



News Letter

1/2012

Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe



How can social innovation create opportunities for citizens, business and public sectors in Europe?

In times of economic uncertainty, social innovation has become more important than ever in confronting two pressing challenges: driving growth and addressing social problems. Social innovation brings together charities, businesses, social entrepreneurs, policy-makers, researchers and care providers. Europe has a proud tradition of social innovation, from the first charities in the Middle Ages to the cooperative movement, social experimentation in policy-making, and social innovation at the workplace.



Social innovation rides the wave of a significant mind-shift. In the past, social challenges such as population ageing, migration, social exclusion and sustainability were primarily perceived as *problems*. Today, these societal trends are seen as *opportunities* for innovation by the public sector and the business community. For example, health already represents a large – and growing – share of GDP in most countries.

A new generation of entrepreneurs is pushing the boundaries further to develop innovative answers to social issues. And they go about it

in a very entrepreneurial way: new business models, new ways to deliver public services, and new ways to work with local markets.

Social innovation is underexploited in Europe

Although there is no shortage of innovative ideas and projects in Europe, in some cases successful innovations have spread only slowly beyond local or national levels, if at all.

This is precisely where the EU has a key role to play. At a European level, actions have focused mainly on (1) developing and disseminat-

ing good practices across national boundaries, (2) facilitating networking, and (3) helping to up-scale and mainstream successful initiatives into new accepted practices for public and private sector organisations. Social innovation is a theme that runs through almost all the Commission's key initiatives underpinning the Europe 2020 Strategy; from 'smart growth' through projects in the Innovation Union and in the Digital Agenda, to the New Skills agenda and the European Platform against Poverty in the 'inclusive' pillar.

Concrete opportunities for social innovation can be found in:

1. Creating new products and services for unmet social needs (e.g. in home care, transport or education)

Policy involvement could focus on actions that promote up-scaling of social innovations.

We need to transfer the lessons learnt from three decades of supporting technology-based innovation to supporting social innovation. To name a few: in finance, in incubation (of spin-out companies, technology-transfer, and by providing seed finance and business development assistance) and in impact measurement. In March 2012, the European Commission organised a workshop on 'how to grow social innovation in Europe through incubation'. This attracted huge interest from regional policy-makers, social enterprises, financiers and business incubators. The Framework Programme (FP) for Research and Technological Development supports networking between social innovation incubators.

Content

Editorial article

- How can social innovation create new opportunities in Europe? 1

Column

- Current EU initiatives in the field of social entrepreneurship and social innovation 2
- Society needs social innovations 3

Sociopolitical Developments in Europe

- Social innovation in the strong Danish welfare state 3
- Promotion of social innovation and social entrepreneurship by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 4
- Social, entrepreneurial, innovative? 5

Background

- Social innovation 5
- Please note 6
- Editorial Information 6

2. Identifying markets where existing products and services could be adapted to meet larger consumer demand

There are many unmet social needs, but these markets remain small because public services do not react and a sustainable business model is not yet in place. As a result, vital innovative technology (ICT, robotics, health products) often remains on the shelf.

Policy actions could be targeted to connect those who invest in and develop technology solutions with those who buy and use them (patients, carers). Already, 'living labs' and projects funded by the Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) Joint Programming Initiative are doing this for ICT and medical products.

3. Social innovation at the workplace

Businesses and public sector organisations are looking to improve their productivity and effectiveness through better organisational tools and improved working practices. About ten European regions currently invest Structural Funds in workplace innovation, particularly in manufacturing and SMEs (small and medium enterprises). The European Commission is planning to set up a learning network on how to support social innovation at the workplace by the end of the year.

Funding opportunities for social innovation in Europe – now and in the future

Over the years, the EU has financed many social innovation projects; for example, in the EQUAL and PROGRESS programmes. In other EU-funded activities, the phrase 'social innovation' was not actually used, but the concept featured prominently because better social outcomes were produced and new forms of social networks were created¹.

The European Framework Programme (FP) for Research and Technological Development funds social innovation. The FP7-funded SELUSI project found that innovation and growth patterns of social enterprises in five European countries generally outperformed companies with a traditional for-profit business model. The FP7-funded INNOSERV **social platform** brings together key representatives of the research, practice and policy communities in social service planning and delivery to explore the key factors for innovation in social services.

