



# This is **European Social Innovation**



**European Commission**  
Enterprise and Industry

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# This is **European Social Innovation**

**“This is European Social Innovation” was instigated, coordinated and produced by Louise Pulford, Social Innovation eXchange (SIX), Filippo Addarii, Euclid Network, in partnership with the Social Innovation Park, Bilbao.**

## SIX



social innovation  
eXchange

The Social Innovation eXchange (SIX) is a global community of over 1000 individuals and organisations – including small NGOs and global firms, public agencies and academics – committed to promoting social innovation and growing the capacity of the field. SIX aims to improve the methods with which our societies find better solutions to challenges such as ageing, climate change, inequality and healthcare. The members of SIX have been closely involved in policy design in many fields – including the creation of innovation funds, incubators, user-led design and Social Business Parks. SIX has designed and implemented an ambitious programme of global events - some focus on specific regions and issues, while others utilise Cisco's TelePresence technology to bring together partners from across the globe to share learning and methods.

SIX was instigated by the Young Foundation, UK, and this is where the network's secretariat is now based.

[www.socialinnovationexchange.org](http://www.socialinnovationexchange.org) - [www.youngfoundation.org](http://www.youngfoundation.org)

## Euclid Network



Euclid Network is a growing community of civil society professionals who want to connect across borders for a stronger, more innovative and sustainable European civil society. With 300 members and a wider network of 3000 civil society practitioners and engaged professionals, we empower the network to become the changemakers of civil society – challenging the status quo, bringing solutions to the table and fostering collaboration and peer-learning across boundaries. We are a pan-European network working both within and beyond the EU member states. However, we also fully embrace "Global Europe", connecting Europeans to civil society across the world. Working on sector-wide challenges that affect all our members (such as sustainability, effectiveness, innovation and policy) we use the power of the network and the strength of our partnerships with private and public institutions to bring about lasting change for European civil society and society as a whole.

[www.euclidnetwork.eu](http://www.euclidnetwork.eu)

## Social Innovation Park

The Social Innovation Park (SI Park) is a pioneering initiative promoted by DenokInn, the Basque Centre for Social and Corporate Innovation, aiming to provide the best environment for social leaders, private companies and institutions to cooperate, learn from each other and to launch new large scale initiatives. SI Park will host consolidated social enterprises and international innovation projects in the Greater Bilbao area of Northern Spain. All of them will benefit from the services incorporated into the 100,000 square meters of infrastructure: the Social Innovation Laboratory (G-Lab), the Social Innovation Academy and the Social Enterprise Generator.

[www.denokinn.eu/](http://www.denokinn.eu/)

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# Foreword



What brings Danish bees, Portuguese students, German parents, Italian healthcare workers, Turkish scuba divers, Dutch digital pioneers, French fitness trainers, English Community scouts and Romanian birth certificates together? And what does Europe have to do with it?

As the remarkable stories in this short book demonstrate, it is about the courageous and committed people who use their creativity and ideas to solve problems. Moreover, innovation is important insofar as it is our capacity to shape the future we desire.

As these encouraging and enlightening examples show, Europe has a strong potential for social innovation, a potential that should be used even better. I therefore wish to recognise our social innovators and make these success stories known so that others are inspired. In so doing, I hope to help strengthen social innovation as a whole in Europe.

We have therefore included in our “Innovation Union” proposal the launch of a European Social Innovation pilot, which will provide expertise and a virtual hub network for social entrepreneurs and the general public. We hope this will be just the beginning of a common journey to a Europe to which we aspire, satisfying the Europe 2020 strategy. A Europe where the concept of a social market economy is our reference, fulfilling the promise of the Treaty of Lisbon. A Europe that does not consider the market as an end per se, but as a means to ensure and achieve social policy. And where I believe, social innovation can serve as one of our most valuable instruments.

*Antonio Tajani*

Antonio Tajani

# What is “This is European Social Innovation”?

Across the world, millions of people are creating better ways to tackle some of the most challenging social problems of our times. “This is European Social Innovation – A call for inspiring stories” proves that Europe is no exception.

From over one hundred inspiring social innovation stories, spanning twenty-three countries, our jury chose 10 projects which illustrate some of the most promising innovations happening at the moment in different fields and countries across Europe.

The current financial and economic crisis makes social innovation more important than ever - both as a component of economic strategies to build Europe’s relative position in growing fields such as healthcare and environmental services, and as a vital contribution to achieving greater value for money in public services. We must look to social innovation to stimulate a more dynamic, inclusive and sustainable social market economy.

Fortunately, there is no shortage of social innovations in Europe. Many are very well established - from the Mondragon group of Cooperatives in the Basque Country in Spain, to France’s Emmaus communities which are now established all over Europe and Italy’s San Patrignano which is now the largest drug rehabilitation community in the world. Some are less well established, as individuals, communities, organisations and companies begin searching for new ways, and adapting old ones, to address the modern societal challenges.

Despite this activity, the field of social innovation has yet to mature enough to tackle the multitude of challenges society presents it with. Many innovative projects and programmes remain small, under-funded, and are not sustainable, therefore having restricted impact. Funding specifically intended for growing social innovations is limited, and often provided by philanthropists. In order to move from its current state of fragmented good ideas, to a place where social innovations are making a more consistent, more efficient impact across all areas of need, successful social innovations in Europe must be more visible.

So together, Euclid and SIX networks, with the support of the Social Innovation Park in Bilbao, Spain, and the European Commission launched “This is European Social Innovation – a call for inspiring stories”. Our aim was to identify and highlight some of the most promising innovative initiatives, thereby raising the profile of social innovation across Europe, and creating an impact beyond the established social innovation community. The 10 selected projects were identified because of their potential for impact, and relevance to the issues facing Europe. We have not attempted to classify the best social innovation initiatives, rather, we have chosen to highlight some of the most promising innovations happening at the moment in different fields and countries across Europe.



# What do we mean by social innovation?

The term “social innovation” is a relatively new one, but social innovation itself is not new. There are many examples of social innovations throughout history, from kindergartens to hospices, and from the cooperative movement to microfinance. A “field” of social innovation, however, is a new idea.

