



Innovating innovation by research - 100 years after Schumpeter
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Vienna Declaration: The most needed social innovations and related research topics

*"For most of human history, reality was nature...
Then reality became technics, tools, and things made by men...
Now reality is primarily the social world experienced through the
reciprocal consciousness of self and others."*

Daniel Bell, The Coming of Post-Industrial Society (1973)

1. Rationale of the Declaration

In response to major societal challenges the Europe 2020 strategy sets measurable targets such as **Employment** of 75% of the workforce, investment of 3% of the EU GDP in **Research, Development and Innovation** (RDI), adapting to the challenges of **Climate Change** (20% less greenhouse gas emissions, 20% increase in energy efficiency, 20% of energy from renewable resources), reducing school drop-out rates below 10% and enabling 40% of age cohorts to complete third level **Education**, and reducing the number of people in or at risk of **Poverty and Social Exclusion** by 20 million.

To aim at such specified targets involves the determination of a multiplicity of objectives and the need to co-ordinate scientific as well as practical activities in the wide domains of employment, RDI, climate change, education, and social inclusion. Against the backdrop of prevailing politics of innovation, the contours of a new innovation paradigm with increasing significance of social innovation are becoming visible. The tracks of international research on innovation demonstrate that the technology-oriented paradigm – shaped by the industrial society – does not cover the broad range of innovations indispensable in the transition from an industrial to a knowledge and services-based society: Such fundamental societal changes require a paradigm shift of the innovation system.

This new innovation paradigm – as described by the experts of the OECD Study "New nature of innovation" – is essentially characterised by the opening of the innovation process to society. Alongside companies, universities and research institutes, citizens and customers become relevant actors of innovation processes. Terms and concepts such as open innovation, user-led innovation, customer integration and innovation networks reflect aspects of this development. Based on these trends innovation becomes a general social phenomenon and increasingly influences all walks of life.

Social innovations are needed and can be found in wide domains of the society, such as from the areas of services to the social economy and creative industries. In light of the increasing importance of social innovation, the conference looked at the theoretical concepts, areas of empirical research, concepts and developments in the field of social innovation. What is required here is to redraw boundaries (both in terms of differences as well as overlaps and interactions) between business innovations and new technologies on the one hand, social innovations on the other hand. Increasingly, innovation blossoms where the sectors converge.

Innovations in technology and business are imperative; yet in order to reap their full potential, and at the same time creating social development that is beneficial to cultures as inclusive as diverse, social innovations will make the difference: There is a lot of evidence that social innovation will become of growing importance not only with regard to social integration and equal opportunities but also with regard to preserving and expanding the innovative capacity of companies and society as a whole.

The most urgent and important innovations in the 21st century will take place in the social field. This opens up the necessity as well as possibilities for social sciences to find new roles and relevance by generating knowledge applicable to new dynamics and structures of contemporary and future societies.

The **Vienna Declaration** is the first and immediate **“Core Deliverable” of the conference**, created and established during the conference by joint efforts of all participants.

The topics selected and prioritised do not represent the completion of the process of determining the most needed social innovations and the corresponding research issues. In fact, the whole operation was built on being *courageous enough to start the process* of getting there, while at the same time remaining *modest enough to know that this is just a beginning*. It is perceived and shall be read, commented and considered as the starting point in further clarification, specification, and operationalisation of important research topics social sciences shall deal with in an attempt to support processes of identification, development and implementation of the most needed social innovation of the 21st century. In addition, of course, social sciences also are requested to also study, analyse, and assess the societal impact of innovations in general, and of social innovations in particular.

2. The making of the Vienna Declaration

In preparatory stages of the conference **Challenge Social Innovation** deliberations took place on what could be done to strengthen the social sciences’ capacity to play a prolific role in conceptualising and research of social innovations, and thus to favour desirable development of the globalised knowledge society. This led to the idea of a **Vienna Declaration** that should *identify critical areas of social and scientific development and state a number of equally important corresponding research topics*.

It was decided among the organisers of the conference, to make the gathering a real working conference, asking the Chairs of the Parallel Sessions, Speakers and all Participants to tune in to the ambitious aim of stating what they consider most relevant social innovations and related research topics in the thematic areas in any of the respective Parallel Sessions.

