

Report on the European Social Innovation Policy Framework in Light of Third Sector & Civil Society Actors

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ITSSOIN

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Executive summary

This report consists of two separate parts. Part 1 provides an overview of the links between the discourses on social innovation and the third sector within EU-level policies. Part 2 concerns the discourses on social innovation and the third sector in the domestic policy landscapes in each of the nine EU countries involved. For both parts a literature list is provided and the report ends with a short conclusion.

The screening of previous literature, existing policies, and recent trends in part 1 of the report reveals that up to now there is only little research on the connection (identified for this project) between social innovation policy and civil society. In only a few EU-projects clear links are established between social innovation and third sector or civil society, some of which rather connect social innovation to social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, while other projects associate social innovation to the idea of hybrid organisations. In policy research conducted on the basis of a social enterprise perspective, it has been argued that the EU should primarily focus on policy and support of social enterprises. EU policy streams on social innovation emphasise that the third sector is an important actor for social innovation but some of the initiatives aim at the more recent and still not clearly defined concepts of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs, rather than explicitly at civil society organisations and civic engagement.

The nexus between policy, social innovation, and the third sector is most evident on policy level in the two flagship initiatives, the Innovation Union and the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion which are developed, organised and directed by different EU bodies. The initiatives regarding social innovation and the third sector at the EU-level focus on raising awareness or on legislative and more regulative changes that potentially may have a more direct impact on the development of the field and the practice of social innovation.

In part 2, our research teams in the nine EU countries (the Czech Republic, Denmark, UK, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden) sought to provide an overview of the nexus between policy, the third sector, and social innovation. In the report, our teams present examples of support structures and reforms and describe the overall trends. The way in which the social innovation concept and related policies have been disseminated within domestic policies clearly differs across these countries. The result of our study indicates that the social innovation concept primarily migrated from EU to the various domestic policy landscapes where it is adjusted in various different ways, rather than simply disseminated in a direct form in the different country-specific environments and policy fields.

However, our primary preliminary finding is that the EU policy initiatives on this issue are far from being fully implemented in the different countries. In some of the countries and policy fields, social innovation is used as a direct vehicle for social and economic development much in line with the EU policies' intentions, while in other countries the concept and related policies are still more or less non-existent.

The countries examined within our research not only show very different levels of policy impact in this area, but also exhibit a large variation with regard to the existing linkages between the policy discourses on social innovation and the third sector. In almost all countries the third sector is identified and recognised as an actor that is in some sense relevant for social innovation. In some cases this is done by associating its function with the definition of social innovation, in other cases this relation becomes visible where the third sector or civil society actors are described as actors within social innovation policy processes. Within the framework

of the social innovation discourse, the third sector actors are, in some countries and fields, regarded as important, primarily in their role as providers of welfare services; in other countries, however, they are rather considered to be important because they give voice or provide advocacy to vulnerable groups and are therefore also seen as important platforms expected to influence the development of social innovation.

The current lively discussion regarding the significance of social innovation in the European policy framework and the role of the third sector or civil society in this field in some of the countries, pinpoint especially important issues such as sustainability of the initiatives, the independence of the organisations as well as the role and character of the relations with the state or public sector and the business world. There is, however, still an absence of research focussing on social innovation policies, initiatives, and support structures - issues with regard to which we lack even the most basic knowledge, for example as to the spread, translation, and impact of the initiatives.

Part 1 – The EU level

1. Introduction

This report highlights the main policy frameworks and trends on social innovation existing at the level of the European Union as well as how the initiatives at this level migrated and disseminated to the national level. These ‘policy streams’ are relevant, since they set the conditions for the third sector and its organisations in this field, and for the further development of the European social innovation framework and landscape.

According to Kingdon’s (1995) stream theory, various forms of entrepreneurs are able to grasp the opportunities when so called policy windows open. Such policy windows most likely open when the three streams of politics, policy, and problem, align in favour of the specific entrepreneur and its mission. Kendall et al (2009) successfully use Kingdon’s theoretical framework in their ‘Handbook on Third Sector Policy in Europe’, where the overall aim is to understand policy processes related to third sector actors at different levels and in different policy fields in Europe.

It is important to emphasise that it is not possible to identify a simple or clear transfer or dissemination of the policies on social innovation developed on EU level neither to individual countries nor to specific policy fields. The so far limited but still visible impact is probably better described in terms of an on-going translation process (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2006; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008), where frames and individual policy components in the individual national or specific field environments are in different ways altered, merged, and fused with the frames and components of the new policy initiatives and structures.

To date, we mostly find investigation that is connected to but not explicitly targeted at social innovation policies. Researchers discuss, for instance, the introduction of new legal forms for social enterprises (Galera & Borzaga, 2009; Meyer & Jepperson, 2000) or investigate the emergence of social investment markets (Edery, 2006; Geobey, Westley, & Weber, 2012; Moore, Westley & Nicholls, 2012; Nicholls, 2010). Some of these contributions apply a comparative perspective or place their analysis on a meta-level as in the analysis of the spread of government–voluntary sector compacts (Reuter et al., 2011); others are more nationally targeted (Krlav, 2013; Scheuerle, Glänzel, Knust & Then, 2013). In general, there is a lack of studies that examine policies in their function described above and take account of their relation to the currently strongly pronounced social innovation subject and its imperatives. Although exceptions exist, these studies presently focus on a developing country context (Nicholls, 2013). To our knowledge, there is at present little systematic research on social innovation policies at the European and subsequently national levels and their potential relation to the third sector or other sectors. We aim at filling this gap – not least because the third sector impact is not only to be understood as a direct contribution of the third sector to social innovation but also because it has to be assessed from the perspective of its relative standing with reference to emergent policies.

Starting from the EU level (and proceeding to the national level of all the involved ITSSOIN partner countries in the second part of the report), this report aims at identifying streams that can be connected to social innovation and more specifically to social innovation in the context of third sector or civil society organisations. In this report we aim at emphasising relevant strategy documents, initiatives, policy bodies, and support structures of social innovation and the involvement of third sector actors.

2. Methodology

2.1. Screening for previous literature

In order to provide an overview of the most relevant policy frameworks and trends on social innovation and the third sector within the European Union, we searched for literature on social innovation policy and the third sector. Search terms such as ‘social innovation’, ‘third sector’, ‘NGO’, ‘civil society’, ‘European Union’, ‘policy’, and ‘policy streams’ were used in different combinations in order to find relevant articles. We also used names of specific policy documents, such as ‘Europe 2020’.

2.2. Screening for policies and trends

Policies and trends on social innovation and the third sector were screened by searching different EU platforms, whereby search terms were used and experts were involved, in order to efficiently find the policies and trends on social innovation that are most related to the third sector. The experts involved represent support structures in the EU and Sweden (European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) – a consultative EU body with the mission to connect Europe and the organised civil society, and Forum for Social Innovation Sweden – a meeting place for academia, industry, government and non-profit organisations in Sweden).

3. Findings

3.1. Research on social innovation policy streams

Over the past years, EU-funded research on social innovation has evolved. However, beyond this EU-funded research, research on social innovation policies is difficult to find and there is a clear lack of research regarding the spread, impact, and efficiency of social innovation policies. On behalf of the European commission, Jenson and Harrisson (2013) conducted a review of 17 EU research projects on social innovation. As to the question, what type of actors is focussed on in the different projects, the authors highlight that the projects SPREAD and Tepsie connect social innovation to civil society organisations. The projects Selusi, PERSE, and SPREAD link social innovation to social enterprise and social entrepreneurship; the projects INNOSERV, LLL 2010, and LIPSE associate social innovation to hybrid organisations with links to informal and formal sectors. In their analysis of the perspectives on social innovation used in the projects Jenson and Harrisson conclude that in Citispyce and WILCO social innovation is regarded as being in line with the reduction of growing inequalities in liberal societies.

Starting from a social enterprise perspective, Borzaga and Bodini provided a working paper for the European Research Institute for Cooperative and Social Enterprises (Borzaga & Bodini, 2012). They identified the Social Innovation Europe Initiative and the Social Business Initiative as the two main policy streams in European Union social innovation policies. The authors proposed a better alignment of the two streams and also promoted social enterprises as important actors for social innovation. They argued that the EU should implement a twofold policy line with one policy line targeting ‘pure social innovation’, i.e. social innovation that has to be subsidised. This, they argued, could be directed towards any type of enterprise. The other policy line would target ‘economically sustainable social innovations’ and focus on social enterprises. It was argued that social enterprises are most likely to provide economically sustainable social innovation due to better chances for replicability and scaling up. From this twofold policy stream perspective, the support of experimentation, awards, and monetary incentives, the supporting of initiatives by subsidies (such as grants and tax breaks), and

contracting-out policies would be included in the first policy line. According to the authors, this line may be less fruitful, since it targets individual initiatives that can be difficult to scale up; it is also problematic because it strongly depends on public subsidies.

3.2. The nexus between policy, the third sector, and social innovation

3.2.1. Social Innovation policy frameworks and reforms

The social innovation policies at the EU level were developed during times of economic crisis and austerity in the EU member states, and aim at driving growth and addressing social problems. The EU 2020 strategy, which was launched in 2010 and superseded the Lisbon Strategy, includes three growth targets and seven flagship initiatives (European Commission, 2010). The civil society is emphasised to be an important actor in the implementation of the EU 2020 strategy and in contributing to the elaboration of national reform programmes. The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, clearly promoted the third sector in his speech when the initiative Social Innovation Europe was launched (Barroso, 2011).

The most obvious connection between EU policy on social innovation and civil society organisations, the third sector, and NGOs can be found in the two flagship initiatives Innovation Union and European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion. The Innovation Union flagship initiative included, for instance, the European Social Innovation pilot, which resulted in a virtual hub for social entrepreneurs, the public sector, and the third sector. This pilot is also connected to the flagship Digital agenda for Europe. Within the flagship initiative European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, NGOs are regarded as key stakeholders; the social economy, including foundations, mutual societies, and cooperatives are considered as a tool for active inclusion.

The wide range of organisational forms or types included and mentioned in many of the social innovation initiatives is important because it contributes to the complexity of the implementation and the analysis of the existing policy framework. The boundaries between different types or groups of organisations are not clear. The definitions and the focus also vary across different fields and initiatives. This is not problematic per se; instead, it is rather a salient illustration of the complexity of the involved concepts and topics (social innovation and third sector, etc.) and demonstrates the diversity of individual national situations, where the policies eventually are expected to be visible and operational.

In the report, we develop and use a simple modelling in order to reduce some of the conceptual ambiguity, to understand the empirical observations of organisational forms or types of initiatives related to the social innovations, and to provide a preliminary analytical framework. On an overarching level, we understand the idea of a (I) social economy as the broadest and most inclusive concept, where the two main and fairly distinct categories of the included organisations and initiatives are: the third sector or sphere of civil society (IIA) and the sphere of cooperative and mutual forms (IIB). Within the third sector or civil society we find non-excluding and often overlapping categories such as social and popular movement organisations (IIA:1), interest organisations (IIA:2), NGOs (IIA:3), and foundations (IIA:4). Within the sphere of cooperative and mutual forms (IIB) we find sub-categories such as established consumer cooperatives (IIB:1), traditional farmer coops (IIB:2), welfare (service) cooperatives (IIB:3), and mutuals and savings-banks (IIB:4).

Between the two main categories with strands from both of these categories and thus opening up for the complexity and dynamics which we currently experience in this organisational realm between the state or public sector actors and for-profit corporations, we can identify a third stream of interesting solutions which we define as hybrid organisations and solutions (III). This category includes (at least) social enterprises (IIIA), social cooperatives (IIIB), and social entrepreneurs (IIIC).

The policies on social innovation at the EU level refer to a high extent explicitly to the third sector and its organisations as important actors, at least on a conceptual level. However, there are also policies which have a bearing on social innovation and are rather specifically focused on social enterprises or social entrepreneurs than on organised civil society or on different forms of civic engagement, e.g. the ‘Declaration for Social Entrepreneurship’ (European Commission, 2014a), which was written by the participants at a Strasbourg Event in January 2014. However, today most European Union policies on social innovation strive to promote action, rather aiming at including a variety of actors and types of initiatives than at excluding potential contributors (Rodert, 2014).

3.2.2. EU bodies relevant to social innovation and the third sector

The three European Commission’s Directorates-General responsible for most of the work that is relevant to social innovation and the third sector in the EU are: the DG Enterprise and Industry (e.g. the Social Innovation Exchange, SIX), the DG Internal Market and Services (e.g. the Social Business Initiative), and the DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (e.g. the Social Investment Package). The European Structural Funds are also central to supporting social innovation and the third sector in the EU member states. Social innovation is expected to be even more prominent in the new programme period (Rodert, 2014).

The European Economic and Social Committee is a consultative body and a key policy actor in the work on social innovation and civil society issues at the EU level. The European Economic and Social Committee has the mission to build a bridge between Europe and the organised civil society; therefore, it also includes representatives from civil society organisations in the different EU member countries (EESC, 2014). Connected to the Social Business Initiative, the multi-stakeholder expert group GECES was set up in order to advise the Commission on social business issues (GECES, 2014).

3.3. Support structures

3.3.1. Networks and incubators

Since 2011 networking with regard to social innovation has been coordinated by the EU within the framework of the specific initiative Social Innovation Europe (SIE). Within the flagship initiatives Innovation Union and Digital Agenda for Europe, the European Social Innovation pilot was launched with the objective to be a virtual hub for social entrepreneurs, the public and the third sectors. The SIE hub was delivered by the SIX network, which applied an already existing digital concept for social innovation networking to the European context, explicitly aiming at providing support, connection, and inspiration for social innovators. This work was conducted in cooperation with the Euclid Network and the Danish Technological Institute (Social Innovation Exchange, 2014).

3.3.2. Funding and reforms

Awareness regarding social innovation initiatives is being raised by the EU by means of different competitions and rewards. In 2013 the EU launched the annual European Social Innovation Competition, and since 2008 it has also organised the RegioStars Awards (RegioStars, 2014), a social innovation competition focussing on regional development. There have also been partnerships with the Naples 2.0 International Social Innovation Competition and the European Investment Bank Institute in the Social Innovation Tournament, an initiative targeting the creation of social value in relation to the fight against social exclusion (European Commission, 2014b). Moreover, the EU offers funding for social innovation through the Employment and Social Innovation Programme (EaSI) and supports relevant research through Horizon 2020 – The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (European Commission, 2011). At the regional level the EU also provides funding through the EU structural and investment funds.