As foundations, governments and businesses begin to invest, momentum for this concept is gathering. Discussions often focus on the terminology and around the world many organisations offer different definitions of what it is, who does it, and how they do it. Within Europe, the lack of clarity of the concept impacts different regions and different industries in different ways. Social innovation in Europe is often confused with social enterprise or is limited to the social field. It is not taken seriously by many, especially in newer member states, and for part of the social economy - especially old school cooperatives - it's the horse of troy for the private sector to access funding historically ear-marked for social projects.

Social innovation is about new ideas that work to address pressing unmet needs. We simply describe it as innovations that are both social in their ends and in their means.

Social innovations are new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations.

*This draws on the definition in the Open Book of Social Innovation, March 2010, Murray, Calulier-Grice and Mulgan*

# Europe and the challenge of social innovation

We were aware that social innovation can be misunderstood and is often not well received in Europe before we launched this initiative, so we expected to face some difficulties. Our main challenge was accessing social innovations. The lack of a strong, mature European focused network of social innovators, and an uneven access to new technologies in Europe meant the information about this competition was not easy to disseminate widely. In addition, people running great projects in their local community often do not identify as social innovators, and thus disqualified themselves as possible entries. The combination of social innovations often being small or young, and the underdevelopment of measurement tools for social innovation resulting in a lack of visible impact, made the competition relatively unsellable to the media.

Despite this, we received over one hundred applications from twenty-three countries. The applications were impressive, diverse and showed the vitality of work on the ground. Entries came from all over Europe, from the EU's founding member states, as well as the new member states of Romania and Bulgaria. The projects we received were both new, for example ONE, the first Social Impact Bond which is being piloted in the UK to help stop reoffending, to well established innovations, like therapeutic approaches to medical problems, such as those the JERI project at the HUCH Jorvi Hospital in Finland uses with patients with mental health problems. Some entries were successful replications and adaptations of existing projects, such as Portugal's Generation Orchestra which is based on the child and youth orchestras in Venezuela, and Bilbao Bizkaia Kutxa, a socially conscious bank in the Basques Country, Spain which provides microfinance (a service originating in Bangladesh). The entries showed the breadth of ways people are tackling similar social problems in their own communities and regions, from different applications of "the Hub" model all over Europe, to multiple ways of engaging citizens in decision making. Other entries, like the Hiriko Driving Mobility – a project that will fabricate the first folding vehicle designed to be fully electric and integrated into the public transportation system – focus more on whole system transformation and could change the way we live our lives altogether.

# Introducing the Jury



**Alain Coheur** is the Director of Social Economy Europe, the EU-level representative institution for the social economy. He is the Chairman of the International Cooperation Commission of the International Association of Mutual Health Funds (AIM). Alain is also the Director of European and International Affairs at the Belgian National Union of Socialist Mutual Health Funds, and vice-chairman of the Technical Commission on Mutual Benefit Societies. He has been a long term coordinator of many European projects and organisations; since 1997 he has been coordinator of health projects at the Euregio Meuse-Rhin, and since 2002 he has been coordinator of

the Franco-Belgian “Health Observatory”, of which he was the former Chairman, and Chairman of the European Affairs Commission of the Belgian National Intermutualist College. Since 2007 he has also been Chairman of the Belgian Non-Governmental Organisation “Solsoc”.

**Diogo Vasconcelos** has been Chair of SIX since spring 2009.

Diogo recently chaired the European Commission Business Panel on Future EU innovation policy. Since 2007, Diogo Vasconcelos has been a Distinguished Fellow with Cisco’s Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), the global strategy and innovation group of Cisco. He also Chairs the new international NGO Dialogue Café. Before joining Cisco, Diogo was the Economic Knowledge Advisor to the Portuguese President of Republic Prof Cavaco Silva and lead the President’s widely studied digital campaign and “digital presidency”. Diogo was founder and president of UMIC, the Portuguese Knowledge Society Agency.

He was also a member of the board of the Innovation Agency. Before that, he was elected as a member of Parliament and was Vice-President of the Social Democratic Party and its spokesperson for Innovation. Prior to that, Diogo founded a multimedia company and published the first magazines in Portugal about the internet and entrepreneurship, and launched the Entrepreneurs Academy.



**Ewa Konczal** has been with Ashoka since 2000 and currently leads Ashoka in Poland and Central and Eastern Europe. Prior to joining Ashoka Ewa worked in Egypt, where she co-created the Egyptian Polish Businessman Association. She has also volunteered with the Global March Against Child Labour in Delhi, India. Pursuing her passions – mountaineering – in 2004 Ewa founded her own organisation, Magic Mountain Foundation, that creates opportunities for various disadvantaged youth and adults to climb their own Everest. Ewa is a Ford Motor Company Fellow and a member of the Remarque Forum at New York City University. In 2006 Ewa received the AIESEC International Global Leadership & Entrepreneurship Award and entered

the AIESEC Alumni Hall of Fame. Her work has also been recognized by several Polish organizations, who presented her with The Friend of the Poor Children Award and EKO School of Life Medal for supporting work with the socially excluded.



**Geoff Mulgan** is Chief Executive of The Young Foundation, one of the world's leading centres for social innovation, social enterprise and public policy. Between 1997 and 2004 Geoff had various roles in government including director of the Government's Strategy Unit and head of policy in the Prime Minister's office. Before that he was the founder and Director of the think-tank Demos. He has also been Chief Adviser to Gordon Brown MP; a lecturer in telecommunications; an investment executive; and a reporter on BBC TV and radio. He is a visiting professor at LSE, UCL, Melbourne University and lectures regularly at the China Executive Leadership Academy. He has been a board member of the Work Foundation, the Health Innovation Council and the Design Council, chair of Involve, and has served on many task forces and commissions. He is also chairing a Carnegie Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland.

**Peter Dröll** is currently the head of the Innovation Development Unit in the European Commission's Enterprise and Industry Department. He joined the European Commission as member of financial control, responsible inter alia for the Environment Institute of the Commission's Joint Research Centre in Ispra (IT). He continued in the legal unit of the Commission's Environment Department, with the remit to monitor and ensure transposition and implementation of EU environmental legislation. With the opening of accession negotiations in 1998, he joined the Commission's negotiation task force as member of the Poland team. In this position he was coordinator of environmental negotiations with all accession countries. In 2002, he joined the Cabinet of Commissioner Günter Verheugen and was later an appointed Assistant to the Director General for Enlargement. In 2004, he was appointed as Head of Cabinet of the Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik.