What was to be considered most important should be gauged against three main criteria:

- The *novelty of a solution proposed* to address a critical issue referring to the thematic core of the Parallel Session
- The *scientific significance* of research in the field proposed
- The *social relevance* of the solution and impact expected

The **Vienna Declaration** now consists of prioritised research topics which were first proposed by the participants in the 14 thematic Parallel Sessions the conference consisted of. In these sessions a number of four research questions or topics – that should be supportive to the analysis, identification or implementation of relevant social innovations in the thematic field – were established. Thereafter, in dedicated plenary voting sessions, all participants of the conference voted for their favourite topics and thus determined the list of the 14 most important research topics – according to the conference **Challenge Social Innovation**.

The full documentation of all 56 topics and the detailed results of the voting (facilitated by using a digital voting technology) can be found in the document called ‘Declaration documents’.

3. Results: The 14 prioritised research topics concerning social Innovations in the areas of the 14 Parallel Sessions

PS 1.1: Social innovation and social economy (entrepreneurship)

Topical issue voted to the first place by 33%:

- *We need a wider, more inclusive definition of social innovation, what is it and what is it not, including a better comprehension of the role of the social economy, civil society, business firms and the State.*

PS 1.2: Social innovation and for-profit business

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 42 %

- *Business Innovation as social process through new collaboration formats and organisational structures*

PS 1.3: Society 2.0 and social innovation

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 41 %

- *What are opportunities and risks of social media for enabling (large scale, systemic) social innovation*

PS 1.4: Innovations in services and social innovation

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 33 %

- *Integrating complimentary concepts of service innovations and social innovations*

PS 1.5: Measuring social innovation

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 53 %

- *More active contributions of social sciences in conceptualization of ways, how social impact of technology and social resources for innovation can be monitored, assessed and measured.*

PS 1.6: Social innovation and demographic change

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 53 %

- *Lifelong learning, work and intergenerational solidarity as components of societally engaged ageing*

PS 1.7: Social innovation for inclusion and integration

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 36 %

- *Rigourously test promising practises (establish multi-national evidence-base) before scaling up social innovations (implementation, skills, financing, mainstreaming)*

PS 2.1: Cross-sectoral approaches to social innovation

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 35 %

- *Reinventing the state (including multi-scalar coordination and more receptive public governance bodies).*

PS 2.2: Social innovation and sustainable regional development in emerging economies

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 46 %

- *How and when does social innovation create value?*

PS 2.3: Diversity, democracy, participation: Which lessons to learn from (education) research?

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 37 %

- *Which new indicators can be developed for measuring the short-term and long-term effects of the educational system (like quality of life, well-being, innovativeness)?*

PS 2.4: Social innovation and development (overcoming poverty and pauperisation, mini-credits)

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 41 %

- *Popular Participation and self-management as central element for social innovation*

PS 2.5: Social sciences (including economic sciences) and social innovation

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 32 %

- *Develop new approaches and competencies of social sciences to contribute actively to the practical implementation of social innovation*

PS 2.6: Innovate the concept – the humanities and social innovation

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 27 %

- *How best to harness the distinctive contributions of Humanities-based knowledge and methods of enquiry (time: history; ideas and concepts: philosophies and worldviews; communication: linguistics etc.) for successful social innovation initiatives?*

PS 2.7: Social innovation at the workplace

Topical issue, voted to the first place by 38 %

- *Societal challenges such as empowerment, active ageing, health, skills, diversity and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups are centrally addressed through work, and thus require social innovation in the workplace leading to smarter and better working.*

4. Making use of the Vienna Declaration

There are three main ways to build on the results achieved by the conference **Challenge Social Innovation**.

4.1 Discussion of the content, scope, meaning and intention

To collect questions, recommendations, comments of support and critical assessment alike, the first and unchanged result of the identification, wording and voting processes of the **Vienna Declaration** is published for discussion in an open forum at www.socialinnovation2011.eu.

Any entry in this forum from 1st until 31st of Oct. 2011 will be recorded and analysed by the Steering Committee, feeding in to the revised and commented version of the **Vienna Declaration** in the first week of November.

Following the revision of the **Vienna Declaration** in November 2011, the forum will remain open for further discussion, provision of comments and dissemination through communication channels in science, the wider public, printed and digital media including Web 2.0.