The **Commission proposal for a Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2014–2020** could offer many future opportunities to fund social innovation in Europe. At this very moment, policy-makers in cities, regions and Member States are defining the funding priorities of the Structural Funds² for the 2014–2020 period. In the Horizon 2020 proposal for EU research and innovation funding of the MFF, the 'Inclusive, innovative and secure societies' challenge contains a specific objective on social innovation, but other parts of Horizon 2020 may also address – directly or indirectly – social innovation outcomes and processes.

The way forward

Social innovation appeals to policy-makers, civil society, financial bodies and businesses in Europe. To grow the field, it is essential to advance in two key enablers; doing effective evidence-based decision-making for investments and building more partnerships between civil society, business and the public sector.

The challenge for all those involved is to identify which social innovation ideas are the most promising to take to the pilot stage, and subsequently to identify which pilots are best able to improve on existing models of practice. Sharp met-

rics are needed to ensure that good ideas receive the financial backing for up-scaling and that poor projects are abandoned. The FP7-funded TEPSE project will develop a knowledge base of indicators for social innovation.

Supporting the efforts of national, regional and local authorities, of the social economy and of enterprises remains central to EU action. These stakeholders drive the implementation of social innovation and they can best recognise the positive impact of social outcomes, growth and jobs.

DR. HENRIETTE VAN EIJL
European Commission
DG Enterprise and Industry

- http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/pdf/library/methodology/leader_approach_en.pdf
- http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2014/proposals/regulation/erdf/erdf_proposal_en.pdf

Column

Current EU initiatives in the field of social entrepreneurship and social innovation

The EU views the promotion of social innovation and social entrepreneurship as one of the key tools that will help Europe to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The EU Commission has been studying this issue for a number of years already. In May 2010, it published a report¹ that served as the basis for the flagship initiatives "Innovation Union" and "Platform against poverty and social exclusion" of the **Europe 2020 growth strategy**². More concrete initiatives were then announced. **The Single Market Act**³, which was presented in October 2010, also identifies social entrepreneurship as one of twelve adjustment screws for improving the internal market, and introduces the Social Business Initiative. **The Social Innovation Europe** initiative⁴ was launched in March 2011. It is intended to serve as a European information and exchange platform and to network the relevant stakeholders both at a European level and within the Member States. In October and December 2011, the Commission then finally presented the following three European initiatives, which aim to promote social entrepreneurship and social innovation across Europe:

- The overall objective of the **Social Business Initiative**⁵ lies

in the promotion and development of social enterprises in the European internal market. The Communication focuses on the establishment of a short-term action plan to foster the creation and development of social businesses, which is to be launched by the Commission before the end of 2012. In summary, the action plan will cover eleven measures in the following areas: a) improving access to financing for social enterprises; b) increasing the visibility of social enterprises; c) improving the legal framework under which European social business operates.

- To improve financing possibilities for social enterprises, the Commission accepted on 7 December 2011, inter alia, a proposal for the establishment of a new category of **European funds for social entrepreneurship**⁶. The new "European Social Entrepreneurship Fund" label (EuSEF) will soon make it easier for investors to identify funds that focus on investments in European social enterprises.
- The "**Proposal for a Regulation on a European Union Programme for Social Change and Innovation**"⁷ is intended to create a new funding programme that will provide a total of close to 960 million euros for the period between 2014 and 2020. The proposal is based on three existing instruments: PROGRESS, EURES and the "European Progress Microfinance Facility for employment and social inclusion". With the new proposal, the scope of the Progress programme will be extended to social innovation, and in particular to social experimentation. Unlike the current provisions, the microfinance instrument will now also support social start-ups.

The initiatives presented here are currently being hotly debated at the European level and in Member States. The controversy particularly focuses on how the very vague terms of the European context can be applied to national contexts while giving adequate consideration to traditional structures in the social sector (cf. article by Johannes Eisenbarth).

LETITIA TÜRK, SABRINA STULA
Observatory for Sociopolitical
Developments in Europe

¹ Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA) (2011): *Empowering people, driving change. Social Innovation in the European Union*.