**Rosa Gallego** works as a Deputy Manager of the Spanish Association of Foundations, a membership association with more than 1,000 foundations. Since January 2009 she has also served as Chairperson of DAFNE (Donors and Foundations Networks in Europe) which gathers 22 associations of foundations and funders from across Europe, representing more than 5,500 members. Rosa's professional experience started in the UK working for AFS (American Field Service), an international association in the field of education and intercultural learning. Following that she worked for two years at the Spanish Branch of AFS leading a project to promote intercultural education in the Spanish Educational system. Between 1999 and 2001 she served as Secretary General of the International Young Nature Friends in Brussels, a network of youth organizations with presence in more than fifteen European countries.



**Stephen Bubb** is the Chief Executive of the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) – a dynamic and high profile UK third sector body. He has been the Secretary General of Euclid Network since 2007, and is also the Chair of Social Investment Business. He is a member of the Commonwealth Foundation's Civil Society Committee, an Independent Assessor for high profile public appointments and a member of the Honours Advisory Committee. He has held major roles in UK trade organisations; in the TGWU (Transport and General Workers Union), the NUT (National Union of Teachers) and the AMA (Association of Metropolitan Authorities). He was Founding Personnel Director of the National Lottery Charities Board, served as a Councillor in Lambeth and was an active member of the health authorities for Guys and St Thomas' over two decades.

**Simona Paravani** is the Global Strategy Chief Investment Officer for Wealth at HSBC. Simona has been working in the finance industry since 1998. Prior to this role, Simona was Chief Investment Officer for HSBC Global Asset Management (USA) Inc, which involved overseeing the New York based liquidity and Multimanager investment capabilities, and leading the development of innovative investment solutions for HSBC customer groups in the US. Simona joined HSBC in 2004 as an Asset Allocation Economist. Previous to this she has worked for Julius Baer Asset Management and Orbis Investment Advisory in London. Simona holds a graduate degree from Cambridge University.



## Selecting the projects

Our jury were asked to select 10 projects. They were asked to ensure the 10 selected projects illustrate diversity – both in terms of geography, sector and social challenge. The judges were asked to consider the following 3 criteria which we think help identify a social innovation:

- 1 Is it useful? Does it tackle a real social or environmental need cost-efficiently?
- 2 Does it have meaning for those who are involved in it, both for those delivering the service/product (the suppliers), and for those receiving it – (the demand) ?
- 3 Does it create new and effective relationships in society?

The following pages tell 10 of these remarkable innovation journeys.

# The 10 selected projects

## ■ Connected Care, UK

*"Building social capital, willingness and trust in deprived communities is a long road. So many residents tell us that they are "surveyed to death".*

<http://www.turning-point.co.uk>



### An unjust Kingdom

The inverse care law states that the people who need social care support the most have the most problems accessing it. This injustice has large scale negative impacts. When services fail in this way, the most marginalised suffer, weakened by disenfranchised communities and neighbourhood problems that spiral out of control. Through peer-led research, Connected Care, Turning Point's model of community-led commissioning, is working hard to reach the heart of fragmented communities in order to build social capital and develop new solutions to health and social care problems. Connected Care enables the community to tackle the root cause of poor outcomes for service users.

### Social innovation heroes

Connected Care recruits and trains local people to work as Community Researchers. They have access to the marginalized groups most in need of help, those with complex needs, and those who don't access or engage with services. The Community Researchers live in the area they research. They often have links with, or need for, the local health and social care services. This gives them unique access to the people most often missed by social services. Working for Connected Care often gives them a new direction and confidence in starting something new. In return, the Community Researchers give their time, energy, passion and, importantly, access to the hardest to reach members of the community. Connected Care also works with frontline staff and commissioners who are committed to redesigning services based on the needs of communities.

### The innovation journey

The evidence base for Connected Care originated from research carried out by Turning Point, in conjunction with IPPR in 2004. The report Meeting Complex Needs found that people with multiple needs are often failed by existing health and social care services. It brought to light the gaps in current health and social care services, finding they don't provide joined-up, cost-effective services; they don't address the whole person; and they don't meet complex needs. The report called for a much more connected approach for all individuals living in deprived neighbourhoods. It called for the voice of the community to be central to the design and delivery of all connected services. This led to Connected Care.

### The Battle

To bring about real change authorities need to be convinced that community engagement must be central to the design of the services. Building the required social capital, willingness and trust in deprived communities is a long road. Connected Care addresses these issues by ensuring that the design of services starts from within the community, and focuses on the needs of citizens; that there

are mechanisms in place to hold agencies to account to make this happen; and that commissioners embrace a radical shift in service approach, including stimulating and sustaining community-led social enterprises.

### The way back home

Connected Care programmes have been carried out in ten areas across the UK. 164 community researchers have been recruited and trained, reaching community populations of 130,000. Connected Care has helped different agencies to work together in partnership with these communities. Their vision is to create a movement of community leaders coming together to tackle social problems in their own area, with community engagement being integral to service design and delivery of local services.

## ■ Eltern-AG, Germany

*"All children need equal opportunities... ELTERN-AG helps children with less favourable conditions in early life, by first supporting their parents."*

[www.eltern-ag.de/](http://www.eltern-ag.de/)



### An unjust kingdom

The OECD's PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) survey in 2000 studied educational outcomes in children from 43 countries across the world. The survey showed that even within the abundant welfare state of Germany, children from poorer families had very little chance of achieving a high-school diploma, let alone a university degree. Generally, these children had fewer chances of success in life and suffered crucial disadvantages.

### Social innovation heroes

In 2001, in a classroom of the small Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences, a group of young students and their lecturer were inspired to do something about the educational inequalities suffered by children from lower income families. They took the time to look into each and every existing program offered by the state and various different welfare organizations, and found that the majority of programs were aiding the middle classes the most. They were failing to engage successfully with the parents and children who really needed them. Having discovered this, the group, which named itself ELTERN-AG, left the classroom to discover the reason for this, by talking directly to the parents. What they learned was that more often than not poorer parents felt intimidated by the unfamiliarity of some of the very state institutions which were there to help them.

### The innovation journey

The ELTERN-AG-group decided to tackle the problem through empowerment; they did not believe in lecturing grownups, but wanted to galvanize them to help themselves. The group went to the poorer quarters of the city, and looked for struggling families, for immigrants who couldn't speak German, for young single mothers, for fathers who had never learned how to cope with a nagging child. From these people, they began to build the basis of the network of ELTERN-AG groups.