4.2 Providing input and proposing directions concerning research and innovation policy makers

The revised version taking into account suggestions and remarks to the initial version, will be broadly published and brought to personal attention of EC Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Mrs. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, on Nov. 11th, 2011 in London.

Furthermore, the **Vienna Declaration**, debates and follow-up statements and papers will be fed in the development of research programmes in Horizon 2020 relevant to Social Sciences and Humanities, activities under the Flagship Initiative Innovation Union under Europe 2020, and other European measures concerning science, research and innovation.

Beyond Europe, the Vienna Declaration and all its documents will be brought to the attention of the OECD LEED Forum on Social Innovation and the upcoming Social Innovation Programme of UNESCO.

Moreover, there may appear possibilities to discuss and promote the whole or parts of the **Vienna Declaration** in the context of research policy strategies or programmes on national or regional and university levels. At this stage of development, it is neither possible to predict a certain impact in research and innovation support programmes, nor is there any guaranty that policy makers will really take into account proposed topics highlighted in the **Vienna Declaration**. However, the **Vienna Declaration** is the first such document, indicating research topics pertaining to social innovation, worked out by an impressingly large number of international social innovation experts.

4.3 Formation of a world-wide community of researchers and scholars in social innovation

The sensational high interest in **Challenge Social Innovation** – with 371 participants registered and many more who could not register any more because of extreme overbooking – together with high standards of presentations, discussions, and results delivered, emphatically call for establishing further collaboration and community building.

Beyond the initial stage of providing feed back to participants, the facilitation of mutual communication through the discussion forum focused on the **Vienna Declaration**, and informal networks stipulated as usually by such a conference, there is a second stage of potentially institutionalised liaison and cooperation already in place: ZSI (Josef Hochgerner) and sfs TUDO (Hans-Werner Franz, Jürgen Howaldt) are the proponents of the **European School of Social innovation** (ESSI), established as an *association* according to Austrian law in September 2011.

The **European School of Social Innovation**, formally based in Vienna, is conceived as an international **Competence Network**, reaching out to European and global scholars and institutions involved in social innovation research, academic education and vocational training. The School, comprising and co-ordinating activities in research and education, is not called a European School because it should be confined to European researchers, students and institutions. On the contrary, it will be open for inter-continental participation (courses and study programmes lectured in English), yet with a specific focus on the conditions and sources of social innovations rooted in European social systems.

The debates during the conference and the 14 prioritised research topics concerning social innovation clearly illustrate that until recently the area of social innovation has been virtually ignored as an independent phenomenon in socio-economic research on innovation. Social innovation rarely appears as a specific and defined term with a clearly delineated scope. Mostly it is used as a sort of descriptive metaphor in the context of social and technical change. We have to admit that social innovation currently is a term that almost everybody likes, but a precise and broadly accepted definition is still missing.

The European School of Social Innovation shall help to correct this defect by establishing an international research community, enabling further scientific debates and develop a theoretically sound concept of social innovation. We see a growing number of renowned research institutes all around the world engaging in scientific research on social innovation. Many researchers from these institutes have been with us at the conference. Henceforth, much will depend on realigning competencies of social sciences and specialised social scientists by joint efforts to analysing and lecturing on the development and integration of innovations in general, as well as to improve concepts, knowledge and research on social innovation in particular.

The research topics identified, and 14 of them prioritised by the participants of Challenge Social Innovation, indicate thematic guidelines for research and education activities in the framework of the **European School of Social Innovation**. At the same time, participants of the conference represent a world-wide network of experts, including capacities to act as faculty of the **European School of Social Innovation**, researchers and communicators of social innovation to collectively improve scientific and research competencies in the field.

The proponents will organise a formal inaugural meeting later this year to establish the Board and other Organs of the Association, and to kick-off first concrete activities to become executed during 2012: A Summer School of Social Innovation, and the development and implementation of B.A. and M.A. Curricula, later to be followed by Ph.D. study programmes as well. Moreover, as there is not yet institutional funding, ESSI will seek appropriate forms of private and public sponsorship, organisational connections on European and where applicable national levels.

Expressions of interest, recommendations, encouragement and certainly support of any kind are welcome and highly appreciated!

Please use the forum to post and communicate overall comments pertaining to the **Vienna Declaration** in general, or to the **European School of Social Innovation** in particular.

In case of specific inquiries or proposals you might like to convey, please contact any one of us:

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