The Social Business Initiative focuses on supporting social enterprises by improving access to funding, increasing the visibility of social entrepreneurship, and by improving the regulatory environment (European Commission, 2014c). Actions regarded as essential within the initiative are, for instance, the simplification of the European regulation concerning cooperatives, a proposal for a European Foundation, and research on the extent to which social enterprises could access dormant patents to assist their development.

The Social Investment Package focuses on guiding the member countries in the development of national social policies, e.g. by offering support in how to benefit from the EU Social Fund. The main goals are to ensure that social protection systems respond to people's needs, to simplify and better target social policies, and to upgrade active inclusion strategies in the EU member states (European Commission, 2014d).

3.4. The overall trends of social innovation connected to the third sector

This overview shows several trends regarding the links between social innovation and the third sector within EU-level policies.

EU-funded research on social innovation has grown over the last years but there was only little academic research focusing on social innovation policy and its connection to civil society. Only a few projects established clear links between the idea of social innovation and civil society; some researchers connect social innovation to social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, while others associate social innovation to hybrid organisations. Within the policy research from a social enterprise perspective it was argued that EU has two different social innovation policy streams, 'pure social innovation' and 'economically sustainable social innovations', and that EU should focus on the latter, i.e. on policy and support directed towards social enterprises (Borzaga & Bodini, 2012).

The third sector is to a large degree highlighted as an important actor for social innovation but some of the initiatives are rather focused on what could be described as the social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, rather than on civil society organisations and civic engagement (see our previous discussion on the wide range of organisational forms and categories). The nexus between policy, social innovation, and the third sector is most evident in the two flagship initiatives Innovation Union and European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, where the third sector is being explicitly referred to as an important actor. However,

there seem to be an interest in mobilising a variety of actors, and to include, rather than exclude, potential contributors.

The initiatives on social innovation and the third sector at the EU-level is organised under several different Directorates-General. The main consultative EU bodies in this context are the European Economic and Social Committee and the expert group GECES. There are several support structures and initiatives coordinated by the EU, often in cooperation with networks and organisations active within the area.

To sum up, the initiatives concerning social innovation and the third sector at the EU-level range from initiatives that mainly focus on raising awareness and legitimising action to more direct legislative and regulative changes intended for direct impact on the development of the field of social innovation. However, the actual impact of the action will probably be most visible at the level of individual member countries.

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Part 2 – The national level

5. Introduction

This report is based on nine country-specific reports on the domestic policy landscape for social innovation and the third sector and is provided by designated research teams in each of the countries. In the last chapter, the team of researchers from the Stockholm School of Economics provides some more general but still preliminary conclusions based on the combined picture of the presented policy landscape and trends.

The concrete questions that the individual research teams in each of the countries sought to answer in their respective reports on the policy landscape were:

- What policy packages or reforms regarding social innovation explicitly connected to the third sector, NPOs, NGOs, or civil society, have been launched in the country?
- Have other policy packages or reforms relevant to the third sector or social innovation been launched without having any outspoken or explicit connection between the two?
- Are there interesting examples of relevant support structures such as networks, incubators, or regional or local policy reforms?
- What does this overview reveal in terms of trends in each country?

6. Methodology

The national research teams sought to identify the current policies and trends most relevant for social innovation and the third sector in each country. Expert interviews were conducted in some of the countries in order to efficiently identify the policies and trends most relevant with reference to the above mentioned questions. Mostly, the experts were representatives from various support structure organisations and national agencies in the countries. Most research teams screened government and support structure websites using search filters on the basis of specific search terms such as 'social innovation', 'innovation', and 'third sector' in the respective national language. Mostly, the specific content of the policies was also briefly screened by the teams; in some cases it was more thoroughly analysed.

The empirical findings presented in second part of this report are structured in a country-by-country form under each of the three subheadings. Chapter 7.1 addresses the nexus between policy, the third sector, and social innovation; in chapter 7.2 we address existing support structures and reforms, while chapter 7.3 brings together and describes the overall trends in each involved country. Finally, in chapter 7.4 the team from the Stockholm School of Economics summarises and compares the picture of the situation in Europe based on the conclusions for each of the involved countries; in this chapter we also highlight a number of interesting preliminary themes and observations primarily based on the material provided in the different country sections.

7. Findings

7.1. The nexus between policy, the third sector, and social innovation

7.1.1. The Czech Republic

The concept of social innovation has very recently entered the Czech public discourse and has been introduced in practice predominantly in two ways: first, through public institutions, policies, and programs that are in some way related to the European Union (implementation of EU policies, allocation of EU funds, etc.) and second, through foreign for-profit or non-profit entities, where social innovation is connected to the non-profit sector. Even if these are private and business initiatives, they are also frequently funded or co-funded by EU programmes.

In the key strategic policy documents related to innovation policies (Ministry of Industry and Trade, 2005), the concept of social innovations is not connected to the notion of civil society. Authorities do not implement the social innovation concept and we observe an only slowly rising awareness in the academic world and the non-profit sector stimulated by foreign evaluators such as the Austria-based platform that promotes social innovation by awarding the SozialMarie prizes for the best Czech social innovation projects and encourages awareness with regard to social innovation by issuing publications, presenting winning projects, or by spreading know-how coming from abroad by promoting foreign winning projects that actively disseminate social innovation ideas. The Austrian Social Impact Award, on the other hand, rather focuses on social impact than on social innovation. The only context that is provided for the realisation of innovations in Czech policy is the one of 'research, economic, fiscal, educational, and social policies' (Council for Research, 2005). The same applies to the national research, development, and innovations policy in the Czech Republic from 2009 to 2015 (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2009) where only the operational programmes allocating EU funds are mentioned in this regard. The most explicit political agenda in which the concept of social innovation plays a key role is related to two main areas; the first is scientific research and the second the technical and technological development.

Although public awareness has increased over the last few years, the support for social innovation as a policy concept is still rather low. The low social embeddedness of the concept mirrors the fact that a political agenda, which would explicitly link the third sector to social innovations, is virtually non-existent.

However, some signs of change in the public administration approach are evident. The Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has currently established a working group focussing on social innovation issues. This working group is composed of representatives of the public administration, innovation hubs, and universities. The working group will provide a publication on the international experience with social innovation called 'Social innovation and international cooperation - experiences from abroad'. The ministry also prepares a priority axis within an ESF operational programme.

As to this priority axis, the above mentioned working group has identified two limiting factors; one of them is the lack of competent evaluators of potential projects. This is particularly due to

the fact that the concept of social innovation is relatively new and unknown in the Czech Republic; only a few potential evaluators are able to identify and evaluate social innovation.

The second problem arises from the innovations hubs. Their representatives have expressed doubts about the potential influx of funds from the European Union. From their point of view, massive public support could in fact undermine the new, innovative and unusual activities and initiatives (Dumont, 2014; personal communication, July 27).

The concept of social innovation, as understood by the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), is in line with the concept used by the European Commission and it is not so far from the TEPSIE definition. However, the ministry still regards social innovation as mainly associated with the field of social work and social care. According to the MoLSA, social innovation can be defined as new (and, compared to available alternatives, more effective, more efficient, more sustainable, and fairer) solutions (products, processes, services, organisational structures, technologies, ideas, regulations, institutional forms, functions and roles, social movements, interventions) that meet urgent social (or societal) needs, while creating new social relations or cooperation (Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2012).

In the Czech Republic, the social innovation concept is not directly connected to the notion of civil society. The state associates the concept of social innovation rather with a technical than a social context. This is why there are no national, regional, or local policies and subsidies explicitly aiming at supporting social innovations and only implicit policies and programmes targeting the support of social innovations can be found; these policies and subsidies are related to operational programmes co-funded by EU, in which innovative activities and processes are emphasised, and even represent a condition for the participation of non-profits and for the funding of their projects. In other words, if there are any signs of support and preference for social innovation in national or regional policies, this is almost exclusively because of European or transnational policies and political strategies that are imposed on the Czech authorities. The Czech public administration does not reveal any significant potential to become a source of social innovations resulting from cooperation with the non-profit sector. Its dominant role is to ensure public services; however, in this sector its own service providers (i.e. public agencies and organisations) are given preference. The other (potential) actors – mostly in the field of social services – are rather bound by regulations and (sometimes inadequately strict) quality standards.

Among the examined countries, in the Czech Republic the technological understanding of social innovation most strongly predominates over the social understanding. As it is the case in Spain, in the Czech Republic EU policies also seem to have effects on how social innovation-related issues are dealt with. However, it appears that in the Czech Republic this is not embraced by policy makers in the same way as it is in Spain.

7.1.2. Denmark

Although exhibiting a relatively new emphasis, particularly inspired by the international community in the USA, the UK, and Europe, in Denmark the fields of social innovation and social entrepreneurship have a historical counterpart which is linked to the old socio-economic

forms of cooperative movement and cooperative enterprise and to the more recent development traditions that emphasised essential welfare areas such as social services, integration of ethnic minorities, integration into the labour market, lifelong learning, and the development of local cultural institutions from the 1980s to the mid 1990s (Hulgård & Andersen, 2013, p.12).

More recently, the concepts 'social innovation' and 'civic engagement' have been promoted by the Danish centre-left government and local municipalities under a plurality of definitions which as yet present no clear boundaries (Kristensen & Rasmunssen, 2013, p.6). From the government side, there is a growing understanding of the potential that social entrepreneurship and innovation has to reform the welfare society and to increase the ownership of welfare solutions in the population. However, a comprehensive strategy or set of policy measures taking all the aspects of social innovation into account has not yet been implemented. And it is likely that reform or policy measures within this field will not target only the third sector, given that innovation is a field that has defined its own validity in connection with business innovation, at the individual company level and with regard to innovation in technology, manufacturing services, and the private service sector in general; moreover, there is little agreement as to how this can be understood in the third sector context (Kristensen & Rasmunssen, 2013, p.6).

The government perspective consists of regarding initiatives that initially focused on volunteering as a way to strengthen social innovation efforts. This is one of several reasons for the establishment of the Frivilligraadet – the National Volunteer Centre in Denmark in 1992. A number of subsequent initiatives exemplify the evolving recognition of the potential of third sector/NGOs/civil society contributions, including:

- In 1998, the Social Service Act §18 made it obligatory for municipalities to cooperate with civil society and to include funding of this cooperation in the budget of the municipality in question.
- In 2001, a Charter for the cooperation between the voluntary sector and the public sector was drafted in general terms, however, with little measurable impact (Arbejdsdegrupperne medlemer, 2001).
- In 2011, Civilsamfundsstrategien (Danish civil society strategy) was promoted by the government. The initiative expires in 2014 and Frivilligraadet has published its draft for a new strategy (Centre for frivilligt sociale arbejde, 2013).
- In 2014, a Charter for the cooperation between the voluntary sector and the public sector will follow.

The Charter for cooperation between the voluntary sector and the public sector describes the fundamental values and frameworks relevant to interaction. It was drafted by representatives of the two sectors in 2001. Now it is about to be renewed and will be kept updated.

The potential of social enterprises has recently been more clearly recognised in an official government policy document which presents ten initiatives recommended by the government to facilitate the work of social enterprises (Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs, 2014). Denmark currently displays a grassroots- based approach to social innovation, in which smaller, newly founded organisations, as well as citizens, play a

pronounced role. Yet, this is connected to the circumstance that other potential actors seem to be partly detached from direct involvement and few market actors and advocacy-oriented NGOs are actively involved. The most recent government initiatives may induce greater interest and involvement from all actors in the field.

7.1.3. The UK

The senior partner in the current coalition government made clear before the 2010 election its commitment to the notion of a 'Big Society' as an alternative to 'Big Government'. Its goal was to promote civil society and the third sector by redistributing power from the state to society and from the centre to local communities, thereby giving people the opportunity to take more control over their lives (Conservative Party, 2010). The coalition partners' subsequent programme for government categorically stated 'the Government believes that the innovation and enthusiasm of civil society is essential in tackling the social, economic, and political challenges that the UK faces today' (HM Government, 2010, p.29). As a result, it declared that it would act 'to support and encourage social responsibility, volunteering, and philanthropy, and make it easier for people to come together to improve their communities and help one another' (ibid.). To this end, it made commitments to strengthen a diversity of organisational forms in the third sector by supporting the creation and expansion of mutuals, co-operatives, charities, and social enterprises, and enable these groups to have much greater involvement in the running of public services.

These policies also had powerful financial drivers and rested on the premise that the combination of a substantial public sector deficit with increasingly complex societal challenges urgently required different ways of providing public services. Therefore, the delegation of power to citizens and community organisations can be seen as an innovation in governance adopted to help square the circle between fiscal austerity and rising demand. However, this 'technocratic' interpretation should be viewed alongside a more ideological interpretation in which the necessity of fiscal tightening is seen as an opportunity to reduce the role and scale of the government.

In 2012, 'the government set out to make it easier for civil society to work with the state' (Cabinet Office, 2012). Policy initiatives were launched to support the role of third sector organisations through, for example, increased access to public service contracts and opportunities for developing their 'commercial' skills (to increase their ability to compete with the private sector). Underlying this initiative was the recognition that the state needed to work with civil society to promote and sustain its potential for innovation and social action. Specific initiatives included:

- The Social Action Fund: a source of grant funding managed on behalf of the government by a charity, the Social Investment Business Foundation.
- Social Impact Bonds: designed to incentivise innovation and strengthen civil society by attracting investors to projects which improve the social outcomes of publicly funded services. Investors pay for the project at the start and then receive payments based on the results achieved; charities and social enterprises bid for and manage the projects.
- Whole Place Community Budget Pilots involve civil society in shaping local priorities for public services as well delivering them.

- The Social Outcomes Fund: a fund to bring in investment to help finance preventative programmes involving civil society which aim to address complex and expensive social problems

These programmes add to an already existing spectrum of financial instruments that aim to ensure that public services are achieving social impact (rather than just service outputs). For example, different forms of payment-by-results or outcome-based-commissioning regimes have been applied across government department for almost a decade. Such approaches never excluded the third sector and most of them made some kind of reference to its provider role. However, many of these programmes demanded a level of organisational capacity and maturity that formed significant barriers to the entry of smaller third sector organisations into formal contractual relationships with the public sector. Current government policies are intended to address such barriers and to create conditions for more equal competition between the public, private, and third sectors for contracts to deliver publicly funded services.

This objective is reflected in new legislation and statutory guidance. For example, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires commissioners to ensure that the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the local population is considered before they contract services, it reinforces the ‘Duty of Best Value’, and demands that civil society organisations be treated equitably (DCLG 2012).