### The battle

In 2004 ELTERN-AG formed its first group. 10 parents came together in the “Daisy Kindergarten” in Magdeburg. They had time to share stories and discuss the trial and tribulations of their everyday lives while their children played. They discussed the things that mattered to them, such as best practice examples of how to celebrate a children’s birthday party on a budget. The group met 20 times and results began to show. All the parents stayed with the group; they now had friends and acquaintances, a social network, and the group decided to continue the meetings for several years. The ELTERN-AG team had learnt a lot too. They had learnt to be mentors rather than teachers, tour guides rather than instructors. However financing the program was still an issue. In 2004 the students and their professor set down everything in their vision, and everything they had learnt, into a successful funding application to the Ministry for Social Affairs of the German state of Saxony-Anhalt.

### The way back home

To date, around 800 parents have participated in ELTERN-AG, which means around 2000 children have been reached. 100 ELTERN-AG mentors have been trained by the original group, which has itself developed into a professional team. ELTERN-AG groups have been held in five German states, and the programme will soon expand to Austria and Switzerland. The empowerment concept is so successful, that ELTERN-AG has been asked to turn their focus to new target groups, such as long term unemployed people, and elderly people looking for a new perspective in their career.

## ■ La Petite Reine, France

*“We are convinced that economic, socially and environment-friendly sustainable development is the key solution to better the unjust society we are living in.”*  
[www.lapetitereine.com/fr](http://www.lapetitereine.com/fr)



### An unjust kingdom

La Petite Reine was created in 2001 by Gilles Manuelle, as a response to a two-fold issue. Goods delivery in city centres is neither efficient nor ecological. Oversized delivery trucks often travel along overcrowded routes several times a day, thus generating further traffic jams and pollution. The original aim of La Petite Reine was to provide a more suitable transportation alternative for city centres. In 2009 La Petite Reine expanded their commitment to sustainable development to include social action towards underprivileged people.

### Social innovation heroes

La Petite Reine is directed by a team of devoted and skilled people, united by their conviction that society needs to be driven towards a more ecological and social development. La Petite Reine became part of the Ares Group (Association pour la Réinsertion Economique et Sociale) in 2009, a non-profit people reintegration association created in 1991. Over the past 2 decades, Ares has been developing firms which employ people experiencing social difficulties, such as homelessness, disabilities, and academic underperformance. These firms, including La Petite Reine, maintain a strong social and professional support methodology, so as to define a career path that matches each employee’s particular desires and abilities. 60% of participants access a long-lasting job after Ares.



### The innovation journey

When La Petite Reine was established 10 years ago, its ambitious aim was to transform the inner city logistics sector by streamlining delivery flows, utilizing logistic centres before peak hours and then organizing optimized delivery tours, therefore decreasing traffic jams and pollution. La Petite Reine's second innovation was in the mode of delivery. They designed an electrical vehicle, the "Cargocycle": a fierce and light three wheeled bicycle equipped with a large trunk (1.5m<sup>3</sup>), that was able to utilize bike lanes and parks as easily as roads. Their third innovation took place in 2009 in joining Ares, tackling the need for a growing workforce, with the aim of providing professional development and employment to socially excluded groups. To ensure long term benefits to the workforce, every employee is provided with personal weekly social and professional monitoring.

### The Battle

The numerous problems faced by La Petite Reine have served both to develop the organisation's strengths, and to deepen its understanding of the issues it addresses and the relevance of its solution. The most prominent issue was to gain recognition of the potential of the "cargocycle" from logistics experts, demanding a great deal of conviction, technical expertise, and above all demonstration. To achieve this La Petite Reine has needed to optimise its vehicles, logistic flows and social support. Through doing this, it has reached the standards required by the logistics sector, and additionally designed a new and economically, ecologically and socially sustainable take on logistics.

### The way back home

La Petite Reine has achieved a considerable amount, but there is much left to be done. The potential of growth is huge, and La Petite Reine has many ambitions. The "cargocycles" are already operating in 5 major French cities: Paris, Rouen, Bordeaux, Dijon, Lyon, and in Geneva, and plans to extend the model throughout the country, and across Europe.

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## ■ Vitaever, Italy

*"Vitaever is the largest distributive hospital in Europe for cancer, with 3,300+ patients, 300+ professionals, and 1,300+ volunteers across 10 regions of Italy"*

[www.vitaever.com](http://www.vitaever.com)



### An unjust kingdom

Europe is currently experiencing a rapidly ageing population. Consequently there is an increase in patient demand for home based healthcare, and national governments must invest in developing new healthcare initiatives, particularly those which reduce the necessity of hospitalisation for chronic diseases. The ANT Foundation successfully developed the largest EU home-based cancer hospital with over 3,300 patients assisted in their homes, organized by 21 regional clusters throughout Italy. The ANT Hospital is composed of around 224 medical professionals, and 1,300 volunteers in support roles. This amounts to a complex system, affected by issues of communication limits, data and knowledge sharing, personnel and resource scheduling, and asset tracking. Nethical utilizes information and mobile technology to address these issues thereby helping ANT to offer the same care, benefits and efficiency of a traditional one-site hospital.

### Social innovation heroes

Nethical, based in Bologna, Italy, is focused on developing SaaS (software-as-a-service) technologies for remote healthcare providers. The company focuses both on optimizing the efficiency of healthcare in western countries as well as on providing powerful tools to less-developed countries, such as Serbia or Bangladesh. ANT Foundation is an Italian leading non-profit organization which has assisted over 78,000 patients in the advanced stages of cancer and their families since 1985. ANT offers free-of-charge professional medical assistance, drugs, food and psychology consultancy as well as disease prevention and screening programs. ANT has now launched several pilot programs across the EU.

### The innovation journey

The broad technical background of Nethical and the solid medical expertise of ANT Foundation have been combined to develop Vitaever. Launched in mid 2000, Vitaever provides cutting edge smart technology to track, manage and optimize distribution of personnel, assets and goods for both mobile healthcare services, and traditional one-site hospitals. Vitaever is distributed via Nethical's SaaS technology with no cost for installation, maintenance and server hardware.