- http://ec.europa.eu/bepa/pdf/publications_pdf/social_innovation.pdf
- 2 European Commission (2010a): *EUROPE 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Communication from the Commission, COM(2010) 2020 final*, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>
 - 3 European Commission (2010b): *Towards a Single Market Act. For a highly competitive social market economy. 50 proposals for improving our work, business and exchanges with one another. Communication from the Commission, COM(2010) 608 final*, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0608:FIN:EN:PDF>
 - 4 Cf. <http://www.socialinnovationeurope.eu/>
 - 5 European Commission (2011a): *Social Business Initiative creating a favourable climate for social enterprises, key stakeholders in the social economy and innovation. Communication from the Commission, COM(2011) 682 final*, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0682:FIN:EN:PDF>
 - 6 European Commission (2011b): *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Social Entrepreneurship Funds, COM(2011) 862 final*, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0862:FIN:EN:PDF>
 - 7 European Commission (2011c): *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Union Programme for Social Change and Innovation, COM(2011) 609 final*, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0609:FIN:EN:PDF>

Society needs social innovations

Past experience shows that technical innovations alone are not sufficient to meet the major challenges facing our society. Climate change, demographic development, the financial crisis and the growing acceptance of sustainable consumption patterns, the use of concepts and lifestyles – all these are issues that require different solutions.

There is now a global discussion going on about changes in our understanding of innovation, an understanding that has now freed itself from the straightjacket of purely economic and technological innovation. Increasingly, innovations are coming to the forefront that are not characterised by the invention of new artefacts or exclusively focused on the creation of economic value. These social innovations aim at creative changes in social practices to achieve specific objectives, for instance changes in the way we live, work and consume, how we organise ourselves and how we shape our political processes. The goal is to better solve specific problems or to better meet specific needs than had been possible so far on the basis of established practices.

However, for a social invention or discovery to become a true innovation, it has to be socially accepted and spread across society or at least to certain segments of it. It is important to remember that, as for any other innovation, “new” is not inherently “good” or “socially desirable”. Depending on the practical rationality of the stakeholders,

social innovations, too, are usually ambivalent, and thus require debate on what kind of social innovations we need and want to promote (cf. Howaldt/Schwarz 2010).

The growing importance of social innovation becomes particularly clear when we examine how open an innovation process is towards society. In order to better exploit the potential existing in our society, citizens and customers as well as social movements and NGOs are becoming increasingly involved in the development of new products and major projects of (political) change.

At the same time, social innovations have high economic relevance. On the one hand, they allow us to restructure innovation processes and extensively utilise the potential of people in and outside enterprises and thus increase our society’s innovative capacity. On the other hand, new industries such as the creative economy require a new understanding of innovation if we intend to use its potential in a meaningful manner. The focus here is often on creative ideas and concepts rather than on new technologies. These creative ideas are more and more likely to be oriented not only towards the design of new artefacts or products, but towards the design of social processes and social innovation. The American concept of “design thinking” is increasingly being used to re-think complex problems and develop new solutions for social problems¹.

Today, there are already numerous approaches and successful initiatives that demonstrate the strengths and the diversity of social innovations. The successful open-source movement, for instance, goes far beyond the potential of technical innovations in terms of its significance and its range. The concept of microcredit, too, as developed by Muhammad Yunus, or the increasingly important role of ‘social entrepreneurs, in the solution of social problems’ are examples of successful social innovations.

The growing importance of social innovations is beginning to be understood around the world. The Vienna Declaration², for instance, which summarises the results of the first global scientific conference on social innovation, calls for the development of a new innovation paradigm that is open towards society. This would allow the importance of social innovation to grow not only in terms of social integration and equal opportunities,

but also in terms of the innovative power and sustainability of companies and of society as a whole.

Sustainable development and the widespread implementation of social innovations urgently require further efforts. Precisely because social innovations often occur at the interface between sectors, a systematic strengthening of intersectoral cooperation – drawing in stakeholders from science, politics, business and civil society – must be promoted. The further development of intermediary institutions, of political and creative initiatives, and of transfer payments should also be encouraged. We also need an expansion of research on social innovation, not least in order to better address the issue of good conditions for the development and successful implementation of social innovations. Until now it has been obvious that there are rather few organisations and instruments that support the targeted implementation and dissemination of social innovations, especially with regard to the linking of innovative solutions of individual innovators with political and other public initiatives. The dissemination and adoption of social innovations is, however, a great opportunity to successfully meet, with novel approaches, growing challenges such as mass unemployment, erosion of social security systems or increasing ecological risks.