In addition, another government initiative has introduced the possibility of statutory agencies making asset transfers directly to the third sector at the community level together with a right for third sector organisations to challenge and take on local authority service provision where they have a viable plan (Cabinet Office 2011, Localism Act, 2011).

As the coalition government agreement makes clear (see above), the current Government is seeking to harness civil society as a source of innovation in public service provision, organisation, and governance. This ambition applies in principle across government departments. We could not identify any recent policies that were specific to the third sector but did not relate to their role in contributing to social innovation and addressing societal challenges. We identified, however, a few innovation policies concerned with economic growth and technological advances (for example in the areas of health and education) that did not see an explicit role of the third sector.

The government’s Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) publishes an annual innovation report ‘Innovation, Research and Growth’ (for the most recent see BIS 2014). Each report provides the latest available evidence on UK innovation performance and the contribution of business, government, higher education and research organisations to UK innovation activities. However, they contain minimal if any substantive references to social innovation and the roles of civil society or the third sector. The most recent, for example, mentions ‘societal challenges’ only in a brief description of the objectives of the Horizon 2020 programme. Another indication of its focus is that the report makes a number of references to the work of the National Endowment for Science, Technology, and the Arts (NESTA, see below) but they are very largely confined to its activities relating to innovation and business growth. However, the wider programme of NESTA could make it a potentially important means for ensuring that the knowledge, skills, and interests of the wider third sector are represented in

policies for business growth as well as in the social policy fields. Examples of support infrastructures for innovations named in the paper are: the Intellectual Property Office; the British Standards Institute; the National Physical Laboratory; smart grants; Catapult Centres (which support business in implementing their business ideas); Small Business Research Initiative (which helps small businesses to get their ideas on the market through competing for Government contracts to develop new products and services); established overseas relationships; involvement in the EU framework Horizon 2020.

The focus of the innovation report indicates a relative absence of the idea of social innovation in mainstream innovation discourses. Separating out social and economic innovation may be necessary to some degree in order to ensure that sufficient attention is given to each of these dimensions of innovation. However, in view of the ways that *societal* challenges span both dimensions there still seems to be a lack of focus on answers based on *social* rather than technological mechanisms. This is particularly striking where innovation is advocated in more person-centred fields.

For instance, two National Health Service reports on innovation (DH 2011, 2012) emphasise that innovation should be at the heart of the National Health Service and summarise progress on the infrastructure for innovation such as: compliance with Technology Appraisals (developed by the National Institute for Care Excellence); roll-out of tele-health; future role of newly established Academic Health Science Networks; new legal duties for Clinical Commissioning Groups and Commissioning Board to promote innovation; new Specialised Services Commissioning Innovation Fund and the Small Business Research Initiative; innovation prizes; networks with industry, and financial incentives to innovation. The policy is focused only on stakeholders in the National Health Service, industry, and academia.

In conclusion, central government in England places a strong value on social innovation in response to the state's financial deficit and other societal challenges; the public sector is not seen as fit for purpose to meet current or future demand and is, in any case, seen to require major contraction to meet economic, fiscal, and social objectives. The English government promotes the role of the third sector as a public service provider across government departments. However, few innovation policies concerned with economic growth and technological advances (for example in the areas of health and education) were found. The innovation report 'Innovation, Research and Growth' (BIS 2014) refers specifically to innovation in response to societal challenges but does not mention the third sector as a driver for innovation. Two National Health Service reports on innovation (DH 2011; 2012) refer only to stakeholders in the National Health Service, the industry, and academia.

In addition, the policy documents reviewed appear to give little attention to the role of the third sector as critic, advocate, and community development agent. The role as service provider has been the predominant one, though it might be argued that the encouragement of the third sector to work in partnership with the state to design services based on local understandings of need does provide some opportunity to build such roles into contracting processes. However, the impacts of financial austerity and contractual relationships on the balance of the roles and functions fulfilled by civil society will need to be core elements of empirical research on the contribution of the third sector in the UK to sustainable initiatives in social innovation.

The apparent emphasis on the service provider role highlights the importance of clarifying the distinctive nature of national policies on the third sector and social innovation in the specific contexts provided by different welfare regimes and traditions. This dimension will have to be recognised and respected in all empirical investigations in this research programme and especially the cross-national ones.

Nevertheless, the UK is one of the countries which have most strongly embraced the social innovation rhetoric and acknowledged it as having a key role to play in finding solutions to societal challenges. We should, however, be particularly alert to the importance of questioning not only the extent to which civil society can, in practice, act as a source of social innovation but also how far it is capable of filling the gaps potentially opened up by the contraction of so-called 'big government'.

Moreover, many of the initiatives discussed here are of recent origin and have, by definition, yet to be subject to long term evaluation. Their impact is, therefore, uncertain. Critical dimensions for such evaluation will be how far they represent effective innovations in governance as well as in service provision, including the extent to which they secure shifts in the balance of power and influence between local communities and government in what has historically been a highly centralised system of government at local as well as national levels.

7.1.4. France

In France, several national initiatives to strengthen the third sector have been undertaken. Since 1987 laws have been passed in order to promote and give incentives for philanthropy through tax reductions for donations and through simplification of procedures, e.g. the Aillagon law, passed in 2003 (Vaccaro, 2012). The legal form 'endowment fund' was established in 2008 to combine the strength of an association with the status of a foundation. While the Aillagon law creates fiscal and symbolic incentives to encourage individual and corporate philanthropy, the law that established endowment funds ('loi de modernisation de l'économie') really created a new vehicle for social innovation. Indeed, the endowment fund is a mixture of 'association', which is very easy to establish and to govern, and the 'fondation reconnue d'utilité publique', which is very prestigious and can benefit from the widest range of financial resources (including rents arising from investment properties, bequests etc.). Endowment funds benefit from the qualities of both forms and can potentially unleash new initiatives for the common good. Today, in France there are between 1500 and 2000 of such funds created by individuals, corporations, and non-profit organisations. According to Deloitte (2014), the top three fields where these funds can be found are arts and culture (21.7%), education (19%), and healthcare (12.8%). However, it seems that many of these funds were created without a defined objective and that today most of them are no more than 'empty vehicles'.

A law passed in 2001 included 'solidarity funds' ('fonds solidaires') in the employee savings plans mechanisms. Solidarity funds invest between 5 % and 10 % of their assets in companies that are labelled 'solidarity enterprises' ('entreprises solidaires'). This label is awarded to unlisted companies that either provide work integration or whose managers are elected, and which satisfy certain rules of executive compensation. The law concerning the modernisation of the economy passed in 2008 requires companies to offer employees at least one solidarity fund in the employee savings plan.

In 2014, a major step forward in recognising the positive role of the third sector in France was made with the passing of the law on social and solidarity economy (SSE, or ESS in French) (République Française, 2014). This law defines the common principles which link the wide diversity of actors to legal structures composing the social and solidarity economy sector and it addresses the role of public policy in promoting and fostering the sector's development. Although the above mentioned SSE law refers to social innovation, it only provides a large definition of the concept and specifies the criteria used for the public funding of socially innovative initiatives. However, the fact that such a section is included reflects the social and solidarity economy sector's claim that its impact in terms of social innovation be acknowledged (Chibani-Jacquot & Frémeaux, 2013). This claim is partly driven by a strategy to find new ways of funding the sector by means of existing innovation loans. But the shortness and impreciseness of the section on social innovation reflects the lingering predominance of a technological approach to social innovation in France (AVISE, 2013, p.4).

Of course, traditional SSE structures cannot claim an exclusive right to social innovation. In this regard, the national agency AVISE, founded by the public bank (Caisse des Dépôts), the regional resource centre l'Atelier and major players in the social economy sector advocate that regional policies carried out to support social innovation be distinguished from SSE policies (AVISE, 2013, p.2). As an illustration, the philanthropy sector also claims to contribute to the 'fertilisation of social innovations' by 'giving priority to the funding of the emergence phase and of experimentations' (ADMICAL, 2014, p. 5).

To conclude, France appears to have a condensed and strong lobby in favour of social innovation, which is rather driven by private or civic actors than by official policy. These actors are designated under the label 'Economie Sociale et Solidaire' (ESS). Nevertheless, their focus seems to be too narrow to justly mirror the variety of parties with a potential stake in innovation.

7.1.5. Germany

When considering policies that refer to innovation, in Germany, there is a strong focus on technological or commercial solutions for societal challenges (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2009; Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2010). However, at the same time Germany has an important welfare system and this is why its players are given special attention when it comes to policy making.

The main policy stream relevant for the third sector in general is the engagement policy shaped by the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. In general, the subject of social innovation has not been a predominant one, The 'strategy for civic engagement' was developed over ten years ago and has undergone several phases of renewal. Until recently, reports compiled by government commissions on the advancement of civil society, for instance, rather dismissed or ignored the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship and its inherent connection to social innovation.

For instance, in a report from 2009 the 'committee on civic engagement' interpreted civic engagement as being primarily embodied by volunteering on the one hand, and regular operations of the established welfare organisations, on the other. In this report, innovation did

not play any specific role. A delegation visit to the UK that aimed at grasping a different notion of promoting social impact activity was assessed in the following way: 'Due to profound differences in socio-political traditions the adoption of British experiences in Germany would be problematic [...]' (Deutscher Bundestag, 2009, pp. 78). This statement exemplifies a rather dismissive attitude towards social innovation and shifts in the landscape of (potentially) involved actors.

This attitude is largely in line with the extensive report of the Enquete Commission on the 'Future of Civic Engagement' from 2002 (Deutscher Bundestag, 2002, pp. 219–229), the first of its kind. Innovation by social entrepreneurial organisations (be it start-ups or incumbent organisations) or other civic initiatives was not mentioned at all.

Besides, the role of firms has only been discussed with reference to the concepts of CSR and Corporate Citizenship. Discussions centre around 'corporate giving' and 'corporate volunteering'. Increased networking and inter-sectorial cooperation have nevertheless been promoted by various government reports and government-sponsored conferences for quite a while, with a focus on business involvement (Deutscher Bundestag, 2002, pp. 56-59; 70; Deutscher Bundestag, 2009, pp. 293, 297-304; Forschungszentrum Bürgerchaftliches Engagement, 2008).

Meanwhile, policy positions have moved beyond this focus or previous refusal to explicitly embrace social innovation and related processes. A report of the National CSR-Forum advising the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs contains a short recommendation: '[...] new incentives and forms of financing for social entrepreneurship are elements of a solution for social, ecological and societal challenges' (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2010). Although the recommendation looks like a marginal note in a 60 page report focusing on CSR, it might be interpreted as one of the first steps towards political support for social entrepreneurship and social innovation.

The updated National Strategy for Civic Engagement (Deutsche Bundesregierung, 2010, pp.4f.; p.63) illustrates this even more clearly. It refers to the role of foundations as innovators, civic engagement as a motor of social innovation, and social entrepreneurship as an important new trend. It demands that the tension between civic engagement and entrepreneurship should be dissolved and used productively. In addition, it is stated that the government intends to systematically build a support structure for social innovation and plans to discuss means to foster strategic cooperation between players in the social arena, including the field of social venture capital. There is a special focus on innovation in the field of urban development, youth work, and environmental sustainability.

Thus, after a transitory period of defiance of the relevance of social innovation, national policy seems to have embraced the concept and tries to actively foster it. It remains to be seen which specific actions will result from this. The political agenda is mainly driven from an engagement point of view, rather than motivated by the economic, labour, or social policy bodies.

7.1.6. Italy

There is currently a legislative turmoil in Italy resulting from the guidelines that concern a third sector reform and were introduced by the government led by Matteo Renzi; an open consultation on those guidelines formulated with the participation of civil society organisations, third sector forums, and the academia (concluded in June, 2014), and the final proposal of a new law for the third sector still lie ahead (Italian Government, 2014b).

In Italy, political documents establish no relation between the third sector and social innovation. Social innovation is not even mentioned in the government's guidelines (Italian Government, 2014a) or new law proposals (Italian Government, 2014b). The overall objective of the reform is to simplify the current regulation on third sector organisations. In particular, the reform aims at strengthening the third sector by providing a clearer definition of 'social enterprise' and of its characteristics and function, and by introducing increased incentives for social enterprises which operate in the market (Italian Government, 2014b). A third sector agency is also planned but there are still many unresolved questions as to how it should differ from the previous (unsuccessful) agency in terms of its role and the extent of its decision-making power.

Different solutions were proposed to strengthen the incentives for welfare production by the third sector. The third sector is recognised as the driving force of the planning and implementation of social and health services in Italy. The government states: 'They call it third sector, but actually it's the first' (Italian Government, 2014a). It is too soon to tell whether the new law would recognise this role beyond political declaration, especially since the reform must be enacted through several legislative decrees in the following months. As to the financial support to the third sector, the reform envisages the introduction of various social finance mechanisms aiming at social solidarity and the reduction of public expenditures (Italian Government, 2014b, p.5).

With reference to social innovation Italy shows a strong focus on the organisational level and great confidence in the capacity of social enterprises. Legislative reforms are used as a means to enable such actors to enhance their operations. At the same time broader policy initiatives are about to evolve, which makes the topic dynamic.

7.1.7. The Netherlands

Dutch programmes on social innovation (SI) that receive governmental support generally target the business and research sector. An analysis of a number of reports and policy briefs shows that the third sector, NGOs, civil society, and grassroots initiatives are hardly connected to social innovation at all. According to a recent study on the state of SI in the Netherlands (AWT 2014) 'social innovation' means 'workplace innovation'. Therefore, the term 'social innovation' is used in a very limited sense compared to other countries. Government policy with regard to 'social innovation' is therefore also mostly limited to 'workplace innovation'.

There were some policy programmes directly targeting social innovation; only a few established a connection to the third sector.

First of all, between 2006 and 2012, the government supported a Dutch Centre for Social innovation (CSI) (TK 2005/2006a; 2005/2006b; 2005/2006c; 2005/2006d). One out of five subjects explored by the CSI concerned 'learning knowledge alliances' (AWT 2014). To examine the institutional field with regard to social innovation was part of this analysis. NGOs were mentioned as part of this field and were regarded as stakeholders in fostering SI.

Second, the vice-minister of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment addressed parliament with respect to possibilities to apply for social innovation grants through the European Structural Fund (ESF) (TK 2011/2012a).

Third, members of parliament motioned to amend the law on higher education and scientific research in order to provide more room for social innovation, next to technological innovation (TK 2011/2012b). The vice-minister replied with a number of measures, including a recommendation to the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) to adopt social innovation as a theme in its 'social infrastructure agenda'.