### The battle

Several technical issues were faced during the Vitaever project. Open source technologies and core custom made blocks were mixed in order to address high performances and security. The development of the technology required several rounds of testing and a multidisciplinary team, composed of ANT doctors and Nethical technicians to convert ANT best practices into Vitaever procedures. This has been the right approach, as today this task force is still generating feedback for the final tuning of Vitaever.

### The way back home

The better version of Vitaever was completed in summer 2010, and today Vitaever is successfully tested by ANT early-adopters. Full adoption of the technology is planned for the end of 2010. Because of this collaboration, ANT has access to state-of-art technology, at prices under the market value. Nethical will cover its investment by commercialising Vitaever, and by using this technology as building blocks for future innovations. Nethical also plans to bring the Vitaever cost-saving model to developing countries, starting with Bangladesh, as a means to overcoming economic barriers to access of healthcare technology.

## ■ Your Identity – a change for legal rights, Romania

*"The fact that 96,4% of surveyed respondents have appreciated that these documents were important, and lacking them would impede them in exercising civil rights such as: the right to vote, the right to health care and the right to a legal job, proves that the project accomplished its meaning."*



### An unjust kingdom

"Your identity - a chance for legal rights", was a successful project launched in 2005, under the European Commission's pre-ascension financial assistance program, "Phare". The project's aim

was to address the need for identity documents for Roma people in Vrancea County, a group exposed to social exclusion because of the lack of documents proving their birth or marital status. The absence of these official documents makes it impossible to deal with the Romanian state authorities and also excludes the Roma people from exercising the rights derived from citizenship: social assistance, social security, political rights, and legal employment. Essentially, a person who was not registered at birth does not exist in terms of administration for the Romanian state. This explains the fact that in the 2002 statistical review of the Romanian population, 535140 of those surveyed said they were Roma, whilst research conducted on nationally representative samples estimate the number of Roma living in Romania at 1.5 million. Some of the consequences of this issue include human trafficking, illegal adoptions, and incomplete access to political, social and economic rights.

### **Social innovation heroes**

Before the project was launched, these issues were not on the public agenda. To begin to successfully address some of the issues surrounding the lack of Roma legal rights, many parties were involved. With Vrancea County Council as the project leader, local authorities, specialized services, and NGOs (Association "Rom for Rom" with the support of Panciu IBO Italy) were assembled. Leaders of Roma communities were given a significant role in ensuring the success of the project's activities.

### **The innovation journey**

Three main steps were taken to increase the legal rights of the Roma population in Vrancea County. The first step was providing information to the community and raising awareness of the importance of legal rights. Next, it was necessary to help the Roma population understand their legal rights. This was done using mobile station campaigns inside Roma communities, directly communicating with target group members. The final step was to provide free legal assistance to those who never had birth certificates, and did not exist in the Romanian state administration. Group members in this situation were helped and monitored through the process, from their identification to the issue of birth certificates. This way, procedures that could have lasted several years due to the bureaucracy of the system, were completed during the 10 months of the project. Furthermore, sociological research was conducted and awareness of the problems that Roma communities experience was raised both amongst the general public, and the relevant authorities.

The project has helped 1,113 Roma persons receive identification and civil status documents, allowing them to access the rights of Romanian citizenship. Local authorities have allocated funds to develop new projects for solving the problems of the Roma communities. The collaborative relationships between NGOs and the public sector, which was almost nonexistent at the beginning of the project, have been strengthened significantly and the social exclusion of Roma communities, due to the lack of identity documents, has been raised on the policy agenda.

### **The Battle**

The main problems which the project encountered were the bureaucracy of the Romanian state, the difficulties encountered during the process of birth registration, and the indifference of some public institutions regarding the issues. Strong support from both project partners, and the local media helped overcome these issues.

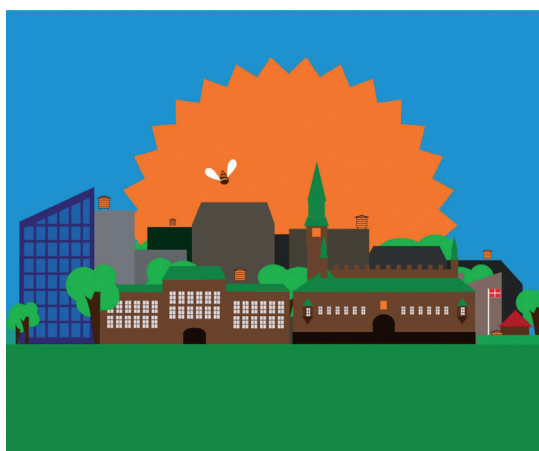
### The way back home

The lack of legal identity in Roma communities is now acknowledged as a problem by policy makers, who have developed local projects to continue the work that Vrancea County Council began. Other problems experienced by Roma communities, such as school enrolment levels, lack of utilities, and high levels of poverty and unemployment are now recognised by the Romanian public institutions. The Vrancea County Council has maintained the partnerships that were created during the project and together they are continuing their efforts in ensuring the social and legal inclusion of the Roma people.

### ■ The Copenhagen City Honey Cooperative, Denmark

*"The secret of our project has been to connect the remaining expert beekeepers with dynamic social projects and committed local businesses. By finding elegant ways to involve all the social layers of the city in creating a sustainable urban honey industry, we aim to create a city that literally buzzes with life"*

[www.bybi.dk](http://www.bybi.dk)



### An unjust kingdom

After the 2009 Climate Conference in Copenhagen, Oliver Maxwell met an emigrant beekeeper and began to learn more about the honey industry. Oliver was surprised by the extent of decline in the bee keeping industry across Europe. Bees can no longer survive without beekeepers. New agricultural methods, exotic bee diseases and climate change, coupled with a decrease in the number of traditional beekeepers, mean the Danish honey industry is under threat. As imported honey puts increasing pressure on the remaining locally produced honey, Oliver Maxwell decided to develop a new generation of city beekeepers.

### Social innovation heroes

Global crisis gave Oliver his impetus. The climate crisis and rising unemployment following the economic crisis in Denmark created an opportunity for Maxwell to create the honey cooperative. The challenge was to get the right people to meet and work together. Oliver began to spend winter evenings meeting beekeepers and biologists, and learning about bees. He brought together a group of development workers from housing associations and employment projects, leaders from businesses and from the municipality who could advise on how to access experts and resources. They all began to see the benefits of working together to build a cooperative and develop the honey industry in Denmark.