Bibliography

Howaldt, Jürgen/Schwarz, Michael (2010): “Soziale Innovation” im Fokus. Skizze eines gesellschaftstheoretisch inspirierten Forschungs-konzepts. Bielefeld: transcript.

PROF. DR. JÜRGEN HOWALDT,
DMITRI DOMANSKI
Social Research Center, Technical
University of Dortmund

- 1 (http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/design-thinking_for_social_innovation)
- 2 cf. <http://www.socialinnovation2011.eu/vienna-declaration-2011>

Sociopolitical
Developments in
Europe

Social innovation in the strong Danish welfare state

The Danish and the other Nordic welfare systems can be viewed as huge complexes of social innovations. These systems are on the

one hand claimed to be so universalistic, strong, powerful and thought through that they keep the people happy, safe, healthy and educated and to a large extent create equality – at least in an economic sense. On the other hand one could claim that these massive welfare systems impede the drive for further social change and new innovations. Thus, the societal benefit of social innovation is deemed worthy of further discussion: is social innovation supplementing or competing with the welfare state?

There is a lot of talk about social innovation in Denmark. But let us be honest: most of us do not even know what social innovation means and think of it as a buzzword with the same meaning as social development. In order to change this reality, Denmark has in the last five years seen the emergence of new actors promoting and supporting social innovation.

Efforts for promoting social innovation

Some of these actors are initiated and supported by official policy-makers while others are private initiatives.

Denmark has a Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at the University of Roskilde and an independent Centre for Social Economy. Both of them have been strongly supported by the government. An alternative educational structure for social and cultural entrepreneurs called the “Chaos Pilots” was founded in the 1980s; it focuses on social innovation now more than ever. Denmark has seen the establishment of the privately funded Social Capital Fund to support scaling and of the also privately funded Social+ (which the author represents), which offers social inventors the support they need to get from idea to social innovation. Lastly Denmark has seen DANSIC – a student driven organisation – promoting social innovation to students of all backgrounds.

These infrastructural actors know that a lot is going on at the EU level in regards to promoting social innovation. But European efforts are not well known in the general public. The Social Innovation Europe initiative stands rather strong but most inspiration for social innovation in Denmark comes from the UK, the US, Australia and Canada rather than from France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria or from our neighbours in Germany, Norway and Sweden.

Controversial discussion about the actual benefit

The main discussion is about value (in both meanings) between a group that is critical of capital and a more conformist group. The first would argue that the focus of social innovation should be on social rather than on economic value and see the danger of a simple privatisation of the welfare system. The latter would argue that a more sustainable welfare system also needs the involvement of the (traditional) enterprises engaged in the delivery of social services. Middle-of-the-road pragmatists (which is where the author stands) would argue that social innovation is the development of social services, methods and products in economically sustainable models – irrespective of their organisational system: non-profit, private, public, business, voluntary or other.

Social innovation within a strong welfare state

The Danish welfare system is constantly evolving and targeting new social challenges. But this evolution happens in small, slow steps. The reasons for this are, above all, the following:

- The size of the welfare state and of public organisations creates inertia, holding them back in, for instance, the field of knowledge sharing.
- The public sector's tasks are highly complex – with many professionals and stakeholders involved in developing new initiatives.
- The fear of making mistakes minimises risk-taking – but risk-taking is an essential part of any innovation process.

As long as the welfare state holds the main responsibility for solving social problems in Denmark, social innovation will be challenged by the conditions in this strong public sector.

Most social innovation initiatives are strongly connected to the public sector – and either initiated or funded by this sector. Nevertheless, a traditionally strong NGO-sector is also a major social innovation player, although its key funding is not private but public. Many non-public social innovations are also financially supported by private philanthropic foundations that are much more willing to take innovation risks.

Traditionally, social development work has been based on relative short-term funding in develop-

ment projects. A lot of valuable social methods and results have not succeeded in the long term because no complementary sustainable business models were implemented.

When discussing social innovation in Denmark, one can see clearly that there is a strong focus on economic and organisational sustainability.