Finally, there is an ongoing programme targeting social innovation in the field of green economy (2013-2016) (TK 2012/2013). In this policy programme, SI concerns the notion that 'stakeholders increase their problem solving capacities in order to come to innovative solutions and well-considered behavioural choices that do not exhaust the natural capital of the earth' (TK 2012/2013, p. 11). NGOs are recognised as relevant stakeholders in fostering environmental sustainability and biodiversity but are not mentioned with respect to social innovation in particular. They may participate in EU-financed projects that target environmental innovation. The report mentions the role of 'societal initiatives' but it is unclear to what extent third sector organisations are involved. Citizen initiatives are thought to lead to 'new alliances'. The programme should foster brokering partnerships between governments, companies, 'societal organisations' and the grassroots initiatives that citizens take. This is in line with the earlier-mentioned discourse on achieving an 'energetic society' (Hajer, 2011), in which citizens self-organise for a sustainable future. Co-operatives in which citizens collectively produce energy are mentioned as an example (TK 2012/2013). The most explicit role of this programme is to facilitate the 'scaling up' of such initiatives by offering access to test-beds or incubators. The programme intends to facilitate at least ten local or regional initiatives.

Apart from these few SI programmes that directly mention the third sector, there is a broader third sector policy discourse closely related to social innovation themes, without applying the actual term. The Dutch government propagates the idea of the 'participation society': a society where people take maximum responsibility for their own lives and surroundings (TK 2013/2014). This is a wider concept than civic participation because it includes many forms of individual participation, for example in the labour process. When the term 'participation society' was mentioned in the 2013 Speech from the Throne (elected as 'Word of the year 2013') (Volkskrant, 2013) setting out government policy for the forthcoming term, it was received in the Dutch media as if it was something new; in reality, however, ideas of a 'caring' and 'responsible' society were mooted deep in the last century. There were calls for the replacement of the welfare state by a 'participation state'. The idea is now becoming increasingly popular, both in the Netherlands and in other countries. In a recent study (Van Houwelingen et al., 2014) examples of citizen participation in the Netherlands were identified in five different municipalities.

The notion that (local) governmental support for grassroots initiatives is embedded in the Social Support Act might imply a preference for SI in the field of social care and social support (even though there is also an SI programme for a sustainable environment) (TK 2004/2005).

Considering that the ‘participation society’ discourse is strongly connected to the decentralisation of political authority to municipalities, a support infrastructure for themes related to SI is mostly organised at the local level (see 7.2.7). Nevertheless, the few policy programmes that particularly target SI in connection with the third sector or third sector actors are relatively disconnected from this local structure.

In the Netherlands social innovation is interpreted as a means of calling upon citizens to take responsibility rather than a direct argument based on financial austerity – the effects of both might nonetheless be similar. As in Denmark, in the Netherlands social innovation impulses seem to come primarily from the local rather than the national level.

7.1.8. Spain

In the last few years the term ‘social innovation’ has emerged in Spain among a minority of state and regional policy makers, academics, and third sector organisations. Its usage is nowadays largely reduced to four specific contexts: 1) state policies originating from Europe 2020, primarily in the field of social inclusion and in the second place in the field of R&D&I (Research, Development, Innovation) (mainly Ley 14/2011; Ley 44/2007; MSSSI, 2013; MESS, 2013, 2014); 2) the innovation strategy of the Basque region (Gobierno Vasco, 2011, 2012; Innobasque, 2011, 2012, 2013); 3) research institutes interested in social economy or social entrepreneurship or both, mainly belonging to private Jesuit universities (in particular the ESADE Institute for Social Innovation in Catalonia; the University of Deusto in the Basque Country); and 4) a minority of umbrella organisations of the social third sector.

The relevant stakeholders in this emerging debate have strongly differing visions as to what social innovation is, and as to which role the third sector should play in connection to it. The two most relevant policy packages at the state level aiming at contributing to the goals of Europe 2020 provide a case in point.

The Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (MSSSI, 2013, 2014) envisions social innovation as a set of tools geared towards saving public money, through increased efficiency and public-private partnerships, in the process of solving social problems. Third sector organisations, particularly those active in the field of social services, are accordingly characterised as key collaborating actors involved in the development of social innovations which target the creation of inclusive societies. As for the main policy tool to foster social innovation at a state level, the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2013-2016 (MSSSI, 2013) is yet to be implemented.

The Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO, 2013a, b, c) defines social innovations as new structural transformations in society. Social innovations are consequently understood as challenges to be met by means of targeted R&D&I projects and the participation of all types of social and economic actors. Third sector organisations are coherently envisioned as key agents for research, development, and innovation in the general and in the specific case

of research in the field of social sciences and humanities that is directed towards solving challenges arising from new social transformations.

To some extent, Spain shares some characteristics with the UK, since it also emphasises social innovation in order to compensate for existing deficiencies of the social and health care systems. The social innovation agenda is being promoted at several levels and is, in contrast to most other countries, strongly related to policy initiatives originating from EU strategies. Supposedly due to the economic crisis, much hope is raised by social innovation and its capacity to stimulate economic growth and employment.

7.1.9. Sweden

The Swedish third sector is affected in different ways by policy changes within the various fields in which its organisations are active. Looking at specific and concrete policy changes of a more horizontal character, in the past ten years four initiatives are particularly worth mentioning; the first is a national parliament decision to change ‘the popular movement policy’ into ‘the policy for the civil society’ (Prop. 2009/10, p.55). This has also been highlighted as a part of a broader transition of the Swedish civil society sector, described as ‘from voice to service’ (Lundström & Wijkström, 2012).

The second initiative is the tax reduction law concerning gifts to certain non-profit organisations (SFS 2011, p.1269, see Vamstad & Trägårdh, 2009), which was enacted with the intent to stimulate private giving to organisations in certain policy fields. The scope of givers and beneficiaries subject to the law, still is being debated. The latest change in the law permitted that a much wider variation of organisations than it was previously the case be interpreted as beneficiaries (SFS 2013, p.968).

Another important change is represented by ‘Överenskommelsen’, a ‘compact’ or agreement between the Swedish government and some of the national third sector organisations in the social sphere, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) (Integrations- och jämställdhetsdepartementet, 2008; see Reuter et al., 2012; Johansson & Johansson, 2012). The government intends with this agreement to empower people, contribute to the development of the social economy and to better conditions for civil society actors, highlight barriers that prevent the sector from reaching its full potential, and develop the welfare. The work on the basis of this agreement has also proceeded at the regional level; an agreement within the sphere of integration has been initiated as well.

A fourth change in the legislative system and probably the one most clearly linked to the discourse on social innovation in Sweden is the enactment of a new legal business form called ‘AB Svb’ (Proposition 2004/05, p.178). An ‘AB Svb’ is a limited liability company with a special dividend restriction. The form is not yet very common for new entrepreneurs; in total, only around 40 companies exist (SCB, 2012) and less than ten (10) of these are active within the welfare fields education, health care, and social care. Tax advantages to further stimulate the establishment and usage of this particular legal form have recently been proposed (Motion 2012/13:Sk303). At the moment, however, we cannot observe any major interest in this form and as long as there are not substantial changes in other areas too (such as particular tax

benefits or re-regulations regarding the format in which tax-funded welfare is allowed to be provided), it will remain a marginal initiative.

In Sweden, the interest in the social innovation concept is very weak and the discourse is limited to certain communities and domains or linked to activities of certain influential actors. However, in some policy documents and initiatives the connection to the social innovation discourse in the EU is visible. The most relevant example on national policy level is the National Innovation Strategy (Näringsdepartementet, 2012), where the government clearly highlights the role of civil society in relation to social innovation. The following section presents the most relevant policies related to social innovation in Sweden, and shows in which way these policies are connected to the third sector or civil society. Also the national agencies responsible for social innovation and third sector issues are presented in order to provide an overview of the policy landscape.

In the Swedish government's National Innovation Strategy (Näringsdepartementet, 2012), the concepts of social innovation and social entrepreneurship are described to become more common, since services previously performed by the public sector are now increasingly being provided by actors outside of the public sector realm (see also Hartmann 2011; Lundström & Wijkström, 2012). It is also explained in this strategy document that social innovation and social entrepreneurship occur in all parts of society but that civil society organisations may have a particularly prominent role in these processes. According to the strategy, firms, organised civil society organisations, or grass root initiatives, can develop social innovations individually or collaboratively. This is described as particularly important for the regional development in more sparsely populated areas. The creation of forums for dialogue between actors from different sectors, areas, and levels is regarded as central in order to reach collective understanding on challenges and opportunities.

In the National Strategy for Regional Development and Attractiveness 2014-2020 (Näringsdepartementet, 2014a), the term 'social innovation' does not appear at all. However, the more general idea of innovation is described as something that can have many different forms and create different values, of which social value is only one example. This strategy can thus exemplify a situation where the EU social innovation discourse is neither adopted at the national nor at the regional level. However, this only indicates a decoupling of discourses at the different levels and does not reveal the situation of the actual social innovation activity. In the strategy, civil society organisations are highlighted as important in the collaboration between actors, in order to create sustainable regional development. Civil society is described as a resource, for instance as a source of engagement that should be utilised for service provision, e.g. by providing cultural activities and social forums, and as a channel for voice or advocacy, for example by acting as opinion leaders. According to the above mentioned strategy document, these organisations also contribute to employment and are role models by working consciously on the basis of a gender perspective.

The Partnership Agreement (Näringsdepartementet, Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, Landsbygdsdepartementet, 2014) states the Swedish priorities under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), i.e., the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, for the 2014-2020 programming period. Social innovation is

mentioned two times, first with regard to entrepreneurship, including a description of social entrepreneurship and social innovation as examples of alternative business models, and second with regard to the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). In the agreement, civil society is not directly connected to social innovation. However, civil society is mentioned as one actor in the so called Local Action Groups, which are community-based groups formed at the local level and involved in the implementation of EaSI programmes. It is also mentioned as a partner in EU's efforts concerning sustainable development, and also in the EU Social Fund work-integration policy (here the 'social economy' is highlighted as an example of potential actors).

The aim of the ESF funding in Sweden is to increase the employment rate and develop a more cohesive society in a sustainable economy. In the proposal for the National Social Fund for the programming period 2014-2020 (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, 2014) the proposal states with reference to social innovation that efforts have been made to promote the importance of a collaboration between civil society, the private, and the public sector with regard to strengthening the position of men and women in the labour market.

In the proposal for a National Regional Fund Investment Programme for Growth and Employment 2014-2020 (Näringsdepartementet, 2014b), social innovation is mentioned as one example of EU-defined investment priorities which the programme 'has to relate to'. However, what exactly this means is not discussed in the proposal. The sphere of civil society is only mentioned as a part of a 'partnership' that shall be involved in the development of the programme.

There is a political and fairly active debate on entrepreneurship in Swedish society that is not connected to social entrepreneurship or social innovation. In March 2014, for instance, the Swedish government decided to establish a committee with the mandate to propose measures for the improvement of the entrepreneurial climate in Sweden. The core mission of the committee is to make recommendations as to how taxes and regulations can be changed in order to create entrepreneurship-friendly conditions (Finansdepartementet, 2014b). The decision refers neither to social innovation or social entrepreneurship nor to the third sector or civil society (Finansdepartementet, 2014a). Although it is not this committee's explicit mission, its suggestions and possible results as well as its work may have effects also in the field of social innovation or the third sector.

There are several government agencies that are particularly relevant to the implementation of the policies relating to social innovation and civil society in Sweden. One of them is the Swedish ESF Council (Myndigheten ESF-rådet). The ESF Council is a government agency under the Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (Socialdepartementet), responsible for managing the Social Fund (Socialfonden) and the Integration Fund (Integrationsfonden) in Sweden.

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket) is responsible for eight regional structural fund programmes (ERDF programmes), one national regional fund programme and the interregional collaboration programme Öresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak (Interreg programme). The agency has also funded social innovation and social

entrepreneurship initiatives. They are also actively working with social enterprises and are in the process of mapping the field of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises in Sweden.

The Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis (Tillväxtanalys) analyses and evaluates Swedish growth policy. The overall goal is to strengthen Swedish competitiveness and to improve the conditions for more jobs and growing businesses throughout the country (Tillväxtanalys, 2014a). The agency has published a report on social innovation from a perspective of six different countries; Sweden, however, is not included (Tillväxtanalys, 2014b).

The Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems (Vinnova) is the national innovation agency. On behalf of the Swedish government Vinnova conducted projects on social innovation in field of health, and social care for elderly people (Vinnova, 2014a). One result arising from its work is the Idea Catalogue, a website aiming at presenting good examples of social innovation, with a focus on elderly people (Vinnova, 2014b).

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor, 2014) supports the government in civil society policy-related issues and works to ensure that young people have access to welfare and can influence societal issues. One of the most important policy changes relevant for this agency is the new national policy on civil society (see previous separate section); however, there is no information on social innovation or innovation in general at the agency's web page. Since this agency has a central position for governmental national civil society matters in Sweden, this indicates a clear divergence between the core issues of the discourse on social innovation (even if this stream itself is weak) and the actual situation of the third sector in the country.

On the basis of this overview, our analysis shows that the discourses on the third sector and social innovation are not only divergent but also that in Sweden social innovation, even in more general terms, is still relatively undeveloped.

7.2. Existing support structures and reforms

7.2.1. The Czech Republic

Structures supporting social innovation activities (excluding resource provision) are mostly dominated by non-profit and for-profit actors and initiatives. Even if these activities are sometimes supported by public authorities, this support is usually only symbolical and is not of crucial importance.

Civil society representatives mainly identify practical examples of support structures on the regional level because these examples are closer to their everyday experiences. Most often, these support structures are regional innovation centres (operated by regional governments or city councils, universities, and business: hubs in Prague and Brno, or Local Action Groups) (Kundrata, & Frištenská, 2014; personal communication, June 17). On the national level, mostly initiatives promoting the corporate social responsibility (CSR) and connecting different societal sectors are mentioned (Donors Forum, Business Leader Forum, Business for Society) (Kadeřábková, 2014; personal communication, June 17). Sometimes competitions such as Social Impact Award, SozialMarie, or various foundations that support social innovations (Ashoka, Pragulic, Vodafone Foundation, etc.) are also mentioned. At the same time, in most of

these cases the social innovations are considered to be ‘an appealing label’ used for CSR activities rather than anything else (Kadeřábková, 2014; personal communication, June 17).

The most prominent policy network connecting the notion of social innovation and civil society in terms of influence on national political structures is driven by the European Union, its strategies, actors, and tools. In fact, when the notion of social innovation appears in Czech public policies, it is mostly in connection with particular operational programmes allocating EU funds (see CYRRUS advisory, 2013) to non-profits.

