SI-DRIVE POLICY DECLARATION: SOCIAL INNOVATION ON THE RISE – CHALLENGES FOR A FUTURE INNOVATION POLICY

PREAMBLE

Taking up the results of the Conference "Challenge Social Innovation" resulting in the Vienna Declaration 2011 the European Union funded project SI-DRIVE is further elaborating the theoretical and methodological frame for Social Innovation. SI-DRIVE provides for the first time an evidence based overview of various types of Social Innovation in different world regions and central policy areas (education, employment, environment and climate change, energy supply, transport and mobility, health and social care, and poverty reduction and sustainable development). The results reflect the diversity, broadness and usability of social innovations, proving the variety of actors and their interaction as well as exploring the systemic character and concept of Social Innovation.

There is an increasing awareness and promotion of Social Innovation: in many countries, the promotion of Social Innovation itself by the EU has served as a driver and opportunity for various actors to embrace new ways of working, access new funding streams, and promote change at a national level. Even though good progress has been achieved in recent years, important steps remain to be taken in order for Social Innovation to move from the margins of policy to the mainstream.

Against this background and based on the theoretical and empirical findings of SI-DRIVE this declaration is summarising the consequences for a Social Innovation Policy of the future.

I. SOCIAL INNOVATION ON THE RISE – THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW INNOVATION PARADIGM

Social innovations have been emerging in recent years as an object of both research and practice. They are exerting an influence on people's lives in a variety of ways. They change the way we live together, work, handle crises and make the most of opportunities. Likewise, they are driving different societal sectors and cross-sectoral networks and individuals. A growing consensus among practitioners, policy makers and the research community shows that technological or business innovations alone are not capable of overcoming the social, economic and environmental challenges modern societies are facing. A vast and growing number of social innovation initiatives all over the world show the need to understand better what social innovations can achieve and how best they can be deployed.

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Social innovations are the main object of research of the SI-DRIVE project. The global mapping of more than 1,000 social innovations and the in-depth analysis of more than 80 examples from around the world demonstrate the variety of conditions and approaches leading to success. They illustrate the strengths and potentials of social innovations in the manifold areas of social integration through education, employment and poverty reduction, as well as in establishing sustainable patterns of consumption in areas like energy supply, mobility and environment, or in coping with health challenges under conditions of demographic change. The economic and political crises of the past years have taught us that growth needs to be inclusive. Social integration and equal opportunities, but also the future sustainability of society as a whole, can only be fostered by allowing social innovations to gain more importance.

Social Innovation, in our sense, focuses on changing social practices to overcome societal challenges, meeting (local) social demands, and exploiting inherent opportunities in better ways than done before, referring to the different context specificities, being more than social entrepreneurship and different from pure technological or business development. Such a concept of Social Innovation is broad enough to encompass its whole variety and potential, and clear enough to distinguish Social Innovation from other concepts like technological, business or open innovation. Against this background, four important topics are related to Social Innovation with regard to future challenges of our societies.

Social Innovation, democracy and participation

Social Innovation builds on the desire of citizens to participate. With the expansion of the participation repertoire, social innovations challenge the current content of the whole range of 'democratic' and other types of politics. Participating citizens strengthen established structures both of democracy and of peaceful and prosperous societies more generally. At the same time, these citizens contest the existing power relations in government, in the market, in work organisation and in their local communities. National, regional or local participation currently does not sufficiently unlock the potential of civil society in co-creating solutions for problems and demands that are theirs. Politics of all types need new ways to empower citizens, to give the citizens responsibility for problem solving, to enable them to design and implement their own solutions, and importantly to dramatically improve their own agency to do so increasingly in the future.