### The innovation journey

In the spring of 2009, they agreed on a structure for the cooperative. They planned to start five new bee farms, each one training 12 new beekeepers, bringing 15 new bee colonies to the city – that means three million new bees and 60 new beekeepers every year. In addition, they aimed to build a honey factory which would provide protected jobs in honey treatment, and to market and sell urban honey products to Copenhageners.

### The battle

To be successful, the cooperative must have the support of the already established bee keepers. The project's social objectives also needed to balance with its financial sustainability.

Beekeepers began to get interested and the project was endorsed by the local and national bee-keeper associations. With the help of pro bono legal and business support, they created a successful business model which became a template for other Danish social enterprises. Key businesses offered their roof spaces and grounds for beekeeping.

In August 2010, the project was formally launched. 30 beekeepers and development workers came together to join the association. The five main Association partners –Sydhavns Compagniet, Kofoeds Skole, Aktivitetscenter Sundholm, Copenhagen municipality, Områdesekretariatet Tingbjerg and Områdefornyelse Husum –are strongly committed and enthusiastic and provide financial and political support, as well as resources and know how.

### The way back home

"The Copenhagen City Honey Cooperative" will launch five projects in January 2011 which will provide training and employment to 60 individuals who will become Denmark's first new generation of beekeepers. The participants are identified by key partners that are already running social projects. Funding applications and business plans have been written and approved.

By reigniting consumers interested in traditional high quality Danish honey, Oliver Maxwell both helped save Denmark's honey industry, contributed to the wider Danish economy, creating employment opportunities for immigrants to Denmark who were struggling to access the mainstream labour market, and stimulated a new way for Danish people to live in a greener city, full of flowers, insects, vegetables and higher quality of life for its inhabitants.

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## ■ The Dreams Academy, Turkey

*"They ask if the blind can dream. Yes they do. It's those without dreams who are getting blind. In this fast flow it is our collective blindness not the individual lack of sight that we hesitate naming"*

[www.duslerakademisi.org](http://www.duslerakademisi.org)

### An unjust kingdom

In Turkey, people with disabilities are the invisible minority. The 8.5 million people with a disability



in Turkey face social, cultural and architectural barriers that prevent them from participating in society – that means 15% of the population are excluded. For people with disabilities, the journey to break free of the social constructs and obstacles that perpetuate the “disability problem” in Turkey is ongoing.

### Social innovation heroes

Ercan Tural, a scuba instructor, was studying languages in Germany. Through his studies, he learnt about social services in Germany. He saw the range of opportunities available and degree of inclusion of people with disabilities and became acutely aware of the gap that existed between the level of participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in German society and his home country, Turkey. If people with a disability could play a role in society in Germany, why could they not in Turkey?

### The innovation journey

Ercan used his love of the sea to demonstrate that an Alternative World, free of barriers for people with disabilities, was possible. Since 1998, Ercan and his students have taken around 2000 people with disabilities to discover diving through the project “Diving is Freedom”. The barriers that usually separated people with and without disabilities did not exist under water.

### The battle

Unfortunately, not everyone shared his belief that an Alternative World, free of barriers for people with disabilities, was possible. Many of the challenges Ercan faced were structural obstacles that impeded and resisted innovation in Turkey. Others challenged his ideas. So, Ercan tried something else. His “alternative” vision led him to set up “Alternative Camp” in 2002 - widening the sports choices available to people with disabilities beyond diving. Alternative Camp realises the dream of “sports for all” - bridging the gap among different abilities, ages, sexes, cultures and languages through the medium of sports. Over 7,000 people with disabilities from 250 local and global organizations and 1,000 volunteers from around the world have taken part. Alternative Camp has now been replicated across Turkey and has become a self-sustaining innovative agent of social change.

The vision of Alternative Camp has been embodied in the Alternative Life Association



(AYDER). AYDER has produced alternative, innovative and self-sustaining projects. Dreams Academy is the latest in a series of projects that provide “alternative” solutions for active involvement of people with disabilities in society. The latest Dreams academy project – the Social Inclusion Band - encourages “Arts & Music for All”.

### The way back home

Dreams Academy is the main provider of a continuous program of multidisciplinary activities (sports, painting, arts, and so on) for disabled people in Turkey – 70% of people with a disability in Turkey have been supported by Dreams Academy. Moreover, Dreams Academy activities are also having a political impact, influencing legislation around employment, education, sports and tourism. Dreams Academy is currently preparing “10 basic principles of barrier free life Turkey” - a declaration to be signed by public and private sector organizations as a commitment to the integration of disabled people. The journey goes on. The Dream for an Alternative world will continue as long as there are dreamers.

## ■ Aconchego Program, Portugal

*“Company for those who need, house for those who study... knowledge and social cohesion in an exchange of boundless affection between two generations in the construction of life projects with mutual sense”*



### An unjust kingdom

Oporto, a small city in the North of Portugal, is simultaneously both very young and very old. Its university and higher education institutions attract about 70,000 students each year – a significant proportion of which come from the surroundings of the city or abroad. Every year, many students are in need of temporary accommodation during the academic year. On the other hand, Oporto has one of the largest ageing populations in Portugal. Many of these older people suffer from loneliness and isolation, especially in the downtown area of the city.

### Social innovation heroes

In order to tackle these challenges, two institutions - Porto Social Foundation and Academic Federation of Porto – joined each other in 2004 to set up the Aconchego Program, a housing programme which matches older people who live on their own with students who are in need of accommodation.

Porto Social Foundation supports the city council in developing initiatives to improve the quality of life and the participation of the citizens. The Academic Federation of Porto supports students throughout their university life in many areas including finding accommodation, organising events, and sharing relevant information.



### The innovation journey

Aconchego Program is based on an intergenerational perspective. Seniors provide housing to university students in their homes and the students, while sharing their home with seniors, help them to overcome loneliness and isolation, improving the welfare of seniors and their families.

Students and the older people are interviewed by both organizations at the beginning of the matching process - key elements such as expectations, interests and past history of both parties are assessed. Location and house size are also taken into account in the matching process. Monitoring is an important part of the partnership - a technical and experienced team conduct regular home visits and telephone calls.



### The battle

The initial phase of integration is crucial for the success of the partnership and the matching process is constantly being refined.

One of the main challenges in developing Aconchego Program is to achieve better matching between the senior and the student. Most of the integrations succeed and failure is often only encountered in the initial moments. The matching process is therefore vital to the programme's success and refining this process has been difficult.

