



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 16 May 2014

Social Innovation: Conference on Mobilising Innovation for a More Social Europe

The European Commission is hosting a high level conference on [Mobilising Social Policy Innovation on the 19 and 20 May in Brussels](#). The conference will discuss how social policy innovation helps to catalyse social policy reforms for better economic and social outcomes. It will present experiences gained across the EU and will look at how social policy innovations can best contribute to achieving the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#) employment and social goals.

Besides the possibilities offered by the EU funds such as the [European Social Fund](#), the European Commission is also stepping up its direct support to social policy innovation through annual calls for proposals worth €9.2 million from the [Programme for Employment and Social Innovation](#) (EaSI).

The conference will bring together over 300 key stakeholders from all over Europe, including representatives from national, regional and local authorities, NGOs, social entrepreneurs, social service providers, and academics. The diversity of participants will ensure new insights to social policy innovation, including the organisation and delivery of social services.

European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion László Andor will give the opening address. The high level speakers include Pedro Mota Soares, Portuguese Minister for Solidarity, Employment and Social Security, Benoit Hamon (tbc), French Minister for Education, Research and Social Economy, Heinz K. Becker, Member of the European Parliament, and Professor Frank Vandenbroucke, as well as social entrepreneurs from the project [Building a European network of Incubators for Social Policy](#) (Benisi).

Ahead of the conference, Commissioner Andor said *"The current economic and social situation calls for new, innovative approaches in the way our social systems are shaped to better address the needs of individuals and of our changing societies. We have underlined in our Social Investment Package that social policy innovation and social enterprises play a key role in this regard. The Conference will be an opportunity to examine how the European Union can further support Member States' efforts to apply social policy innovation and experimentation, in terms of knowledge-sharing, funding, capacity building and advisory services. This support should help the Member States to better deliver on the objectives we have set in the Europe 2020 strategy."*

A total of 23 innovative projects will be showcased at the conference, in particular in the following areas:

- Social entrepreneurs and innovative partnerships: the [Social Innovation Bank](#) in **Portugal** shows how funding social entrepreneurs can help society to deliver on unmet social needs.
- Innovation in social services: a [health care innovation project](#) in **Finland** shows that a new organisation of social services has made health care services available to all citizens, across regions.
- Innovation in social services is also present in the "[Solidarity Now Centre](#)" in **Greece**. The centre provides fundamental services to people most in need, covering everything from legal advice and medical doctors to micro-financing and job guidance.

Forthcoming call for proposals

The call for proposals, under the heading "Social policy innovations supporting reforms in social services", will be launched shortly, and will focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection systems through integration of social services (one-stop-shops), better targeting of benefits and the creation and the use of innovative partnerships.

Background

In the [Social Investment Package](#) (SIP) adopted in February 2013, the European Commission called on Member States to prioritise social investment and to modernise their welfare states. It offered guidance on the efficient and effective use of social budgets and how to put to the best use EU available financial support, notably from the European Social Fund.

Social Policy Innovation in Member States will be best supported through the new [Programme for Employment and Social Innovation](#) (EaSI), adopted by the Council in December ([IP/13/1212](#)). It will make €920 million available for the 2014-2020 period, integrating and extending the coverage of three existing financial instruments: the Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity ([Progress](#)), the European network of Public Employment Services [EURES](#) and the [European Progress Microfinance Facility](#) (now extended to include Social entrepreneurship).

A specific budget of around €100 million will be devoted to test new solutions for employment and social policies in critical areas such as youth employment or inclusion. The most successful can be implemented with the support of the European Social Fund (ESF).

For more information

[Conference on Social Policy Innovation](#)

[László Andor's website](#)

[Follow László Andor on Twitter](#)

Subscribe to the European Commission's free e-mail [newsletter on employment, social affairs and inclusion](#)

Contacts :

[Jonathan Todd](#) (+32 2 299 41 07)

[Cécile Dubois](#) (+32 2 295 18 83)

For the public: **Europe Direct** by phone **00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11** or by [e-mail](#)