



PREFACE INTO A NEW ERA OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

The importance of Social Innovation for successfully addressing the social, economic, political and environmental challenges of the 21st century has been recognised at European and global level. There is a growing consensus among practitioners, policy makers and the research community that social innovation enhances the society's capacity to act. What better way to turn social and economic challenges into opportunities for all?

Social Innovation has played an important role in EU policy and research for many years. The European Union actively promotes Social Innovation and used it with success to reach policy goals. For instance, the European Social Funds have introduced the principle of social policy experimentation, based on methodological guidelines empowering actors to innovate. Research and innovation policies have made social innovation a research topic, promoted a common understanding, created networks and supported the scaling up of promising social innovations. The latest example is the 2 million Euro „Horizon Prize for Social Innovation“: Based on a public vote, the prize will be focused on travel mobility for elderly people, incentivising creative solutions which combine technological, social and behavioural features.

Social Innovation will play an important role in the future of Europe. When President Juncker laid out scenarios for the Future of Europe, a Europe that protects, empowers and defends, he announced a social summit for November 2017. This summit will be followed by an international conference in Lisbon dedicated to Social Innovation.

The present Atlas of Social Innovation is a particularly well timed contribution to this debate: 25 international partners of the EU funded SI-DRIVE project have mapped over 1.000 cases of social innovation all over the world. This global

mapping is complemented by a treasure of insights from leading international experts, reviewing new trends in Social Innovation and examining the possible role of Social Innovation in the next generation of public policies.

By taking stock of social innovation achievements the Atlas of Social Innovation contributes to a better understanding how Social Innovation may contribute to advance inclusive and wealth-creating public policies. It helps to identify potential future opportunities not only in terms of societal well-being, but also of growth, jobs, and business development for Europe.

This Atlas of Social Innovation is built on a long tradition of social innovation research in the European Union in the past framework programmes that made Europe a global center of social innovation research. I am very grateful to the authors of this Atlas for having made this achievement visible. Thank you!

As we seek to build the European future we want, I wish this publication many readers. May it inspire the next generation of public policies and may it encourage all those innovators who experience the difficulties of innovation, which means in its Greek origins "introducing change to the established order" - a pre-requisite to enhance our society's capacity to act.



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