The Czech Donors Forum is the only nationwide association that integrates 66 foundations, enterprises, and initiatives that aim at building and developing a system which fosters non-profits and various projects, including socially innovative projects. Its primary objectives are advocacy activity, lobbying, education, and to provide its members with expertise. Another important network is the Thematic Network for Social Economy (TESSEA). Its goal is to promote the concept of social economy and social entrepreneurship in the Czech context, and mainly the establishment and development of the network’s infrastructure. This includes its promotion, education, support, resource provision, and the exchange of expertise on the national and international level. Finally, TESSEA also focuses on advocacy activities and aims at incorporating the concept of the social economy in the public policy frameworks and strategies. There is also a privately funded Austria-based platform which explicitly aims at promoting and realising social innovations (not only) in the Czech Republic and which awards the SozialMarie prize (SozialMarie, 2014) to socially innovative projects.

The other type of support structures is more connected to public policy processes on the regional and local level. The regional level is represented by various regional innovation centres that are jointly led by city councils, regional governments, and universities. The main goal of these centres is to promote the development of enterprise skills and the commercialisation of research in order to maximise the contribution of higher education to regional and national economies. At the same time these centres also represent an opportunity for non-profits aiming at creating social innovations, e.g. in the field of culture, by making use of resources or training. However, there is no direct link between these entrepreneurship centres and social innovation established by public policy.

Local Action Groups (LAGs) operate at the local level; these groups are selected and registered by the managing political authority and consist of public, non-profit and private partners from the locality concerned and also include representatives from different socio-economic sectors. They receive financial assistance from EU to implement local development strategies by awarding grants to local projects. Some of the LAGs run projects explicitly aiming at the transfer of social innovations from abroad to the Czech Republic and provide local subjects with education and support (Centre of Social Innovation, 2014).

At the municipal level there is support for non-profits and social networks which target social innovation in terms of provision of local, context-specific support. These structures most often take the form of so-called ‘hubs’ such as the Impact Hub Prague (<http://prague.impacthub.net/>) or the Creative Centre Brno (<http://www.creativebrno.cz/>). They usually provide resources and facilities for non-profit activities and creative initiatives and networks, thus paving the way for possible social innovations.

Generally, the social innovation concept is not used in the Czech Republic policy and local or regional initiatives are scarce or rather aim at promoting third sector activity in a broader context than at fostering social innovations in a more targeted way.

7.2.2. Denmark

The government has very recently released a set of recommendations presenting ten initiatives aiming at making it easier and more attractive to start and run social enterprises in Denmark (Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs, 2014). The recommended actions include:

- to launch the website www.socialvirksomhed.dk
- to start the Growth Centre for Social-Economic Enterprises and the Social Council of Economic Enterprises
- to create a registration system for social enterprises which will come into force at the beginning of 2015
- to create an improved framework of guidance and collaboration opportunities for social economy entities
- to provide a clear definition and regulations for social economy enterprises
- to increase knowledge on and understanding of social enterprises and their societal impact
- to create a stronger business foundation in social enterprises and more social-economic entrepreneurship

The policy document offers a broad definition of social enterprises that allows to include companies that provide benefits for the community with reference to social, cultural, employment or health care-related, and environmental objectives. However, the government seems to particularly address the employment-oriented social enterprises which is considered to be the most prevalent in Denmark (78% of the 292 social enterprises have a social or employment-related purpose and the remaining 22% have a health-related, environmental, or cultural purposes) (Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs, 2014).

In addition to the ten new initiatives at the state level there are initiatives at the local and municipal level. All Danish municipalities have established supporting structures for volunteering – e.g. volunteering coordinators such as ‘Volunteer Houses’, etc. Some municipalities have also established and implemented strategies for social enterprises, for instance the Municipality of Kolding and the Municipality of Copenhagen. In Copenhagen, a very interesting incubator for social innovation has been established – funded by Askovfonden (<http://www.kbhplus.dk/>). Also worth mentioning is Social+, a Danish launch pad for social inventions and social innovations (<http://socialeopfindelser.dk/english/>).

Several networks already exist focusing on social innovation. One example is ‘The Danish Municipality Network’ coordinated by the Danish Technological Institute with approx. one third of the Danish municipalities as members (<http://www.teknologisk.dk/det-kommunale-netvaerk-for-social-innovation/32158?cms.query=det+kommunale+netv%E6rk>).

Other networks of information platforms are:

- Sociale-entreprenorer.dk
- [Facebookside for Sociale Entreprenører i Danmark](#)
- [Linkedin side for Sociale Entreprenører i Danmark](#)
- Frivillighed.dk
- Ruc.dk/forskning/forskningscentre/cse/
- Socialopfindelser.dk
- Koeb-socialt.dk
- www.socialokonomi.dk

7.2.3. The UK

Examples of financial and other tools (HM Government, 2013) that the government put in place to facilitate the implementation of its aims of devolving decision making, promoting 'active citizenship' and the growth of the third sector include:

The Localism Act 2011 provided the basic legislative framework for fulfilling the coalition agreement to devolve power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups. It recognises that 'voluntary and community groups often find that their potential contribution is neglected, when, in fact, they carry out some of the most innovative and effective work in public services and we should be encouraging them to get more involved (DCLG, 2011). Among the provisions of the Act, therefore, are new rights for communities to express an interest in running services and to buy assets which councils dispose of (the community right to challenge and the community right to bid (assets of community value)).

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 came into effect on 31 January 2013 and requires public bodies to consider social value ahead of a commissioning goods and services. Such bodies have a legal duty to consider what they propose to commission 'might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area'. Social Value is about maximising the impact of public expenditure to get the best possible outcomes by taking into account what is created, and sometimes what is forsaken, through a commissioning process. Its intention is to frame commissioning as more than a financial transaction or contract and to take into account factors such as happiness, wellbeing, health, inclusion, and empowerment. The Act recognises that such kinds of value may accrue to different people, communities, government departments or organisations from the one paying for it but, within limits, requires commissioners to take such wider potential benefits into account.

The Centre for Social Impact Bonds (based in the Cabinet Office) which provides online resources and workshops and made over £70 million available through the Investment Readiness programme; the Department for Work and Pensions Innovation Fund; and the Social Outcomes Fund.

The Big Society Capital, a social investment bank, which has made commitments of over £150 million with additional, matched funds from third party investors such as private banks.

The Social Investment Tax Relief which gives individuals who invest in qualifying social organisations a reduction of 30% of that investment in their income tax bill for that year.

Social enterprise funds including the new venture capital fund, set up by Triodos Bank, which invests in high impact and commercially sustainable social enterprises. Their aim is to help grow a dozen or so social enterprises.

Community budgets – piloted in 2011 and then continued in the form of Whole Place Community Budgets and Neighbourhood Community Budgets - which provide opportunities for citizens and third sector organisations (in collaboration with other partners) to participate in area-based reviews of public resources and how they might be allocated to secure better social and public value. A range of learning networks have been set up to support new areas in taking a community budget approach; information and advice are available online.

Personal (health) budgets launched in 2011 following their equivalent in social care; they allow people to buy in support services from a range of agencies including the third sector with a shadow or cash budget; the English model originates from a third sector organisation ('In Control') which was established, with the Department of Health financial support and involvement to develop, pilot, and advocate for the roll out of such personal budgets.

Social Impact Bonds – first launched in 2010 by the Justice Secretary to finance a prisoner rehabilitation programme – aim to steer money into the provision of services that are expected to achieve social benefit and long-term cost savings to the government. The repayment to investors is contingent upon specified social outcomes being achieved (rather than an actual return on investment). Third sector organisations such as 'The Young Foundation' participated in the development of social impact bonds and are still actively involved in their implementation.

In the Arts and social sector field, the Government in collaboration with the Arts Ventures Fund plans to launch co-mingling funds later in the year. Philanthropic money, usually from a charitable foundation, is invested alongside more commercial funds to achieve social impact as well as a return on the investment.

The government launched a number of departmental and cross-departmental programmes that reflect their vision and set out strategies to implement the required changes. For example, Free Schools – based on a Swedish concept – are mentioned in 'The School White Paper 2010' (DfE, 2010) as an opportunity for private and third sector organisations to provide education for children with emotional or behaviour problems, at risk of social exclusion, or without a mainstream school place, especially in deprived areas.

The Dementia Challenge was launched in March 2012 and builds on the National Dementia Strategy which recognises the role of the third sector as a provider of services and support to people with Dementia and their carers. Innovative features include the dementia challenge champion groups which work on: driving improvements in health and care, creating dementia-friendly communities and improving dementia research to support, inter alia, innovation in care models and service delivery arrangements. The Alzheimer Society has been a key partner in the development of the strategy and leads the 'Dementia Friends' initiative which works with the Department of Health to increase awareness at a national scale and is financially backed by the Social Action Fund.

In 'Positive for Youth' (Cabinet Office, 2010 a; b) the Government explicitly puts the third sector at the centre of local service provision in the context of a joined up central government approach and the engagement of young people in policy and service delivery decisions. Third sector organisations working with young people – together with young people themselves – will be working with officials across government departments to make sure they adequately respond to young peoples' needs in particular of those who are disadvantaged. £31.4 million is invested in third sector early intervention programmes considered to be 'of national significance' and for a smaller number of projects that test 'radical new system-wide approaches'. Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness are evaluated alongside the initiative. In addition, £30 million have been made available this year for social impact bonds to support young people who are unemployed or at risk of becoming unemployed (Growing the social investment market – 2014 progress update). A community interest company specialising in trading was tasked to provide licensing and franchising opportunities to innovative third sector organisations so that they can roll out their proven effective practices.

In the UK, a small number of third sector organisations are concerned with social innovations at a policy level. A particularly important role in informing policy is played by NESTA (the National Endowment Fund for Science, Technology and the Arts) which was originally established as an executive non-departmental public body but was transformed by the Government in 2010 to become an independent charity that funds itself from the interest on the original endowment of £250 million which is kept as a trust. Its responsibilities and activities include: to publish national data on innovation spending, test and run innovation programmes of public service delivery and recommend ways of scaling them up, running mentoring networks and providing critical reflections on innovation topics. A fund of £25 million invests in social ventures with innovative products or services that address the following three challenges: an ageing population; the employability of young people; and the sustainability of UK communities. The charity also provides important funds such as a £25 million impact investment fund, which is linked to the Big Society Capital.

All of these initiatives show that the UK has by far the biggest support structure for socially innovative approaches pooling the resources of private commercial, civic and (quasi-) governmental actors. However, a key empirical question is the extent to which the structures and processes of national and local governance and implementation are effective in embedding innovation in mainstream commissioning and service delivery operations.

7.2.4. France

In France, different structures have emerged to support social innovation and the third sector at a national and a regional level, e.g. publicly funded agencies, networks of entrepreneurs, and incubators.

AVISE is a central agency at the national level created in 2002 by the Caisse des Dépôts (public bank) and by major players in the social economy. This agency intends to increase the number and performance of structures of social and solidarity economy (SSE). AVISE has been a pioneer in defining and promoting social innovation. According to Prunelle Gorget, Programme Manager, social innovation especially offers an opportunity for additional funding and support of the SSE sector. One of the AVISE objectives is to open the field of innovation to social

innovation and thus to SSE enterprises. There is, for instance, a demand that the existing tax reduction possibilities for research and development ('Crédit Impôt Recherche') be more accessible to SSE sector enterprises. The objective is to 'decompartmentalise' regular enterprises and social enterprises as well as regular innovation and social innovation.

L'Atelier, operating at a regional level, was founded in 2007 by the vice-president of the Île-de-France region who has been in charge of SSE since 2004. The creation of l'Atelier was the result of a dialogue between different regional actors concerned with SSE who expressed the need for a regional resource centre dedicated to the social and solidarity economy sector. The mission of l'Atelier is "to foster the development and promotion of SSE in the Île-de-France region". In 2011, as a result of the work of AVISE and the CSESS ('Conseil supérieur de l'économie sociale et solidaire'- Superior Council for Social and Solidarity Economy), l'Atelier promoted the idea of social innovation in the 'Regional Strategies of Innovation'¹. The strategic advisor at l'Atelier, Laura Winn, emphasised that there is a risk of a semantic drift as to SSE and social innovation, i.e. the risk that 'social innovation' may be regarded as new name for social and solidarity economy. Therefore, l'Atelier strives to maintain SSE funding beside social innovation and suggests that for profit companies should be regarded as eligible for social innovation funding as long as they can prove that they have a responsible approach. However, it is the respective SSE directorate which is in charge of calls for proposals concerning social innovation in the Île-de-France region. As a consequence, it is not easy to include enterprises that do not belong to the SSE sector. Another example given by Laura Winn to illustrate how difficult it is to build bridges in this context is the existing regional policy concerning 'responsible innovation'. Despite the efforts made by l'Atelier, very few SSE enterprises answer to the call for proposals concerning responsible innovation.

Social Incubators have emerged since 2005 in France and are embedded at a local level. Antropia was created in 2005 by the Social Entrepreneurship Chair of ESSEC Business School in partnership with a regional bank, the Caisse d'Épargne Île de France Nord. An interview with Julie Rebattet, co-director at Antropia emphasized the fact that Antropia is more oriented towards social innovation than to the traditional characterisation of the SSE sector. Indeed, the selection of the projects that will be supported and funded is not based on the legal form of the enterprise in question, since the enterprise has mostly not yet been created. The focus is on the three following criteria: Is the project socially innovative? What is the motivation of the entrepreneur? Are stakeholders included to make the impact 'systemic'?

Alter'Incub is another social incubator created in 2007 in partnership with the Languedoc-Roussillon Region, the EU (FEDER), the Caisse des Dépôts and several major actors in the social economy. As in Antropia, projects have to be socially innovative to be eligible. In both cases, a bridge is built between academia and the creation of socially innovative enterprises. However, the main difference is that Alter'Incub emphasises the importance of the collective dimension

¹ 'Stratégies Régionales d'Innovation' (SRI). To improve the identification of the specific strengths and weaknesses of the innovation process in each region, based on a proposal by the European Commission and in agreement with the French government, the French regions were invited in 2007 to develop a regional innovation strategy (DATAR, 2012, p.2).

for the emergence of the social innovation (Richez-Battesti & Vallade, 2009). Alter'Incub is more focused on collective forms of social enterprises such as cooperatives or associations, while projects supported by Antropia are more often privately owned enterprises with a social mission.