The Aconchego Program's success has also been one of its challenges. Great media coverage has increased demand for the programme from both seniors and students – balancing this demand has become increasingly difficult as the number of students in need of accommodation exceeds available homes.

### The way back home

From being an unpopular and unusual idea at its inception, the Aconchego Program has gained its own dynamic. As more and more countries run similar models in cities all over the world, matching students and older people has become a more accepted way to combat isolation of ageing populations and a lack of accommodation for students. Between 2004 and 2008, the demand came mainly from students but since 2008 the demand from seniors increased significantly. The reversal of the group's demand might be related with the relational nature of the programme, where trust and security are key elements. The programme also now attracts more middle and upper class old people, and lower class students for whom close relationships and ties of affection can be places of safety.

The Aconchego Program has already been replicated in Lisbon and in Coimbra.



## ■ The Digital Pioneers Fund & Academy, Netherlands

*"The Digital Pioneers fund was created to help those who are finding it difficult starting a non profit organization from scratch"*

[www.digitalepioniers.nl](http://www.digitalepioniers.nl)

# digitale Pioniers



### An Unjust Kingdom.

Sustainability, social cohesion, education, health care, culture and the arts have all been transformed since the digital revolution – with the help of social media, they can all be approached in new ways. The internet offers enormous potential for empowering civil society organisations and ad-hoc groups of citizens interested in influencing and shaping the society around them to work together to tackle problems related to these issues bottom-up. However, starting a social non-profit from scratch might be difficult...

### Social Innovation Heroes

Working with others to start a non profit organisation which can tackle some of society's biggest issues today can be a challenge without any money to get going, so the independent think tank KnowledgeLand worked with the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science to make a small-scale fund available to civil society Internet projects. In order not to put off people, like other funds, the application procedure for the "Digital Pioneers" fund attempts to be as accessible as possible and the turn-around time from submitting a proposal to receiving the first 80% of the grant sum is just six weeks. There are also very few formal prerequisites for getting support from the Digital Pioneers fund. The lack of formal requirements is compensated by close and intensive contact between the digital pioneers team at KnowledgeLand and the applicants.

### The Innovation Journey

Over the last 8 years the digital pioneers fund has supported more than 175 projects (many of them run by people or organisations who had never submitted a funding application before). The projects that have been supported with amounts between €5,000 and €32,000 cover a wide range of topics (from distributed noise pollution measurement networks, to online libraries for children with severe learning difficulties to online communities for migrants, and everything in-between and approaches (some have built software for others to re-use, some have produced content to highlight specific social issues while others have provided platforms to organize social participation and inclusion). More than 80% of these projects have been successful and together they generate more than 2 million visits per month.

For a lot of these projects, the Digital Pioneers fund has provided the incentive to realize their ideas and transform them into projects that would have otherwise remained just as an idea. Over the years, we have recognized that sustainability is the most important challenge for a number of these projects. So, in order to help the initiatives develop into sustainable projects, Kennisland has set up the Digital Pioneers Academy, an intensive four-month course that helps these initiatives to develop a business plan to make them sustainable without pro. have successfully graduated from the Digital Pioneers Academy running as independent organisations.



In December 2010 the Digital Pioneers fund (after 18 rounds) will come to an end. While the internet still offers enormous potential for civil society initiatives to contribute to society, Kennisland also recognizes that it is time to apply more focus on what kind of initiatives to support and nurture. In the last two years we have tailored our approach to initiatives working in the field of e-participation and open government and we are currently examining how to use the digital pioneers approach to strengthen the emerging field of citizen journalism.

*"Improved technology and altered circumstances have added years to our lives. SIEL Bleu's vision is to ensure that these years are spent full of life"*

[www.sielbleu.org](http://www.sielbleu.org)



By 2025 the over 65 population will have almost doubled. This unprecedented shift towards ageing populations has highlighted a systemic failure of the healthcare system and a critical shortage of elder-care and prevention programmes. Despite a wealth of evidence showing that physical activity can help reduce the risk of diseases and injuries and that it is more cost effective than curative treatment, health and cost benefits of preventive action are currently underestimated.

Yet, the injuries or diseases faced by older people are still seen as accidents and not the unavoidable acts of fate they are often presented as. Through research and showing the impact of its activities, Siel Bleu tries to make stakeholders and the society aware that injuries and other diseases are predictable and preventable. By integrating older people into group sessions of physical activity, Siel Bleu empowers them to become active participants in society, offering social links, physical autonomy, self confidence and an incentive for active behaviour.

### Social innovation heroes

Jean Michel Ricard met Siel Bleu's co-founder, Jean-Daniel Muller, during university. Together, they did an internship at an association providing home care services, giving physical exercise classes to the elderly. When they saw the joy and benefits they were able to bring to these people thanks to physical activity, they found their inspiration for Siel Bleu, which they founded as a non profit organization in 1997 after they graduated. Since then, Siel Bleu has offered fitness training programmes to elderly people in France, helping them to maintain the ability to function independently, improving endurance, resistance, flexibility and balance abilities and retaining their social connections.

### The innovation journey

As well as developing and running an array of physical activity programmes dedicated to older people, Siel Bleu also helps raise awareness of exercise and curative treatments for older people by building strong partnerships with French government authorities and ministries such as the departments of health, elderly people and sport. Siel Bleu also conducts research about the impact of physical activity in preventing diseases and works in partnership with research institutes (INSERM), the European Commission and other European governments, such as Irish and Cataluña governments.

### The battle

Siel Blue has already been replicated in Ireland and Belgium, but its main challenge now is to expand all over Europe, building a network of physical activity stakeholders who can deliver Siel Bleu's preventive programmes, in compliance with their high quality standards.

Ensuring quality assurance during the expansion process will be the biggest battle in their expansion. To help manage this, Siel Bleu will launch a training

and research institute to support the creation and dissemination of its programmes contents.



### The way back home

In 2009, Siel Bleu offered more than 105,000 interventions of physical activity, helping more than 60,000 weekly service users. Since its launch in 1997, Siel Bleu has grown to employ more than 250 staff (160 full time staff). As the ageing populations around the world increase, and with ambitions making the Siel Bleu's services available on a global scale, co-founders Jean Michel Ricard and Jean-Daniel Muller are just at the beginning of their journey.

