



Final recommendations

The European strategy 2020 made innovation one of its priorities. ELISAN welcomes and sincerely hopes that this dimension is reflected and valued even in the social dimension. Indeed, many European local authorities and especially local authorities members of ELISAN implement innovative projects in the social sphere. In doing so, they provide creative and innovative answers (indicators, tools, experiences and so on) to social needs in Europe. More often, these innovation can be transmitted – if adapted – to other regions, other countries, but they have to be encouraged.

Considering that :

On 12th May 2011, a report by Judith A. Merkies European member of the parliament was adopted by the European Parliament. Untitled “Innovation union : transforming Europe for the world after crisis”, it points out that citizens are at the heart of innovation process and it also points out that social innovation consists in finding new effective solutions to meet the need of the society.

The report also explains the role played by the social economy sector in social innovation, by developing and implementing ways to meet the needs that are not taken into account by the market and conventional forms of companies. Judith A. Merkies also highlights the importance of European regions and local authorities as key actors in innovation but also on the future cohesion and employment policies.

The Commission has stressed many times that we cannot have technological innovation without social innovation. Each economic activity must contribute to the development of human resources, such as human capital, lifelong learning, non-discrimination, structural change and cross border social dialogue.

Last 17th march 2011, the European Commission also launched the "Social Europe Innovation Initiative", to encourage exchange of experiences and develop a database of resources and information on organizations and methods of work of stakeholders involved in innovative projects. ELISAN has already created such a database for over a year now, and it should properly be valued.

More generally, the European Commission, looking at the current context of growing social demands and pressure on public spending, believes that it is vital that the actors of social policies improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services and social benefits .



In this context, the European commission believes that the participation of citizens is a key action, to improve services and social action in general (empowerment concept).

European commission through the Europe 2020 Strategy must boost creativity and should better mainstream social objectives into all aspects of our lives and of our policies.

ELISAN and its members

ELISAN and its members have welcomed the proposals of the European Union on the guiding principles for the period 2014 - 2020 which contain specific measures to test new innovations and facilitate reforms, such as the program for social change and social innovation, PROGRESS, the European Social Fund and so on.

For ELISAN

Innovation is indivisible from experimentation in order to improve social services but also to implement new methods of management services or facilities, assistance benefit to users. Experimentation is a first important step before generalization, or modeling.

The principles that should guide the priority of innovation and experimentation are:

- ◆ Equal access to social rights that should be part of an effective European social citizenship,
- ◆ Access to quality services for all, regardless the territory
- ◆ Facilitating the proximity of the user, guaranteeing access to all,
- ◆ Facilitate the daily life of citizens on social issues in cross border areas, confronted by a diversity of national standards.
- ◆ Take particularly into account the outermost regions through a better access to financial tools to help innovation.
- ◆ Facilitate investment financial tools of the EU, in public-private partnerships. Awareness on social issues and answers requires the involvement of all stakeholders – public and private ones - at all levels. ELISAN call private companies to be more specifically concerned about their societal responsibility.
- ◆ Facilitate the knowledge and operational implementation of existing tools such as social clauses in public procurements which smooth the progress of inclusion.
- ◆ Promote the work between local authorities and partners of social economy, as well as with private companies



- ◆ Encourage experimentation in the field of fight against financial precariousness, fuel poverty.
- ◆ Enhance innovation through the concept of sustainable social development, based on its social, economical and environmental aspects.
- ◆ Reinforce the database of European social innovation (such as the one developed by ELISAN).
- ◆ Strengthen financial tools (European Structural Funds to specific programs) for European local authorities, to help them develop social innovation and social experimentation.
- ◆ Promote extensive work in innovation through European networks such as ELISAN that could manage a budget for a set of proposed programs, and objectives to be achieved.
- ◆ Rely on European networks of cities and regions to create a dialogue with European institutions, to compare the different approaches on social innovation on the territories, and to consider the European local authorities as privileged partners of the European Union in the field of social innovation.

For ELISAN

For ELISAN, Europe needs to have financial resources which will help the development of experiments but also their evaluation and, if necessary, refocusing the policies implemented. In this context, ELISAN also supports the establishment of a European Charter of Social Innovation.

For ELISAN the work of proximity of European local authorities contribute to provide, to the citizens, services of general interest of quality, accessible to all in a logic of proximity and social diversity: they guarantee social and territorial cohesion. These social services for the people most at risk must be considered **as essential social services**. ELISAN requires that the nature and characteristics of social services of general interest to be preserved, clear, considered and recognized. Such recognition would allow local authorities in Europe to ensure their duties in a flexible framework for the development of their innovative potential.

Document approved by the Board of Directors of ELISAN on November 7, 2011 in Brussels and presented to the participants of the European Conference held on November 8, 2011 at the Committee of the Regions - Brussels.