From supplement to competition

Social innovators in Denmark have traditionally been non-profit entrepreneurs supplementing the welfare state. With rising awareness and interest in social innovation, a number of different sectors and actors are getting increasingly involved. For example, the private sector and the business sector are becoming involved in developing a social economy

and small social businesses within that economy. These actors do not necessarily see themselves as *supplementing* the welfare state – but rather as *competing* with traditional services within the welfare system.

The great (almost complete) majority of social, health and education services are publicly funded through taxes. For most Danes, this means that they do not want to pay for any of these services as they have already paid for them on their tax bill. So although the end users of social innovations in Denmark might often be the citizens (marginalised or not), the customer is almost always the welfare state. This is a challenge for social innovation in Denmark.

And yet there is a growing interest in understanding how to increase the role of civil society in solving

social problems and making social innovation. Denmark has always had a strong volunteer sector supplementing the public sector's work for socially marginalised groups. But with the future challenges faced by the welfare state, there is strong interest in finding new ways to activate civil society. The answer could very well be social innovation.

ANDREAS HJORTH FREDERIKSEN
Director Social+ (Denmark)

Social, entrepreneurial, innovative?

As the European Commission sees it, social innovation and social entrepreneurship should contribute to the modernisation of social services in Europe. In these "times of tight budgets", a variety of initiatives bear witness to the Commission's efforts to bring into



Promotion of social innovation

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) has committed itself to the promotion of social innovation and social entrepreneurship within the scope of the "Civic Participation Strategy" (2010). It is convinced that social innovation has long been and continues to be central to the development and sustainability of the society. Together with other relevant stakeholders, the Federal Ministry wants to make a contribution towards drawing more attention and bringing more recognition to

social innovations in the political debate about the challenges the society is facing. The Ministry hopes to improve framework conditions with concrete measures focusing on the following areas:

Visibility and recognition, results-oriented reporting, the development of an infrastructure for launching social enterprises by social start-up and innovation centres, cooperation with non-statutory welfare associations, and the development of innovative funding instruments such as the KfW programme

for funding social enterprises in place since 1 January 2012.

These and other issues will be at the centre of debates at the multi-stakeholder conference to promote social innovations and social entrepreneurs due to take place in Berlin in early 2013. The ministerial unit in charge of the conference, unit 311 at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, will be happy to answer any further questions at 311@bmsfj.bund.de.

the debate about social services of general interest such issues as efficiency, greater involvement of private stakeholders and private capital, and evidence-based impact analysis. Faced with multiple crises – the financial markets, sovereign debt, economic and currency problems – Brussels is taking note of the fact that there are growth and employment reserves in the health and social sector. The potential for sustainable, crisis-proof and “integrative” growth is seen to be greater here than in other sectors. The Commission believes that this is in perfect keeping with its long-term growth strategy, Europe 2020, the objective of which is not only intelligent and lasting but also *integrative* growth.

The Commission’s proposals define the key terms no more than very vaguely. For instance, the “Social Change and Innovation” programme describes social enterprises as being enterprises whose primary objective is to achieve social impact, as operating in the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative way and as using surpluses mainly to achieve social goals. This is a very broad definition. Non-profit providers in Germany fully meet these requirements. Nevertheless, this understanding of social entrepreneurship can also be interpreted in a less stringent manner, for instance regarding profit-making and use of surpluses. How are we to understand the terms “primary” and “mainly” when it comes to the social objective and use of profits? And what constitutes innovation remains entirely unclear. Contrary to superficial statements, evidence-based measurement of social added value and sustainable impact do not seem to be at the top of the list of the Commission’s priorities. A transparent and uniform description of what constitutes social added value would be welcome, not least from the perspective of potential investors who entrust their money to an investment fund for distribution to social enterprises. According to the DG Internal Market unit responsible for funds for social enterprises, there are still no plans for this; priority being given to building up the market. All of these inconsistencies, but also the explicit argumentation of the European Commission, speak for themselves: the main motives of the Brussels initiatives are cost effectiveness, growth and employment. These goals can potentially compete with genuine social objectives such as the realisation of basic human rights, user

orientation, or non-discriminatory and low-threshold access to services of general interest.

