

Citizens' summary

EU proposal – social change and innovation programme

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Problems in the EU such as ageing populations, high unemployment, poverty and social exclusion require:

- adequate and effective reforms of **welfare and pension** systems and **labour markets**
- better access to **finance and small-scale loans** (below €25,000) for [social enterprises](#) and unemployed people, and people in unstable employment
- better support for working in other EU countries - **matching job-seekers with job offers**

EU law needs to be better implemented, to:

- improve working conditions
- reduce the frequency of work-related accidents and illness
- ensure gender and age equality in the workplace
- tackle new and emerging risks in occupational safety and health.

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

A new [EU regulation on social change and innovation](#) that would ensure:

- EU countries are in a better position to make the above reforms
- more small-scale loans are available – to boost self-employment and business development
- workers could move around Europe and companies recruit throughout Europe

WHO WOULD BENEFIT AND HOW?

European citizens would get:

- equal protection in the workplace, particularly the least-protected sectors and the most vulnerable workers (young people, workers on fixed-term contracts, low-skilled workers, immigrants, etc.)
- more job opportunities abroad
- better access to small-scale loans

Small businesses and social enterprises would get:

- support for employing young people
- easier access to funding for development, consolidation and scaling up their operations

National, regional and local authorities in the EU would get:

- guidance and training on applying EU law effectively
- support for effective employment and social policy reform
- EU-wide reliable data and statistics
- best practice and financial support to test and scale up innovative solutions for reforming labour market and welfare systems.

WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

The EU can provide:

- Europe-wide evidence, statistical tools and indicators on these issues
- a platform for exchanging innovative practice and mutual learning between countries
- expertise in microfinance that can serve microfinance institutions in all EU countries
- a multiplier effect to maximise the impact of national funding – pooling financial resources at European level would attract additional funding from third-party investors such as the European Investment Bank.

WHEN IS THE PROPOSAL LIKELY TO COME INTO EFFECT?

- 1 January 2014.