In 2013, a new French Public Investment Bank was created (BPIFrance). The financing of social and solidarity economy (SSE) through BPIFrance is a commitment of the President of the French Republic elected in 2012, François Hollande. New financing tools have been announced by the Director of BPIFrance.

In France, there is an interesting tension between established third sector actors and the new concept of social innovation and its implications. This conflict, however takes place at the level of the involved actors with little interference by regulative policy. The idea of social innovation is welcomed and relevant actors are being defined but there is some uncertainty as to how these actors will be able to transform their aspirations into concrete action.

7.2.5. Germany

In Germany, there are several examples of support structures related to social innovation. One example, which is directly linked to civic engagement and similarly to the example from the Netherlands, are the voluntary agencies coordinating volunteers and organisations that need support, senior offices, self-help contact points, citizen associations, local alliances for families, district offices, and communal staff offices for engagement. They all play a role in stimulating civic engagement and establishing effective links between volunteers and organisations; thus, they can act as stimulators of social innovation. The federal umbrella organisation which includes these agencies hosts an annual innovation prize which is awarded for outstanding achievements in realising this mediating function.²

Another interesting connection between volunteering and innovation is the support granted by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) to so called 'Bürgerstiftungen' (citizen foundations), which are seen as a means to promote social cohesion but also innovation, specifically innovation with a local focus (Deutsche Bundesregierung, 2010, p. 62).³

At the national level there are also emergent financial support mechanisms for social innovation. A particular one is a scaling fund for social entrepreneurship. At the end of 2011 the BMFSFJ, together with the state-owned KfW bank (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau), announced the establishment of this fund (Bundesministerium für Familie & KfW, 2011); the KfW provides a certain amount in form of equity capital which then has to be matched with an equal amount from a private investor. The overall KfW investment is limited to € 200,000. Although the initiative was criticised and had limited success in terms of financing agreements (Scheuerle, Glänzel, Knust, & Then, 2013), it illustrates a clear policy shift.

² See: <http://www.bagfa.de/aktuelles.html>

³ See also: <http://www.buergerstiftungen.org/>

In terms of recognition for social innovation the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth intends to establish a 'social innovation award' meant to complement the National Award for Civic Engagement (Deutsche Bundesregierung, 2010, p. 55). However, this has not yet led to any concrete action.

A more established programme is 'social impact lab', a scholarship programme initiated by a social entrepreneurial and a German corporation and supported by BMFSFJ. It aims at building an infrastructure for social innovators, including business model support, new modes of financing, and supportive exchange networks.

As it is the case with many of the initiatives and the sketched policy trends, the initiators of the above mentioned programme underline that social innovation in Germany and the recognising and supporting of social innovation-related policies are predominantly the result of efforts by diverse (mostly) civic, but also some business actors. Policy is only slowly but steadily leaving traditional paths in order to embrace new concepts such as social innovation and to try to support and serve as a mediating element between involved constituents. This has led the established Welfare Associations, which represent the biggest part of the German third sector, to actively engaged in the subject despite their initial reluctance (Nock, Krlev, & Mildenerger, 2013).

7.2.6. Italy

The 20 Italian regions and the more than 8,000 municipalities have a considerable degree of autonomy in implementing social policies.

The Third Sector Forum, a nation-wide forum representing third sector organisations' interests, was officially constituted in 1997. It represents 70 national umbrella organisations of the third sector across the fields of social cooperation, volunteering, international solidarity, ethical finance, etc., with an overall of 94,000 local units across the country. The objectives of the Forum are to represent and support the interests and varied activities of the different third sector organisations in the country. The structure of the Forum is decentralised and consists of 16 regional forums and 40 sub-regional forums, so that it can better represent the civil society's interests and activities at the district and local levels.

In accordance with its mission and objectives, among the major projects run by the Forum there are executive education-related projects and an Observatory with reference to the Legislative Decree 328/2000 on the integrated system of social services and initiatives. First, the Forum develops executive education programmes in all Italian regions, thus aiming at providing training for existing and future social entrepreneurs and managers of third sector organisations, in order to increase their negotiation capacities, to foster dialogue with the political and the for-profit world, and to develop knowledge-sharing processes among all third sector organisations. Second, the Observatory has the specific objective to monitor the advancement of the Legislative Decree 328/2000 supporting the dissemination of best practices within social innovation and social care that originate from local communities, the elaboration of new proposals to modify the legal regulations on third sector organisations and social enterprises, and the strengthening of the dialogue between third sector organisations, unions, and public institutions.

Several umbrella organisations exist in Italy, the Third Sector Forum alone represents 70 nation-wide umbrella organisations, which in turn comprise several organisations with different mandates and fields of activity as well as different governance models. The strongest third sector movement in Italy is the one of social cooperatives; therefore, the major umbrella organisations belong to the cooperative sector. The most important umbrella organisations with regard to their size, their function in promoting the welfare of Italian communities, and the extent of their representativeness are: Confcooperative, Legacoopsociali, and Consorzio Gino Mattarelli (CGM).

Confcooperative is the Italian Cooperative Confederation, one of the main umbrella organisations providing support and assistance for the cooperative and social enterprise movements in Italy. It encompasses almost 20,000 enterprises, more than 500,000 employees, and 65 billion euro of total sales volume. It represents almost 3,300,000 associated citizens. It is organised in 22 regional offices, 81 district (province) offices, and 7 inter-district offices. Constituted in 1919, it is inspired by the Church's social doctrine and it particularly focuses on the support of the cooperative movement in Italy and abroad and on fostering the relationships with other international cooperative movements.

Legacoopsociali constitutes the biggest part of the Italian cooperative movement; it comprises 15,000 associate cooperatives and represents around 8,000,000 associated citizens, 76 district (province) offices, 21 regional offices, 1 national office, and 1 European office based in Brussels. For its members, Legacoopsociali fulfills the role of a 'supporter' and a 'watchdog'. It coordinates the network strategies and policies and promotes legislative proposals and debates with public institutions, corporations, unions, and international organisations. It also surveils the proper implementation of strategies and policies by the associated cooperative enterprises.

Another cooperative group is the CGM; founded in 1987 it currently handles 10,000 local units, 70 districts (province), and 5,000 municipalities. In accordance with its specific mission, the CGM provides citizens with social and health care services in a direct way (40%) or in collaboration with local governments (60%). Overall, more than 700,000 Italian families benefit from the CGM network and make use of a wide range of services, including education, health care, rehabilitation, social care, culture, and tourism.

The Third Sector Agency (1997-2012) was a public agency directly supervised by the presidency of the central executive government. During slightly more than a decade its mission was to monitor, promote, and guide the third sector's strategies in the country. Although it was closed down in 2012 by the Mario Monti's government, the new government has proposed to reconstitute the Agency (Italian Government, 2014b) and to perpetuate a part of its wider approach to the third sector organisations and social enterprises in the country. However, it is too soon to tell which mission the 'new' agency will have and which changes will be introduced in comparison to the former one.

In Italy, there is a predominant motive of 'self-organisation' in the literal sense, since there is a strong focus on a co-operative movement which spreads over the whole country. The form of engagement differs from that in the Netherlands where action networks seem to be much more informal and less organised. Generally, in Italy the social innovation streams seem to be much

more solidarity-driven, whereas in Denmark (with yet another 'local' approach) the policy discourse is much more technology-driven.

7.2.7. The Netherlands

Social innovation (SI) programmes generally aim at the business and research sectors rather than at the third sector. As far as SI is related to the third sector, the focus seems to be rather on grassroots initiatives than on formal organisations.

The most concrete support infrastructure from programmes that particularly address SI are the test beds that were founded to foster the scaling up of local initiatives which target environmental sustainability (TK, 2013/2014). On top of that, the policies that do not explicitly refer to SI offer a national support infrastructure. This applies particularly to the already mentioned Social Support Act (WMO), which assigns the task of fostering civic engagement, volunteering, and grassroots initiatives to local authorities. Municipalities often embed such policies in the neighbourhood programmes which tend to work with municipal officials adopting the role of 'neighbourhood coordinators'. Alternatively, and often additionally, municipalities make contracts with local welfare organisations. These organisations are traditionally involved in community development and community organising. They are increasingly being remodelled to serve as professional agencies that provide support to volunteer projects or civic initiatives. This shift is advanced by the 2010 'welfare new style' programme of the Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sports (VWS, 2010). The initiatives that such agencies support range from small, informal groups to relatively well-established civic organisations (foundations, cooperatives, etc.) in fields as divergent as social care, security, or energy supply.

Local authorities provide volunteer support, in form of volunteer centres in order to create the conditions for encouraging people to volunteer (Mensink, Boele, & Van Houwelingen, 2013, pp.135-136; Van Houwelingen, Boele, & Dekker, 2014). Examples include matching demand with supply, promoting volunteering, expressing appreciation for volunteers, and supporting volunteer organisations to ensure that gained knowledge is not lost. This policy was already deployed before the Social Support Act (WMO) was introduced, and was later continued with national policy papers on volunteering.

Larger municipalities tend to have a larger civil service apparatus, which translates into more detailed and better argued policy plans. In addition, the support for urban volunteers is provided by differentiated organisations set up specifically for that purpose. In villages, by contrast, there is sometimes only one person in charge.

Policy makers appear to be sceptical about the task assigned in the Social Support Act to encourage people to take new initiatives (Mensink, Boele, & Van Houwelingen, 2013). They feel that initiatives in which they take the lead are less successful than bottom-up initiatives. They also believe their ability to steer initiatives is limited. Yet some of them look for opportunities to launch new initiatives, especially in neighbourhoods or districts where they do not arise spontaneously. Municipalities tend to make funding available to encourage new initiatives for one-off activities, often in the form of a programme in which people can submit ideas for initiatives that are eligible for grants. The funding does not always come from the

Social Support Act budget but is sometimes drawn from neighbourhood action funds. Municipalities also occasionally provide funding for longer-lasting projects.

7.2.8. Spain

In Spain, there are several umbrella organisations and networks supporting the third sector such as the Third Sector Platform, the European Anti Poverty Network in Spain, the Social Inclusion Network, or the NGO Social Action Platform, among which only the following three refer to social innovation in their strategic plans and positioning documents:

The Third Sector Platform (Plataforma del Tercer Sector) was created in January 2012 in order to unify and amplify the voice of the third sector by the seven organisations leading the social third sector in Spain. Its main strategic document emphasises that social innovation is a the key lever for the modernisation of the sector (PTS, 2012). This platform integrates the NGO Social Action Platform (Plataforma de ONG de Acción Social) whose strategic plan refers to innovation as an opportunity to improve non-profit-business partnerships, which is a missing component in third sector proposals and also as a necessary step towards increased legitimacy of the sector (PONGAS, 2013).

Social Inclusion Network (Red de Inclusión Social) integrates all relevant public administrations and third sector organisations interested in social inclusion in Spain, particularly in active inclusion policies geared towards employment. The network was created in 2010 and is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). Its goals are to promote coordinated action within the network, exchange best practices, and analyse the impact of ESF funding on social inclusion. Its 2011 positioning document (RIC, 2011) mentions the flagship initiative Innovation Union and the necessity to combine political orientation with economic considerations (e.g. investing in innovation) when approaching the complexities of social inclusion.

There are also public entities and academic centres promoting research or social innovation training or both. The ESADE Institute for Social Innovation (Instituto de Innovación Social de ESADE) is one example. The mission of this institute, created in 2009 within the private Jesuit University Ramon Llull University and based in Catalonia, consists of developing personal and organisational skills within the business community and not-for-profit organisations in order to strengthen their activities and their contribution to a more just and sustainable world. To advance this mission, the institute is involved in research and training on, and the dissemination of corporate social responsibility, responsible investment, non-profit management and leadership, and social entrepreneurship. The institute's three main initiatives that specifically focus on social innovation and belong to its social entrepreneurship field are:

- Momentum Project: an annual programme in collaboration with the BBVA bank to develop an ecosystem of support for promising social enterprises in order to consolidate and scale their social impact in Spain, Portugal, Mexico, and (later on) in Peru.
- Women Innovators for Social Business in Europe (WISE) project: it aims at developing a comprehensive training and development programme for female entrepreneurs in Europe who wish to launch social enterprises. The training and business development plan envisions the creation of Europe's first virtual network of female social

entrepreneurs. As an EU-funded Erasmus+ / Lifelong Learning Programme, WISE is run by a consortium including organisations from Switzerland, Austria, Greece, and Croatia.

The Deusto Social Innovation (Deusto Innovación Social) is a development unit within the Deusto Foundation, closely linked to the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences of the private Jesuit University of Deusto which is based in the Spanish Basque Country. Its mission is to transfer knowledge and to increase social outreach in the field of applied social science research and social innovation. Mainly operating as a consultancy unit in close collaboration with Innobasque (the Basque agency for innovation that will be referred to in the next but one paragraph), Deusto Social Innovation has been actively involved in the creation of social entrepreneurship and social economy in the Basque region.

Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT or Fundación Española para la Ciencia y la Tecnología) is a public initiative foundation that has extensively collaborated with private foundations and other third sector organisations interested in research and innovation (R&I), mainly those funding R&I projects or operating science museums and other programs to foster science education and to improve the social impact of science. Although the term 'social innovation' does not appear in its calls for funding, FECYT supports the development of innovative culture and projects through funding, research, and training, often in collaboration with and/or through implementation by the third sector.

There are also several relevant social innovation incubators and regional or local policy reforms or initiatives, particularly in the Basque Region (Euskadi), where a constellation of social innovation initiatives, frequently implemented through collaboration networks, has emerged in connection with two agencies: Innobasque, which is devoted to innovation in general, and Dennokinn, which is committed to social innovation and business entrepreneurship.

Innobasque, the innovation agency of the Basque regional government, has been the leading example in Spain in understanding social innovation as a part of a regional innovation strategy, thus contributing to sustainable social and economic development at a regional level. Innobasque launched a 2-year strategy for social innovation in February 2011. The strategy acknowledges the transformative capacity of emerging models of sustainable organisations, which provide affordable goods and services, thus enhancing the welfare of those segments of the population which need it most. Such models include social economy organisations, hybrid or fourth sector organisations, social learning, CSR and BoP (Innobasque, 2011, p. 28). Among the initiatives developed by Innobasque in the field of social innovation in collaboration with other institutions and social actors, the following should be especially mentioned:

- Innobasque has developed a pilot research project to establish a Regional Social Innovation Index (RESINDEX Euskadi 2013) in cooperation with Deusto Social Innovation and Sinnergiak Social Innovation. Sinnergiak is a social innovation centre set up by the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) as part of its EUSKAMPUS strategy for an international campus of excellence. The centre's goal is to foster synergies between people and organisations both regionally and internationally in order to carry out projects and experiments within the social innovation field in the Basque Country. RESINDEX is a tool to measure the impact of social innovation in the

Basque Country; it is part of a regional initiative to design public policies that foster social innovation and to evaluate the factors that may affect the development of social innovation within organisations. A whole chapter in the index is dedicated to non-profit organisations.