# What's next?

## What's next for social innovation?

This initiative has shown that Europe is rich in social innovations – from raising educational standards in Germany through empowering parents in disadvantaged communities, to helping secure legal identity for thousands in Roma communities. It is also clear that Europe has a wealth of creative people who drive social innovations – from a scuba instructor in Turkey who is putting disability on the political agenda to the co founders of Siel Bleu, whose university internship was the inspiration for an organization that now runs in 3 European countries.

However, despite social innovation providing the opportunity for Europe to deal with societal challenges like climate change, energy and food security, health and an ageing population, this initiative has shown that social innovation must be further nurtured and supported in order for it to create an impact beyond the established social innovation community. This is why we are delighted with the recently published innovation strategy for the European Union, “Innovation Union”, includes a strong commitment to promoting social innovation in the coming years. We believe this commitment should support innovators on 3 levels:

### **Support for individual innovations and innovators**

Firstly, support is needed for the individual projects and innovators. The champions for change who submitted their projects to “This is European Social Innovation” are only a small number of the innovators in Europe and their peers are hard to reach. Stronger social innovation networks will not only help social innovators to identify themselves as such, they will enable innovators to connect into a mutually supportive community where they can learn from and share with their peers.

A European social innovation community would not only enable currently disparate individuals to create a common language and establish, share and disseminate best practice and new models. It would also build capacity. A lack of training and capacity for social innovators is often outlined as a barrier for social innovations to grow. A strong community would help those involved in social innovation share skills and resources, transforming the currently weak and fragmented capacity which constrains effective innovations from flourishing and growing.

### **Creating an environment for social innovation to flourish**

Secondly, we need to create enabling conditions for social innovations to thrive. Many of the submissions for this initiative identify the need for funding that is better suited to social innovation. This means increased availability of reliable funding sources which are bureaucratically light, and are available at every stage of the innovation process – from conceptualizing, testing, and assessing to scaling potential solutions. European funding is currently one of the largest sources of income for early stage projects, so large institutions must also create a safe space for innovation. Finance must be available for proof of concept testing and prototyping, and the associated risks must be managed.

In addition, the political climate must be supportive at every level, not only through policies and favourable commissioning. In fact, it was political support from influential individuals and institutions that was highlighted as a key factor behind the success of many of the projects that were submitted as part of this initiative.

### **Showcasing best practice through stories and rich case studies**

Widespread adoption of social innovation will not happen without support from government, business, civil society organisations, and citizens across Europe. And that won't happen without social innovations being visible. A better understanding of social innovation across all actors in Europe will be best achieved through showcasing concrete examples of social innovation projects, in various forms and forums. We need to raise awareness of a social innovation approach in order for actors from different sectors to engage with each other productively, without scepticism, and fear of competition. We need to raise the profile of social innovation in Europe and we hope "This is European Social Innovation" has begun to encourage more people to capitalise on the value of social innovation to create a better Europe.

## What's next for our selected projects?

The 10 selected projects will now be invited to a workshop at the Social Innovation Park in Bilbao, cited by some as the world's first Social Silicon Valley. The Social Innovation Park is a vibrant and unique industrial park for social businesses, NGOs and co-operatives committed to tackling social problems in Bilbao. The goal of the workshop is to identify ways and means to scale up and/or replicate the 10 flagship initiatives working in collaboration with the other winners, partners and potential investors. The participants will also design a process of permanent collaboration to identify new large scale opportunities.

Thanks to everyone who shared their inspiring stories

## Notes

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### Acknowledgements

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"This is European Social Innovation" is deeply grateful to everyone who took part by submitting their inspiring stories. With over 100 entries, the creativity and diversity of the entries was most impressive and the jury found it very difficult to only select 10 stories to be showcased in this booklet. As the challenges we face in society increase, creativity and social innovation will become more and more important for a prosperous Europe. We hope all of these stories will provide inspiration to many more people across Europe to form new partnerships, and work together to transform their communities. Congratulations to all of you!

## Quotes from the Jury

*"We need people, institutions and governments to innovate, to find new ways of solving today's social problems. And we have to support those that are trying. We must highlight their work, help them with funds, and offer our networks to them. They, the social innovators, are the key actors for social development and by supporting them we will be contributing to building up a better world."*

**Rosa Gallego, Asociacion Espanola de Fundaciones and DAFNE**

*"The breadth, depth and potential of the projects is just unbelievable and breathtaking."*

**Simona Paravani, HSBC Global Asset Management**

*"I want to thank all those who make Europe more human and to encourage all those - including me - who want to do something similar"*

**Peter Dröll, European Commission**

*"Europe has great traditions of social innovation - but in recent years innovation has often been talked about as if it's only for scientists and technologists. This initiative was designed to showcase a selection of current examples of radical innovation taking place below the radar across Europe - to help people understand what social innovation is and why it matters so much to a continent facing urgent challenges of ageing, jobs and climate change."*

**Geoff Mulgan, The Young Foundation**

*"Being part of this jury has been an inspiring experience that left me with several new ideas that were sparked as I read all the entries. It has made me even more convinced that there is huge need for similar initiatives like this one. Helping us learn from successes of others should be supported more, rather than investing in re-inventing the wheel. Helping others to replicate and scale existing innovations will bring benefit to us all, creating wide spread social change."*

**Ewa Konczal, Ashoka Poland**

*"Innovation and social: two essential words to highlight that the progress also comes from organizations which placed the human being as 'actor of their development. What is happening in Europe in order to provide Social Innovation is of an incredible wealth, we have received so many high quality projects that it's wasn't easy to retain only 10"*

**Alain Coheur, Social Economy Europe**

*"Disruptive change - and Europe is getting a lot of that- is sometimes the source for innovation. If you have little money you are forced to think differently. That is why Europe's civil society is so great at social innovation."*

**Stephen Bubb, ACEVO and Social Investment Business**

*"This initiative has shown just how rich Europe is in social innovations. It shows the imagination and potential of Europe to tackle some of today's biggest societal challenges. SIX will continue to work with its partners in Europe, and throughout the rest of the world, to ensure the concept of innovation includes social innovation and that it is recognised at the highest political levels – just as it is in Europe's Innovation Union . Thank you to everyone in Europe who is playing their part to make Europe truly innovative."*

**Diogo Vasconcelos, Cisco and SIX Chair**