

YouthProAktiv Declaration of Young Europeans on Social entrepreneurship

YouthProAktiv is a coalition of young people promoting a culture of proactivity and entrepreneurship in education and policy.

More than a buzz word, entrepreneurship has reached such levels of appreciation and respect that it is now even glamourize. Famous entrepreneurs are being exposed as models for young people and they inspire the new generation far beyond the creation of their venture.

The economic environment, and the different crisis that emerged from it, also raised the attention on this proactive approach to that is entrepreneurship. Although it is not new, Entrepreneurship grew lately to different sectors, allowing individuals to achieve their dreams and change our society. Indeed, from startups to scaled-up, companies are ever-more created to answer a social, cultural or environmental issues. This form of engagement find its strenght in the dynamism, creativity and boldness of individuals who are convinced that proactivity mixed with engagement, are the way to make our societies progress.

Representing young European entrepreneurs, social does, NGO builders, young innovators, we, at YouthProAktiv, believe that social entrepreneurship should hold a a preeminent place in the economic, social and political spheres. Consequently,

- 1) We call for European decision-makers to elaborate a new Social enterprise initiative, the last one dating having been launched in 2011. Although we recognize the importance that this initiative had on fostering a more open and inclusive environment for social startups, there should be a renewed approach to to help spur upcoming ventures;
- 2) We invite the OECD and European Commission to accelerate their research on the best practices regarding social entrepreneurship in European countries. Once all countries will have been covered, the European commission should set up an online platform, allowing the sharing of best-practices in different sectors and countries;
- 3) We encourage the European Commission to launch a wide and ambitious campaign across Europe to promote social entrepreneurship. This campaign should include concrete tools to guide member states on how they could elaborate friendly legislative frameworks;

- 4) We urge European policy-makers to establish a fund reserved for social entrepreneurs. Funding being one of the most important challenge when founding a startup, capital should be made more accessible to help kick-start new projects or scale-up existing ones. It's not only a message to entrepreneurs, its a general message that sent that taking risk to solve social issues is valued and encouraged;
- 5) We further urge European policy-makers to alleviate the heavy regulatory burden that weights on social entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs to be. This red tape discourage individuals to take the leap and work on their projects. Becoming an entrepreneur involves giving a lot of time, efforts and energy, all of these should not be spent on administratives forms, but on improving society;
- 6) We encourage all actors of the public sector to increase their collaboration with social entrepreneurs. Often innovators and problems-solvers, social entrepreneurs could bring a new spark in the activities of the corporate sector, thus addressing other sets of social issues. The European commission could help by developping a networking platform based on supply and demand for service provision;
- 7) We request from the European commission that it upgrades its « buy social » that was also adopted in 2011. A initiative could be adopted to concretely encourage social entrepreneurship through public procurement. It would also increase the consideration for socially responsible project and increase social inclusion;
- 8) We request that the European policy makers and their national counterparts include in their formal education curriculum entrepreneurship classes, with a specific module on social entrepreneurship. This module should include various teachings on soft and digital skills, while focusing of leadership and productivity.

Social entrepreneurs are the new partners on which policy-makers can count to adress the most pressing issues we are facing. Not only should they embrace their work, they should also elaborate policies and legislative frameworks to facilitate their progress and the birth of new startups.

As mentionned previously, social entrepreneurship is expanding to all sectors, which means that all stakeholders have the responsibility to collaborate and share best practices in order to allow their sector to benefit as much as possible from the dynamism, creativity and problem-solving that it brings. We are far from having reach the full potential of social entrepreneurship, the time is just right to give our social entrepreneurs the environment and support the need to change our society.