- Innobasque has promoted the Basque Network of Science, Technology and Innovation (Red Vasca de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación). This network involves non-profit organisations (mostly foundations) that are considered to be ‘intermediate innovation organisms’ and support innovation. It also includes social innovation objectives, in particular related to awareness raising, knowledge transfer, and innovation culture. An outstanding example of a member of this network is MIK, the Management Research Centre of the Mondragon Corporation, the leading industrial group in the Basque Country and the biggest industrial cooperative experience in the world, originating in 1956. MIK works in close collaboration with large companies and SMEs, local public authorities such as the Basque government, regional governments, chambers of commerce, local development agencies, social entities, etc., in order to develop research and test projects concerning advanced management theories, techniques, and new organisational forms based on knowledge and innovation, mainly in the areas of open business, entrepreneurship, and socially responsible business models
- Innobasque has promoted the Centre for Social Innovation Eutokia, a co-working space established for social entrepreneurs in cooperation with the Municipality of Bilbao. It is a public-private initiative in cooperation with a network of social agents and organisations related to social innovation. EUTOKIA aims at functioning as a catalyst for social innovation at a local level.

Denokinn is the Basque Centre for Social Innovation, Entrepreneurship and New Business Development, and can be considered a social innovation incubator committed to expanding a culture of social innovation and to supporting emergent social processes that have an impact on local communities. It is a non-profit initiative promoted by local authorities of the Basque region in collaboration with private entities and academic institutions, and fosters a comprehensive approach towards social innovation that includes existing private firms and the public sector. Among the initiatives developed by Denokinn in the field of social innovation in collaboration with other institutions and social actors the following should be mentioned:

- a four innovation laboratory structure covering the whole innovation cycle: 1) Innovalab is a lab for creativity working with private firms, local authorities, and third sector organisations to identify emerging trends and conceptualise innovation; it is the first Spanish innovation laboratory integrated in the European Network of Living Labs; 2) FabLab is a small-scale workshop with computer-controlled tools for the fabrication of innovations, in collaboration with MIT; 3) FormaLab fills the existing gap between innovations and educational programmes; and 4) Applab is transforming ideas into new business models, products, services, and commercialisation strategies. A good example of a novel, innovative product would be Hiriko, a folding two-seat urban electric car developed within the framework of an urban mobility disruptive innovation project in cooperation with the Smart Cities research group at MIT Media Lab folding two-seat electric car and demonstrated at Denokinn Labs.
- The first Social Innovation Park in Europe, located in Denokinn headquarters in Santurtzi, aims at designing, implementing, and testing new methodologies for

approaching future social challenges in an innovative way. Its pilot project, G-Lab (the 'G' stands for 'gizartea,' which means 'society' in the Basque language), aims at evaluating current social services provided by the public administration and private entities in order to design and implement innovative solutions through the creation of new social enterprises. Its focuses on user-centred methodologies, promoting employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, tele-assistance, and palliative care.

It should be mentioned that the Basque regional government launched the Public Innovation Plan 2011-2013 (Plan de Innovación Pública 2011-2013) as a strategic management tool to advance the application of innovative ideas and practices in the sphere of public management with the objective of creating social value.

Within the Catalan region, Citilab is worth mentioning. It is a centre for social and digital innovation that was created in 2008 by the Foundation to Support Knowledge Society (Fundación para el Fomento de la Sociedad del Conocimiento), promoted by Cornellà de Llobregat city council, Barcelona. It exploits and spreads the digital impact on creative thinking, design, and innovation that emerges from digital culture, and is a hybrid between a training centre, a research centre, and an incubator for business and social initiatives.

Finally, there are clusters (mainly in the Basque region but potentially also in the Catalan region) which play a pioneering role in the broader national effort to promote social innovation and are characterised by a particular commitment to the subject and to dynamic approaches in a way unparalleled anywhere else in other countries. From this point of view, it would be particularly interesting to see how and why social innovation thrives in exactly these regions, while it was not possible for it to migrate and establish itself in other Spanish regions in the same way.

7.2.9. Sweden

Although the Swedish policy landscape mirrors neither the level nor the initiatives of the social innovation discourse at the EU level, there are several new initiatives and support structures engaged in advancing social entrepreneurship and social innovation. However, they seem not to focus specifically on third sector organisations but rather on 'good business' initiatives, in which the third sector and civil society organisations are sometimes considered to be a potential actor. There are also more institutionalised civil society organisations, which root, for instance, in the cooperative tradition and therefore are at the heart of what is understood as social economy; they take part in the development of social innovation on the basis of their individual interests. Following networks and organisations exemplify relatively new support structures with an explicit focus on social innovation in Sweden.

The Forum for Social Innovation Sweden (Mötesplats för Social Innovation, 2014a) is associated with the Malmö University and was commissioned by the Swedish government to develop and disseminate knowledge on social innovation and social entrepreneurship (Näringsdepartementet, 2013). The mission of the forum is to advance and foster social innovation so that it can strength Swedish society; this objective is to be achieved by

connecting different actors from academia, industry, government, and non-profit organisations, and by sharing news and information.

The Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, SCES (Centre för Socialt Entreprenörskap, 2014), is an incubator for social entrepreneurs. It was initiated as part of the business incubator at Stockholm University but is now run as a separate association with funding from two grant-making foundations. This incubator addresses social entrepreneurship organised in different legal forms, from civil society organisations to limited liability companies. However, the organisation emphasises that: 'It is an advantage if there are financial goals of the business. There must be a clear contrast to e.g. charity'. Moreover, it points out that, in contrast to Corporate Social Responsibility, the social mission must also be the core business of the organisation.

The Centre for Public Entrepreneurship (Centrum för publikt entreprenörskap, 2014) is a regional support initiative for social entrepreneurs in the region of Skåne in southern Sweden and provides mentorship and advisory services, especially for civil society organisations, public sector organisations, and for individuals, which have ideas as to how society can be improved.

Impact Hub Stockholm (Impact Hub, 2014) is another example of an incubator, primarily operating at local level. This is also a co-working office and has the mission to serve as a business incubator, innovation lab, and social enterprise community at the same time.

There are also examples of regional and local policy initiatives and reforms with relevance for the Swedish social innovation landscape. The Forum for Social Innovation points to several new initiatives and concepts that are being spread in Sweden. Social Impact Investment is one of them and focuses on innovative financial solutions with the aim to build a bridge between different sectors (Mötesplats för Social Innovation, 2014b). Social Investment is also a concept promoted by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) which highlights, for instance, that several regions and municipalities are actively working with 'early social investments in youth and children' (SKL, 2014).

These local or regional examples of support structures and initiatives reveal what could be understood as a significant gap between the interest in social innovation embodied by various local or regional efforts and the national policy in this field. The local and regional attempts to stimulate social innovation stand in stark contrast to the almost total absence of the social innovation concept and practice on the national policy level.

Another insight is that various actors within academia seem to have taken or been given a central role in promoting and fostering the concept and practice of social innovation in Sweden. This is not in itself surprising, since social innovation and social entrepreneurship have also internationally gained considerable attention in terms of academic research and teaching.

7.3. The overall country trends

7.3.1. The Czech Republic

It is obvious that social innovation is still not an entirely recognised concept in the Czech public policies and discourse. Authorities are not using it and in academia or the non-profit sector we can observe only a slow increase of awareness mediated by foreign evaluators such as SozialMarie.

The state accepts the concept of innovation in the technical sense, rather than in a social one. This is probably why there are no national, regional, or local policies and subsidies which explicitly aim at supporting social innovations. There are only implicit policies and programmes aiming at the support of social innovations; these policies and programmes are related to operational programmes co-funded by the EU, in which innovative activities and processes are emphasised and even represent a precondition for non-profits to participate in the programmes and to receive funding for their projects. In other words, if there are any signs of support and preference for social innovation in national or regional policies, this is almost exclusively a consequence of European or transnational policies and political strategies imposed on Czech authorities. Czech public administration does not reveal any significant potential to become a source of social innovations as a result of cooperation with the non-profit sector.

Structures supporting social innovation activities (excluding resource provision) are mostly dominated by non-profit and for-profit actors and initiatives. Even if these activities are sometimes supported by public authorities, this support is usually only symbolical and is not of monetary importance.

It seems that the problem arising in the policy frameworks on social innovations in the Czech Republic is due to the vagueness of the whole concept and to the uneasiness of national political elites and institutions which are facing pressure from EU institutions to foster and implement social innovation policies, but still have not found an effective way as to how to connect this pressure with civil society initiatives.

7.3.2. Denmark

The intertwined concepts 'social innovation' and 'social entrepreneurship' are considered as rather new phenomena in Denmark. Most of the mentioned support structures or initiatives were established after 2010. With regard to size, the initiatives and government organisations have been rather small, with only a few employees. It remains to be seen what changes will be associated with the new initiatives released by the government.

In an overview of research literature, Hulgård and Andersen (2013, p.16) highlight two interesting trends in the Danish social entrepreneurship or innovation field.

- a) Pluralism of terms – where a market logic gains ground over the civil society logic: many different terms are used to define social enterprise and social innovation. Some are focusing on 'social economy organisations' (such as the Centre for Social Economy and the Municipality of Copenhagen), while more recently social entrepreneurship or

social enterprises have gained ground (e.g. the think-tank Monday morning – <https://www.mm.dk/>; and the Social Capital Fund <http://www.densocialekapitalfond.dk/>)

While all the above-mentioned initiatives are influenced by the market logic (growth, professionalism, effectiveness, and return on investment), not everyone focuses as much on the civil society dimension (here associated with ‘values’ such as participant involvement, engagement, legitimacy, advocacy of vulnerable citizens, etc.) There is, however, only weak empirical data that can support this hypothesis.

- b) Institutional establishment of social entrepreneurship – where social entrepreneurship has rather quickly achieved a considerable institutional establishment in the form of new support structures, representation of interests, access to resources, and knowledge production. Several municipalities are also concerned with creating support structures in the form of special counselling, initiating teams, and financing solutions for start-ups. This development supports the notion that the social entrepreneurial initiatives are more and more regarded as a natural actor in the Danish welfare society.

Furthermore, there is a growing understanding that social innovation could be a way of reforming the welfare society and to increase the ownership of the welfare solutions in the population. From a government perspective, the focus has mostly been on volunteering and, recently, also on the potential of social enterprises. The recently released government recommendations with 10 initiatives advances the work but still do not represent a comprehensive strategy including policy measures that take all the aspects of social innovation into account, not just volunteering and social enterprises. In short, the concepts ‘social innovation’ and ‘civic engagement’ were hyped by the current centre-left government and the local municipalities.

The recently released 10 recommended government initiatives for strengthening and facilitating the work of social enterprises are recognition of the increasingly important role which the government expects social enterprises to play in difficult areas of societal intervention; however, the recommendations do not provide a comprehensive strategy or policy measures that include all aspects of social innovation. Few market actors and advocacy-oriented NGOs, however, are actively involved. The initiative launched to give a more active support to social enterprises is too new, so that it is not yet possible to comment on it. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that philanthropic foundations (civil society actors in their own right) complement market and state-based actors in supporting social innovation structures in Denmark. Foundations such as TrygFonden and the Velux Foundation are financially and organisationally involved in several of the given examples and regard social innovation as a core task to be advanced in the next decade.

7.3.3. The UK

In the UK, the central government has placed a strong value on social innovation as a response to the state’s financial deficit and other societal challenges; the current government has placed a strong focus on utilising the third sector to promote social innovation in welfare provision

alongside a strong ideological drive to reduce the size of government and the role of the state as a stated response to the perceived imperatives of fiscal austerity.

A conclusion from this initial snapshot is that the government in the UK heavily relies on social innovations from the third sector organisations to square the circle between fiscal austerity and growing demand, as well as to provide increasing opportunities for the devolution of responsibilities from the state to civil society. These goals have been relatively comprehensively and coherently expressed in the series of policy initiatives described here and their status is also reflected in the establishment of a Minister at the Centre of Government and an Office of Civil Society at the heart of the machinery of the central government.

The policy documents reviewed appear to give less attention to the role of the third sector as critic, advocate, and community development agent. The role as service provider has been the predominant one, though it might be argued that the encouragement of the third sector to work in partnership with the state to design services based on local understandings of need provides some opportunity to build such roles into contracting processes. However, the impacts of financial austerity and contractual relationships on the balance of the roles and functions fulfilled by civil society will need to be core elements of empirical research into the contribution of the third sector in the UK to sustainable initiatives in social innovation. We should be particularly alert as to whether the promotion of civil society is not only a source of social innovation but also capable of filling the gaps potentially opened up by the contraction of so-called 'big government'.

Moreover, many of the initiatives discussed here are of recent origin and have, by definition, yet to be subject to long term evaluation. Their impact is, therefore, uncertain. Critical dimensions for such evaluation will be how far they represent effective innovations in governance as well as services, including the extent to which they secure shifts in the balance of power and influence between local communities and government in what has historically been a highly centralised system of government at local as well as national levels.

7.3.4. France

The difference between the two social incubators Alter'Incub and Antropia illustrates one of the two main trends associated with social innovation in France, i.e. a profound gap between two very different concepts of social innovation (Klein et al., 2014). The first is a concept of collective social innovation which is embedded in civil society and based on 'strong solidarity', while the second is a concept of private social innovation which is embedded in enterprises and based on 'weak solidarity' (Klein et al., 2014). This conceptual divergence can explain why the issue of the definition of social innovation is so important and why a corresponding policy has not yet been formulated at a national level. If indeed there is a consensus on social innovation in the SSE sector, it has not yet spread beyond its borders. Even the currently discussed bill concerning the social and solidarity economy included a definition with two different characterisations of social innovation. The first one focuses on the results (i.e. to meet not yet satisfied social needs), while the second one focuses on the process (i.e. to meet social needs in a different way). In France this tension between different approaches to social innovation has not yet been overcome.