Social Innovation and the economy

Social innovations create social and economic value. Social innovators, social entrepreneurs and the social economy can deliver new jobs and new sustainable growth opportunities. However, it is still largely misunderstood that Social Innovation also has a number of beneficial impacts well beyond traditional growth and employment effects, for instance by strengthening social cohesion, civic participation and commitment. The ability of social innovations to foster economic and social returns at the same time makes Social Innovation a promising option for creating more sustainable, just and resilient societies. Under this perspective social innovations are also a growing economic factor, reflected by the remarkable participation of economy partners in social innovation initiatives and the growing interests of companies for this kind of innovation going beyond pure corporate social responsibility. The economic potential of the broad range of social innovations is still underdeveloped and underestimated.

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Social Innovation and the ecological transition

Social innovations can also create and increase ecological and environmental value. They have a very important role in moving society through the socio-ecological transition necessary to combat, or at least mitigate, climate change and other environmental stresses and degradations, the challenges of which are set to increase dramatically in the foreseeable future. Many social innovations already act upon the understanding that it is living assets, both human and natural especially working together, which are the only real sources of any type of innovation, including technological and business innovation. Natural systems often show the way for successful social innovations, such as ecosystem development, diversity and interdependence, re-cycling and re-using assets, circular societies as well as economies, and learning systems through co-creation and an understanding that any under-used asset is a wasted asset.

Digital transformation needs Social Innovation

Digital technology has disruptive effects, dismantling current social relationships. To cope with these challenges, citizens and other actors need to understand how to master the digital transformation and put it to the service of society. Technological innovation needs to be strongly influenced by Social Innovation. Technological and social innovations can work hand-in-hand to create new services and products

"We are witnessing **profound shifts across all industries**, marked by the emergence of new business models, the disruption of incumbents and the reshaping of production, consumption, transportation and delivery systems. On the **societal front**, a paradigm shift is underway in how we work and communicate, as well as how we express, inform and entertain ourselves. Equally, **governments and institutions** are being reshaped, as are systems of education, healthcare and transportation, among many others. New ways of using technology to change behaviour and our systems of production and consumption also offer **the potential for supporting the regeneration and preservation of natural environments**, rather than creating hidden costs in the form of externalities."

Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, in: The Fourth Industrial Revolution. Crown Business: New York, 2017. pp. 1-2.

with benefits for the whole of society, as well as opening up new markets. Technology can become a pillar for the social good. *"Further innovations in technology and business are imperative; yet in order to reap their full potential, and at the same time creating social development that is beneficial to cultures as inclusive as diverse, **social innovations will make the difference**."* (Vienna Declaration 2011: The most relevant topics in social innovation research)

II. A NEW INNOVATION PARADIGM REQUIRES A NEW INNOVATION POLICY

If Social Innovation can play its full role, our societies can generate new and unexpected benefits. SI-DRIVE has shown that societal challenges can be tackled with social innovations. However, it remains an important task for policy to establish proper framework conditions for social innovations. Current economic, social and innovation policies in the EU member states are too general to create these conditions. Support for Social Innovation requires dedicated policy approaches. This is likewise the case at the national and EU-level. From the past, we understand that specific policies were created to support technological innovation. Social Innovation requires better funding and support infrastructures and it needs better connecting to technological and business innovation in order to reap the full benefits resulting from the synergies between all three.

The good news is that there is an increasing awareness and promotion of Social Innovation. The EU through successive Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation, alongside other international organisations like the UN, the OECD and the World Bank in different parts of the world, are important drivers and promoters of Social Innovation. For example, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals for 2016-2030 are relying increasingly on social innovations, seeing Social Innovation as a key tool in development efforts. Various actors embrace new ways of working, access new funding streams, and help promote change at national level, mainly because of such support. We are, however, only at the brink of changes. Despite good progress in recent years, important steps remain to be taken in order for Social Innovation to move from the margins of policy to the mainstream. SI-DRIVE has developed insights to understand why it is important to foster Social Innovation through policy, and which approaches are most effective, in Europe as well as globally.

