Vienna, Austria

### 11:00 – 13:00 Opening Session

#### Welcome address

**Mercedes Bresso**, President of the Committee of the Regions

#### Panel debate: Innovation and social services: How to deliver local and regional quality services in times of austerity?

Moderator: **Jacki Davis**, Meade Davis Communications

**Martin Hirsch**, President of the French "Agence du Service Civique"

**Leila Kurki**, President Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship  
Section, European Economic and Social Committee

**Jan Olsson**, Co-president of REVES - European Network of  
Regions and Cities for the Social Economy

**John Halloran**, Chief Executive European Social Network

**Geoff Mulgan**, Director of the Young Foundation

#### Workshop 2: Active ageing: Innovative approaches at a local level

Moderator: (tbc)

Mapping the issue:

**Ralf Jacob**, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion,  
European Commission

**Anne-Sophie Parent**, Secretary General AGE Platform Europe

Project presentations:

- **Healthy Ageing Network Northern Netherlands (HANNN)**, a knowledge and development cluster in the field of healthy ageing (The Netherlands)
- **Envejeciendo en positivo**, an Innobasque pilot project for innovative ageing strategies (Spain)
- **Mieux vieillir en Europe**, an innovation network in the field of ageing policy of 7 European regions (France, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania)

### 13:00 - 14:30 Networking lunch

### 14:30 – 16:15 Parallel workshops

#### Workshop 1: New tools and actors for stimulating social innovation

Moderator: **Roger Knox**, Member of the East Lothian Council,  
United Kingdom, Member of the Committee of the Regions

Mapping the issue:

**Olivier Rouland**, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion,  
European Commission

**Liesbet De Letter**, DG Regional Policy, European Commission

Project presentations:

- **Mind-Lab**, a cross-ministerial innovation unit which involves citizens and businesses in creating new solutions for society (Denmark)
- **Social Finance**, a pioneering organisation developing financial products such as "social impact bonds", linking the market, government and society (United Kingdom)
- **Hope in Stations**, an integration project of social services for homeless and 'itinerant' persons at and around train stations (France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, Luxembourg)

Academic comment:

**Ricardo Rodrigues**, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy  
and Research, Vienna, Austria

### 16:30 – 17:00 Closing Session

#### New policy strategies for regions and cities to meet social challenges

**Antonia Carparelli**, Acting Director for Europe 2020: Social  
Policies, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European  
Commission

**Arnoldas Abramavičius**, Mayor of Zarasai District Municipality  
and Member of the Municipal Council, Lithuania, President of  
the ECOS Commission, Committee of the Regions

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

March 2011

Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat, 101 \_ 1040 Bruxelles/Brussel \_ BELGIQUE/BELGIË

Tel. +32 22822211 \_ Fax +32 22822325

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