Non-statutory welfare providers are doing their best to meet the challenge of developing social services and finding innovative answers to new social problems. They do this – not only since social innovation has become politically “en vogue” – at local and associational levels, in partnership with municipalities and regions. They do so in all areas of social work – including areas that can be funded only by public funds or the organisation’s own resources, where market-based provision is just as impossible as a return on social investment capital. A key concept for innovation in public services is guaranteed right of choice. This requires a variety of providers, as encouraged by the three-way relationship under German social law. As this three-way relationship under German social law also meets requirements of EU primary law in respect of transparency, equal treatment and non-discrimination, it should be fully recognised under European law.

Two issues will gain importance for non-statutory welfare associa-

tions and municipalities: firstly, the measurement of social added value and the sustainable impact of innovations in the social sector, and secondly, the efficiency debate, i.e. the issue of optimisation of use of funds and of results. This is an area where concepts must be developed and carried into practice by joint efforts. At the same time, providers must operate in a context characterised by reliability, transparency and availability of personnel, legal and financial resources. The EU also bears responsibility for this – far beyond the realm of social innovation.

Documents

- Deutscher Verein’s Opinion on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Union Programme for Social Change and Innovation http://www.deutscher-verein.de/01-wir_ueber_uns/geschaeftsstelle/arbeitsfelder/stab/pdf-1/EN%20DV%2009%2012%20Sozialer%20Wandel%2016%2004%202012.pdf
- Documentation: Social, entrepreneurial, innovative? Social entrepreneurship and social innovation in the EU [only avail-

able in German] http://www.deutscher-verein.de/03-events/2012/materialien/dokumentation-p-601-12/PDF_Soziales_Unternehmertum_web.pdf

- Main principles of the German Caritas Federation: Social innovations [only available in German] http://www.caritas.de/cms/contents/caritasde/medien/dokumente/stellungnahmen/sozialinnovationen/soziale_innovationen_caritas_eckpunkte-papier.pdf

JOHANNES EISENBARTH
Department of International
Affairs, German Association for
Public and Private Welfare

Background Social innovation

Social innovation has become a key concept at the very centre of current political and academic debate. This article will introduce a few European initiatives and projects that deal with this issue.



Social Innovation Europe (SIE)

Social Innovation Europe is a pilot initiative of the European Commission (DG Enterprise and Industry) that was initiated in January 2011 and will run until December 2012. It is implemented by a consortium consisting of Social Innovation Exchange (lead partner), Young Foundation (research), the Euclid Network (events), the Danish Technology Institute (strategy consulting), and a European network of partners.

Past and present activities of the pilot initiative include the creation of a website (www.social-innovation-europe.eu) to give stakeholders a common platform and present social innovation projects, awareness-raising activities, networking, training and the preparation of studies. A particular focus of the initiative is to link networks, open access channels and offer new forms of support. The initiative also hopes to give the topic of social innovation a more concrete form and to promote cooperation between policy makers, academics, businesses and representatives of the third sector.

Additional information can be found at <http://www.socialinnovationeurope.eu>

Social Innovation Exchange (SIX)

Social Innovation Exchange (SIX) is a global community of over 3,000 individuals and organisations – including NGOs and small global companies, public institutions and academics – for the promotion of social innovation and the growth capacity of this field. Their goal is networking and helping people on the road to their development as social innovators.

To achieve this goal, SIX runs a number of activities, including global networking of social innovators via telephone conferences (TelePresence) and the regular organisation of exchange events (Spring and Summer Schools). TelePresence discussions cover a wide range of topics, from funding social innovation and European innovation policy all the way to the theoretical foundations of the field.

Additional information can be found at <http://www.socialinnovationexchange.org/home>

InnoServ

The InnoServ project (“Social Platform for Innovative Social Services”) has two aims: to identify key factors for innovation in the field of social services, and to find out

what innovations will be crucial for the advancement of social services (project duration: 2012–2014). The specific objective of this project is to build a social platform that brings together key representatives from research, practice and policy in the field of planning and implementing social services. Their concern is to spot relevant current trends in science, practice and policy, to identify knowledge gaps and stimulate research issues that try to fill them. The project hopes in particular to highlight framework conditions, mechanisms, structures, and financing forms that promote innovation, to present examples of professional approach and co-productions of various stakeholders.

The project consortium consists of eleven European partners led by the Institute for the Study of Christian Social Service of the University of Heidelberg.