We need a clear framework reflecting the diversity of social innovations!
For a long time, the prevailing understanding of Social Innovation was restricted to actions of civil society to overcome market failures. This definition is too limited, leaving social innovations as interpreted in purely economic terms. Social innovations are much more than just social entrepreneurship or supplying solutions the market cannot

solve itself. Social innovations deal with all types of issues, including so-called 'wicked problems', i.e. highly complex and inter-related challenges; they are about continuing experimenting with social solutions that not only create economic value, but also social cohesiveness. In addition to directly addressing social problems and needs, social innovations serve to develop the agency (skills, competences, awareness and confidence) of individuals and groups, so they are better able to address their own problems and, perhaps more importantly, create and exploit their own opportunities in the future.

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Social Innovation requires better funding and support infrastructures

A comprehensive understanding of Social Innovation further emphasizes the different societal sectors and the surrounding ecosystems for overcoming such 'wicked problems' as well as exploiting inherent opportunities. Although the ecosystem of Social Innovation is in very different stages of development across Europe and globally, it is under development everywhere. Still, further progress is required across a range of important factors enabling the development of Social Innovation, including appropriate incentives and support schemes!

One of the most important challenges of the future is finding the right incentives and support schemes for Social Innovation. Funding, sustainability modes and support in-kind formats need to be developed enabling impulses for the development, experimentation and diffusion of social innovations, building on the input of actors in relevant sectors as well as public funds and supports. The incentive structures should facilitate social innovators to combine social and technological innovations in a synergistic way. The incentive approach should allow cross-over actions, mainstreaming social innovations, and integrating the user and beneficiary perspective into solutions and initiatives.

We need to learn about differential financing and sustainability models to initiate and upscale social innovations, and about the timely phase-out of public or other funding (for example by philanthropies, businesses

and crowd-funding) once social innovations have become mainstream and sustainable. These models do not always need to end-up as market solutions, but need to take into account solutions in which civil society actors can continue their activities. Valuing social impact should be an accepted model alternative to technological or market related added values.

Within these new approaches, we need to interlock the roles of EU, other international organisations and national funding and support. In the European context, only by combining European open coordination with the national activities of Member States we can help to unlock the Social Innovation potential in every European region.

We need to unfold the potential of social innovations to enable systemic social change!

Social innovations are proven approaches to achieve systemic social change. Such social change requires a fruitful context in which acceptance of social innovations is guaranteed. Three components are essential in this context. First, support for Social Innovation requires a (cultural) climate that helps to understand and support the function of social innovations. This climate needs to start in the schooling system. The focus in education needs to be on what are the main societal challenges and opportunities and what citizens can do by themselves to solve these challenges. Furthermore the opportunities have to be exploited to understand the needs of citizens and on how to create sufficient freedom for social innovations to evolve in parallel with, and complementary to, other mechanisms of change in society.

Second, Social Innovation is also about changing the rules of the game taking into account that the social order is not to be taken as given forever. Social innovators can show how they 'bend' the rules to achieve necessary changes. Societies should allow for this deviating behaviour as a resource for creating variety. Policy makers can adapt their agendas in view of the inspirations provided by social innovators. In other words, social innovators act as antennas of the changes needed in society.

Third, and equally important, an enabling climate for social innovations also arises by bridging measures: awareness and support platforms, networks and infrastructures for social innovations to diffuse. Such bridging measures cannot be planned in a top-down manner, but instead require learning in real-time. We thus need new experimenting spaces to unlock the potential of Social Innovation for society as a whole!

> Support for Social Innovation requires a (cultural) climate that helps to understand and support the function of social innovations

Policy has a role to play in providing venues for new human resources development in support of Social Innovation. Appropriate experimental spaces and living labs are needed to optimize the learning process with social innovations. Experimentation in such a way should deliver new research concepts, such as transformative research, design thinking, nexus thinking, open innovation/co-creation, behavioural approaches, holistic thinking which sees individuals and communities as complex multi-need entities requiring joined-up approaches, living labs and Social Innovation centres. These and other concepts arising from and/or supported by Social Innovation, can unlock the potential in society and enable the participation of relevant actors and civil society. Especially in policy fields with highly regulated formal systems (like education, employment, health) new and more open governance structures are needed guaranteeing new leeway for experimentation.