The second main trend is that, in France, social innovation is mainly promoted by the SSE sector. The SSE sector claims to be the principal social innovation laboratory (Chibani-Jacquot & Frémeaux, 2013). This claim is partly driven by a strategy to find new ways of funding the SSE by means of existing innovation-related loans. Yet, according to AVISE and l'Atelier, policies implemented to support social innovation should be open to actors which do not necessarily belong to the SSE sector. The PTCE (Pôles Territoriaux de Coopération Economique - territorial hubs of the social and solidarity economy) represent a relevant illustration of this inclusiveness. In fact, Laura Winn from l'Atelier emphasises the fact that SSE is a type of entrepreneurship, while social innovation is a process. Although they are frequently combined and coinciding, they are not automatically intertwined. Social innovation can be undertaken by diverse organisations: non-entrepreneurial civil society volunteers, public organisations, SSE enterprises, for-profit but socially responsible companies, etc.

Finally, it can be observed that social innovation is mostly embedded in a regional context. This is not surprising, since in research there is a consensus on the fact that innovation has a territorial dimension (Richez-Battesti & Vallade, 2009). Yet, the position of social innovation in comparison to technological innovation and with reference to the SSE is not straightforward even at the regional level. Julie Rebattet from Antropia often notices a gap between the institutional habits in the SSE and innovation departments at a regional level and the new innovative hybrid models of some social start-ups. In this context it appears that social innovation requires institutional change in order to be able to thrive. Institutional hybridity may be necessary to overcome the institutional isomorphism of the ESS and technological innovation field.

7.3.5. Germany

In Germany, policies concerning innovation exhibit a strong focus on technological solutions for societal problems; however, an increasing awareness of social innovation can be observed. This awareness came into being after a phase of reluctance towards and dismissal of the subject and of related phenomena. It seems that for policy makers it is much easier to embrace the focus on social innovation than that on social entrepreneurship, not least because social innovation better allows for including established welfare organisations. An emergent subject in German policy on social innovation is the attempt to initiate a cooperation between actors across sectors. Several of the most recent policy documents emphasise this multi-stakeholder involvement. Yet, social innovation is very strongly driven by actors from civil society, often smaller organisations, but also the big welfare associations start to deal with the subject in a more intensive way.

With regard to the focus of social innovation, we see that the concept is often interpreted within the context of service provision. However, there is an almost equal emphasis on solidarity issues, particularly with regard to the stimulation of volunteer or broader civic engagement.

A potential barrier but maybe also an advantage in promoting multi-stakeholder engagement is the fact that competencies are spread across several ministries. While the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth focuses on civic engagement and third sector activities, and is therefore the main institution dealing with social innovation

issues, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is appointed as the main institution for CSR, which is also potentially linked to the subject. Moreover, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research promotes not only research project but also networks that lie in between academia and practice. Finally, other ministries occasionally show interests in social innovation too; for instance the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, when it comes to environmental sustainability and renewable energy.

This intersection of competencies continues from the national level to the federal states level, where it can be observed that these federal states (Länder) engage to a varying extent in the subject, for instance in the context of regional development (see Land Baden-Württemberg, 2014; Land Brandenburg, 2014). This multi-facetedness could prove to be more effective in advancing such a complex subject as social innovation but it certainly poses many challenges in terms of coordinative efforts and makes it difficult to pinpoint dominant actors in social innovation discourse, policy, and practice.

7.3.6. Italy

The current legislative turmoil and the very recent approval of the third sector reform in Italy makes it hard to take a clear position as to what will result from the legislative process in terms of overall country trends with reference to the third sector and social innovation in Italy. Based on the proposed reform and the debate among practitioners and academics, in the following paragraphs we will try to provide some comments on future trends.

First, the concept 'social innovation' is not even mentioned in the government's reform document (Italian Government, 2014b), while one of its major points deals with the definition of 'social enterprise'. In this respect, the reform has expanded the range of activities and the identification of limits for the definition of social enterprises (trying to address the delicate balance between their social-related missions and their profit-oriented activity). Moreover, the reform demands that fiscal measures be introduced to support investments in social enterprises. No mention is made on which mechanisms will be enacted to assure social enterprises transparency and the evaluation of their impact.

Second, there is an increased attention to the use of finance sector tools in supporting the funding of social enterprises and third sector organisations in general. Again, this corresponds with the increased attention to measures for impact evaluation – the debate is open on the meaning of 'impact' and the possible ways to measure it.

Third, the reform has reconstituted the Third Sector Agency, however, with many unresolved questions as to how it should differ from the previous (unsuccessful) agency in terms of its role and the extent of its decision-making power.

Fourth, we are witnessing a general redefinition of the relationship between the third sector organisations and the public sector. In view of strengthening incentive mechanisms for the development of welfare initiatives from third sector organisations, different solutions have been proposed, i.e. the modalities through which public services will be assigned to third sector organisations will undergo an overall legislative and fiscal review; an experimental use of 'universal vouchers for social services' is currently under consideration and debate.

If the third sector is actually recognized as the engine of the planning and implementation of social and health services in Italy, this role is expected to be recognized by the new law and beyond political declaration. In Italy, the two concepts, social innovation and third sector, are still not viewed as related, at least not in political documents.

7.3.7. The Netherlands

Four trends, or developments, are worth highlighting on the basis of the screening of policies in the Netherlands. First, social innovation programmes generally aim at business and research sectors, rather than at the third sector. Second, as far as social innovation is related to the third sector, the focus seems to be rather on grassroots initiatives than on formal third sector organisations. Third, the notion that (local) governmental support for grassroots initiatives is embedded in the Social Support Act might imply a preference for social innovation in the field of social care and social support (even though there is also a social innovation programme for a sustainable environment). Finally, considering that the ‘participation society’ discourse is strongly connected to decentralisation of political authority to municipalities, we might expect that a support infrastructure for themes related to social innovation is mostly organised at the local level.

7.3.8. Spain

Trends for Spain should be explained not only in the context of the EU 2020 objectives but also against the background of specific country recommendations for progress towards 2020 targets in view of the recent period of long recession, and on the advances of a comprehensive policy reform agenda against the background of macroeconomic imbalances (mainly excessive deficit and still very high unemployment rate) should also be considered. According to the European Commission, the recovery of the Spanish economy remains fragile, requiring swift and full implementation of the reform strategy (EC 2013, 2014). On the one hand, the capacity of the social protection system to respond to growing poverty and social exclusion remains limited. On the other hand, Spanish economy remains less knowledge-intensive than the EU economy, despite the positive evolution of investment in research and innovation over the last decade.

The first trend that should be mentioned against this country-specific background is that the use of the term ‘social innovation’ has emerged in Spain only among a minority of state and regional policy makers, academics, and third sector organisations during the last few years.

In accordance with this, the second trend relates to the coexistence of largely different visions of relevant stakeholders as to what social innovation is and as to which role the third sector should play in connection to it. Although both most relevant policy packages at a country level connect social innovation with the third sector and share the goals of Europe 2020, the underlying vision of social innovation differs substantially, and so does the role that the third sector plays within those conceptualisations.

Third, and from a regional perspective, the Basque government has been very successful in supporting the development of a true social innovation network (understood as a network in the field of social innovation). It understands social innovation as a tool for socio-economic development at a regional level pertaining to a broader innovation strategy and building upon a

previously existing social economy sector, including cooperatives, savings banks, educational institutions, and foundations.

The fourth trend, in accord with the scarce usage and conceptualisation of the term 'social innovation', relates to the fact that in Spain the implementation of social innovation is still at an early stage and that its societal impact is not yet being evaluated. The main policy tool to foster social innovation at a state level, the 2013-2016 National Action Plan on Social Inclusion, is yet to be implemented.

To conclude, it should be noted that social innovation is scarcely mentioned in the positioning documents and strategic plans of umbrella organisations and non-profit networks and platforms. Once again, the conceptualisation differs amongst stakeholders, since social innovation is mostly understood as modernisation and an opportunity to provide legitimacy to the third sector. However, although recognised as necessary, in Spain a true debate on social innovation has not yet emerged within the third sector. A possible explanation for the apparent neglect of this strategic concept lies in the pressures on the sector to fulfil the urgent demands for social aid and assistance resulting from the crisis. Another possible explanation, to be eventually tested by means of case studies, is the scarce development of innovation in general and of social impact evaluation in particular among Spanish non-profits.

7.3.9. Sweden

In Sweden, the social innovation discourse and related practices spread to an only limited extent. The concept of social entrepreneurship is vibrantly discussed in certain communities, and is in some few instances also explicitly connected to the idea of social innovation. Most of these discussions are, however, isolated from those discussions regarding the third sector or civil society in general. Some specific third sector actors, have, nevertheless, been highly active in the debate in order to promote their particular missions and interests, for example organisations rooted in the cooperative tradition, in the 1990s often described as the core of the social economy. Traditionally, in Sweden the role of third sector and civil society organisations has primarily been to give voice or provide advocacy to those who need it. It is mostly in this traditional role and in the role of a potential partner in the development processes that the third sector and civil society organisations appear and are being mentioned in the policies related to social innovation.

The intertwined ideas of social innovation and social entrepreneurship are being advanced in the centre-right government's innovation strategy from a perspective that it is becoming more common with private service alternatives, where the public sector has previously been the only provider. This relates to a broader discussion regarding the possibility for customers to choose service providers, and the more general idea of pluralism among the actors in the provision of welfare. As a result of an ongoing and partly poisoned political debate as to whether profitmaking should be permitted to private actors engaged in the provision of welfare services and as to how these profits should be distributed and used, welfare service-providing organisations from third sector and civil society might gain more attention in the near future. To promote entrepreneurship in general, the centre-right government in office from 2006 to 2014 also engaged in a number of initiatives which are not directly connected to any of the concepts of social entrepreneurship, social innovation, or to the organisations found in the

third sector or civil society; nevertheless, these initiatives may have effects in these matters too.

In Sweden, there seems to be no particular interest in fully adapting to the current and emerging EU discourse on social innovation. In the policies where there is a potential capacity to include and promote the idea of social innovation in Sweden, it is merely mentioned as something needed in order to fulfil the EU requirements. However, the discourse represented by the formal policies on the national level does not seem to mirror the development of more concrete activities relating to social innovation at the regional and local levels. On these levels, we can already find initiatives and support structures with a potential impact on the development of the discourse as well as of the practice of social innovation. However, the emphasis on third sector actors or civil society organisations in these initiatives is yet very limited. In view of the fact that in Sweden the discourse on social innovation is quite young and considering the national elections in September 2014, it remains to be seen which will be the future role and position of civil society and the third sector with reference to social innovation policies and other initiatives.

8. Conclusion

The nine countries investigated in this second part of the report exhibit a high degree of variation with regard to the existing linkages between the policy discourses on social innovation and the third sector. The UK is the clearest example of a policy landscape where the policies on social innovation and policies on the third sector overlap in more than one way. The Czech Republic seems to exemplify an opposite situation, where the interest in the social innovation concept in the policy landscape is very weak and where researchers find no explicit connections to the third sector in the different national policy contexts in which social innovation is mentioned.

The migration of the social innovation concept into domestic policies and practice differs between countries and it is not possible to talk of a simple dissemination process. In some European countries social innovation is considered as a direct instrument for social and economic development; in others, the concept is almost non-existing in the policy landscape. In contexts where politicians are not actively promoting the ideas of social innovation, the concept is still being used in certain policy domains, partly as a result of the existing EU programmes and the policy discourse in which they are embedded (mainly the Czech Republic and Spain). Actors within or related to the third sector are also, in most of the EU countries, actively promoting the social innovation concept as a tool for achieving their own objectives (mainly France and to a minor degree Sweden). In some of the countries third sector actors are clearly engaged in social innovation policy development processes in collaboration with the different public authorities.

In those cases where third sector or civil society actors are mentioned in relation to social innovation in policy documents, they are frequently regarded as partners in the development of social innovation initiatives. However, the role of the third sector differs significantly between the countries along a continuum of understanding the third sector as advocate respective an understanding as service provider. The reports on the countries' policy landscapes related to social innovation indicate that the third sector actors are, in some countries and fields, predominantly perceived as providers of welfare service (the UK, Spain), especially in the field

of social care, whereas in other cases, they are primarily regarded as providers of voice or as advocacy platforms expected to influence the development of social innovation in the country (the Netherlands, Italy). The lively discussion on social innovation and the role of the third sector that currently takes place in some of the countries point to issues relevant for the future such as the sustainability of the initiatives, the independence of involved third sector organisations, and the character or quality of the relationship with the state and business sector.

This policy screening shows that in almost all countries, in which social innovation policy can be found, the third sector is recognised as an actor which is in some sense important for social innovation. Sometimes the third sector and civil society organisations are recognised in sector-specific policies, in which the assumed function aligns well with the definition of social innovation. Sometimes the third sector is explicitly described as an actor within the social innovation policy processes. However, even if the policy landscape depicts some of the preconditions for the third sector engagement in social innovation, the achieved impact of the sector might not necessarily be connected to the policies. Countries with a weak connection between social innovation and the third sector in domestic policies (such as the Czech Republic) illustrate that there are still initiatives which emanate from the sector itself without any public policy support.

Hence, such countries might still provide some of the most significant examples of third sector impact possible to understand and to describe under a social innovation label. Likewise, countries with a vibrant political debate and policy support regarding civic engagement and social innovation (such as the UK) not necessarily provide the most relevant examples of third sector impact. As some of the involved research teams have emphasised, in some contexts, where the national policy landscape might not affect the development to a very great extent, the impact is mostly based on local initiatives. However, in some contexts, it seems that the third sector impact with regard to social innovation were consistent throughout all the policies found at local, regional, national, and international level.

Finally, it is interesting to notice that this pre-study, which is intended to be transformed into a detailed policy analysis, indicates that the social innovation concept has been migrating from the EU level into the domestic policy landscapes of the individual countries. Moreover, it is important to point out that even if the concept appears in several fields and initiatives, there is no uniform process of dissemination between the countries. There is neither a uniform vision as to which effects the concept is supposed to have nor as to which policy fields it will mainly have an impact on.

It can be concluded that none of the countries have a fully developed and coherent social innovation framework. One reason for this is probably that the contexts in which it is supposed to be integrated is very different. It is probably also due to the lack of research on social innovation policies, initiatives, and support structures, e.g. with regard to the spread, impact, and way in which the concept and related policies were translated into the different countries' contexts. As some of the research teams emphasise, we are more or less in the middle of a process of social innovation policy and support structure development and we do not yet have the evidence of its consequences. Finally, if the impact of social innovation and civil society policies is to be understood, the context-specific function and intention of the policies must be

evaluated. Which are the questions and concerns that social innovation and civil society policies are supposed to respond to? The intended policy analysis will help us to expand our knowledge on this issue.

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