As a first result of its work, a report was published in May 2012 reviewing the literature on innovation in social services in Europe (sectors: health, education and welfare).

Additional information can be found at http://www.dwi.uni-heidelberg.de/innoserv/innoserv_start.html

WILCO

The WILCO project (“Welfare Innovations at the Local Level in favour of Cohesion”), which is funded by the European Commission and involves eleven European universities, focuses on the exploration of innovation in local social policy (project duration: 2010–2013). The main interest of the project is how to successfully combat social inequality in European cities and what examples are suitable for implementation in other cities. The focus is on comparison of practices in the areas of housing and labour market policy and childcare. In addition to the aspect of control by policy-makers and administrative authorities, the project devotes special attention to the perspectives of young people, migrants and single parents. The results are expected to lead to policy recommendations for local stakeholders in government, politics and civil society.

The website gives access to 18 city reports and to reports on the organisation of local services of general interest in ten European countries.

Additional information can be found at <http://www.wilcoproject.eu/>

SABRINA STULA, LETITIA TÜRK
Observatory for Sociopolitical
Developments in Europe

Please Note

New on our website at

www.sociopolitical-observatory.eu

Living in Old Age in Europe – Current Developments and Challenges,

Working Paper no. 7, Sabrina Stula, June 2012

Eldercare Services – Lessons from a European Comparison,

Working Paper no. 6, Annette Angermann, June 2012

Conference papers for the following events are also available:

International conference on “Active Ageing in Europe – Senior Citizens and Volunteering” in the context of a meeting of experts to exchange views on innovative policies for senior citizens and generations, January 2012

“Eldercare Services in Europe – Home Care, Family Support and Domestic Services for Older People”, December 2011

Invitation to the European conference:

New opportunities or new restrictions? Social innovation and providers of social services in Europe on 17–18 December 2012 in Berlin

You can find more details of the event on our website!



Observatory
for Sociopolitical
Developments in Europe

Editorial Information

Publisher:
Institute for Social Work and Social Education
Hans-Georg Weigel (Director)
Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe
Postal Address: POB 50 01 51
D-60391 Frankfurt am Main
Office Address: Zeilweg 42
D-60439 Frankfurt am Main
Germany

Editor:
Hans-Georg Weigel
E-mail: anna.waldhausen@iss-ffm.de

*This is a publication of the
Observatory for Sociopolitical
Developments in Europe.
Homepage:*
www.sociopolitical-observatory.eu

*Agencies responsible for the
Observatory are:*
Frankfurt Project Team:
Institute for Social Work and Social Education

*Postal Address: POB 50 01 51
D-60391 Frankfurt am Main
Office Address: Zeilweg 42
D-60439 Frankfurt am Main
Phone: +49 699 57 89 0
Fax: +49 699 57 89 190
E-mail: Info@iss-ffm.de
Internet: www.iss-ffm.de*

*Berlin Project Team:
German Association for Public
and Private Welfare
Michaelkirchstr. 17/18
D-10179 Berlin, Germany
Phone: +49 3062 98 0
Fax: +49 306 29 80 140
E-mail: kontakt@deutscher-verein.de
Internet: www.deutscher-verein.de*

*The German Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth, 11018 Berlin,
provides funding for the project
“Observatory for Sociopolitical
Developments in Europe”.*

*Translation: Nicole Gentz, Berlin
Design: www.avitamin.de
Print: Druckerei Arnold, Großbeeren
Circulation:
German: 1,600, English: 800
picture credits:
Page 1: © pizuttipics – Fotolia.com;
Page 2: © stefine – photocase.com;
Page 4: © tigerente – photocase.com;
Page 5: © nectar – photocase.com*

Date of publication: Oktober 2012

Ordering address:
www.sociopolitical-observatory.eu

*This newsletter is published within
the scope of the public relations
activities of the government of the
Federal Republic of Germany. It is
provided free of charge and is not
destined for sale. This publication
does not necessarily reflect the opinion
of the Government of the Federal
Republic of Germany. Responsibility
shall remain with the publisher and/
or the respective author.*

*The content and the structure of the
Observatory’s Newsletter are copy-
righted. We are pleased to allow our
articles to be used, but we ask you to
inform us in advance and to state the
author’s name and the Observatory
as the source of the material.*