We need new governance of eco-systems to create sustainable social innovations with a high societal impact!

The absence of a comprehensive Social Innovation policy corresponds with the low maturity status of the social innovation ecosystems. While social innovation initiatives and practices have drawn a lot of attention within the last years in the different world regions, being imitated by manifold actors, networks of actors and diffused widely through different societal subareas, the ecosystem of Social Innovation is in very different stages of development across Europe, however. In all countries, though, the ecosystem is under development and there are a number of important factors enabling the development of Social Innovation, including important support and impetus from the EU. One of the major challenges will be the development of these eco-systems.

The holistic, cross-sectoral approach of social innovations brings the different societal sectors and a surrounding ecosystem for Social Innovation on the scene. To solve the problems and demands in a social innovation process, activating all the relevant and motivated stakeholders from all the societal sectors concerned (public, economy, civil society and science) new and dynamic governance systems have to be established. This includes a new role of public policy and government for creating suitable framework and support structures, the integration of resources of the economy and civil society as well as supporting measures by science and universities. Policy makers have to have a vision of the role of Social Innovation, and have to include social innovations in their own actions. New governance systems or innovation friendly environments are needed to connect important stakeholders, supported by open governance systems to enable and foster experimentation.

Support for Social Innovation requires a governance approach, less a 'government' approach. An open governance structure with open assets, services, engagement, structures, organisations and processes from which side or sector ever will link and integrate not only the different responsibilities inside government structures, but also link and integrate these with the worlds outside for specific purposes of creating (public) value. Cooperation between silos across different administrations, levels and locations, sharing infrastructures and resources, balancing centralisation and decentralisation as well as top-down and bottom-up approaches should lead to a comprehensive government approach embedded in a governance structure interacting with all the relevant societal actors to solve the recent and upcoming societal challenges and social demands.

We need more involvement of universities and research centres to support social innovations!

Currently, social innovations lack knowledge support, especially from scientific knowledge partners such as universities and research centres. Underpinning the development of social innovations with sufficient expert knowledge and professional models can importantly contribute to a more favourable environment for social innovations. From our research results, it is clear that universities and research centres are not sufficiently integrated in the development of social innovations. In the social innovation ecosystem or quadruple helix they currently still have a minor role, especially when compared with their major role in technological or business innovation. These knowledge partners could support social innovators and innovations in manifold ways, including knowledge exchange, the integration of new technologies, monitoring and evaluation, impact assessments including social impact frameworks, pilot and demonstration projects, supporting managerial competences, providing space and processes for self-reflection, as well as introducing and implementing some of the above new concepts. In this way, social innovators will be able to enhance their capabilities and overcome their constraints as well as research and education is fed by experiences and outcomes of social innovations.

Today we see universities and research centres confronted with the challenge of realising their potential in the sense of a comprehensive understanding of innovation of both technological and social kinds. This includes research on Social Innovation and giving impulses to processes of societal change, its integration in teaching as well as research, the inclusion of societal actors at an early stage in research and knowledge transfer, and increasing the overall potential of innovation by also mainstreaming Social Innovation.

We need an EU resource centre and focal point for Social Innovation in the form of a European Social Innovation Agency!

Initially, the European institutional framework for supporting Social Innovation which allowed this new concept to emerge in EU and national policies, included new governance instruments (a permanent inter service group, policy guidance by a group of commissioners, initiatives to power public sector innovations, European innovation partnerships, reform of public procurement), new financing capacities and facilities (a specific programme, access to venture capital, a regulatory framework for social investment funds (EuSEF), the development of microfinance and crowdfunding, an impact investing scheme), capacity building instruments (social innovation prizes, mapping of social enterprises, a data base of labels and certifications, the creation of incubators and networks, the Collective Awareness Platforms (CAPs) initiative, digital innovation platforms, multi stakeholder platform for corporate social responsibility, skills development and exchange) and research with the financing of large research projects including pilot projects in areas of e inclusion, e health, e government. These were spread throughout the services of the Commission. Some were embedded to stay and others were not renewed or left to vanish with changing political preferences.

The need for a stable and transversal structure to pursue what is a "transformative agenda" was mentioned in the "Strasbourg declaration" (January 2014). This was upheld by two strong reasons. The embedment of Social Innovation in one of the central EU policies: the single market and the new investment approach to social policy with its transformative agenda to answer the needs of European societies in their recovery from the economic crisis. Over and above, the needs to make sense of economic growth and to respond to the pressures for more participative societies are coming up with the EU social agenda trying to connect to citizens' needs. Scanning the panoply of EU instruments to focus attention and resources on a transversal political objective and drawing lessons from the experience of other transformative objectives (e.g. gender equality), the appropriate option to explore is the creation of a small and reactive, autonomous institution in the shape of a European Agency.

Given the political and administrative investment done so far and the reaffirmed need to find innovative solutions to the challenges faced by European economies and societies an agency would be the natural place to develop counselling on new forms of governance, to make sure appropriate financing is available, to engage with stakeholders and policy makers on the importance of capacity building and to become a resource centre where the data and case studies researched so far could be documented and made available to feed research and practitioners. The idea is not to discharge institutions of their responsibility to develop innovative policies that work, but on the contrary to support and advise them in their tasks, and to better connect all existing initiatives and policies with an active citizenry.

The great challenge for contemporary innovation research lies in analysing the potential of Social Innovation in the creation of new social practices that enhance an inclusive, equitable, democratic, participative and, above all, socially anchored future.

paradoxes in innovation policy at present. This new paradigm is characterized by three key categories: (1) the innovation process opening up to society, (2) its orientation towards major societal challenges, and (3) a stronger recognition of non-technological and non-business innovations geared to changing social practices.

III. THE NEXT STEP IN SOCIAL INNOVATION RESEARCH

The task of understanding and unlocking the potential of Social Innovation is on the research and policy agenda alike. In recent years, the social sciences and humanities have received more support to develop solutions, as can be seen in the international debate where Social Innovation is treated as a distinct type of innovation and rendered more accessible as an object of empirical investigation. In Europe, a new generation of EU funded projects has developed a sound theoretical understanding of Social Innovation and its relation to social change, of its economic underpinnings, its incubation, its transformative potential and other relevant aspects.

The research conducted by SI-DRIVE and partner projects has contributed to the development of a theoretically grounded concept of Social Innovation as key to an integrative innovation theory. This approach opens up fundamentally new perspectives on recognized problems and opportunities, thereby simultaneously unlocking new possibilities for action, especially in the light of the basic confusions and

The great challenge for contemporary innovation research lies in analysing the potential of social innovation in the creation of new social practices that enhance an inclusive, equitable, democratic, participative and, above all, socially anchored future. This will allow people to do meaningful work and to live richer, more fulfilled and prosperous lives. Building on the results of SI-DRIVE, future social innovation research must prioritize three major topics:

- The (international, national, regional, cultural, social, economic, political) context of Social Innovation – what is going on pertaining to the modes, dynamics and forces (including real power structures in spheres of economies and politics) of social change?
- Further insight into the possible and favourable outcomes and impacts of new practices, ranging from improving the living and working conditions of vulnerable or disadvantaged social groups to triggering, enhancing or driving favourable social change and/or limiting/compensating the impact of less beneficial social change.
- The relationship to technological and business innovation in processes of transformative change (e.g. the 'digital transformation', the socio-ecological transition, etc.).