



## PRESS RELEASE

### European Commission launches €150,000 prize to harness technological change

*2017 European Social Innovation Competition 'Equality Rebooted' to award three €50,000 prizes for the best ideas to spread the benefits of technological change in Europe*

Today in Athens, the European Commission officially launched the 2017 edition of the European Social Innovation Competition aiming to 'reboot' equality and shape our future society by inspiring Europeans to provide fresh, energetic approaches to digital inclusion, collaborative economy, connectivity and skills development.

The European Commission is calling on Europeans to come up with innovations in tools, services and models that allow all members of society to acquire the appropriate skills and seize the many opportunities offered by technologies and the digital revolution.

Organised since 2012 in memory of Portuguese politician and social innovator Diogo Vasconcelos, the European Social Innovation Competition runs with a new theme each year, focused on addressing a different issue in Europe.

This year's launch was hosted at the Benaki Museum in Athens, and brought together inspiring social innovators from around Europe. The launch event heard from experts working in Greece and beyond including OpenLab Athens, Ondula, OuiShare, Fairmondo, as well as Impact Hub Athens and Nesta.

Amalia Zepou, Vice Mayor of Athens, said: *"Rising income inequality, a shifting labour market and digitalisation have brought significant change that is taking place across Europe, and we have also seen this first hand here in Greece. However, it's now more clear than ever that social innovation has the power to catalyse positive change and new approaches around Europe. I'm proud to support the launch of the 2017 European Social Innovation Competition in Athens and I trust Europeans to come up with creative responses to these challenges."*

European societies are transforming rapidly due to technological change. Digital / ICT-based businesses, the creative industries, high tech manufacturing, and knowledge-intensive services are creating increasing value for the economy, driving and taking advantage of technological progress but also impacting the labour market significantly.

The competition is looking for inspiring ideas, large and small, from people all around Europe who believe in building a truly inclusive economy and making the most of skills and technologies to close the gap in our society.

The European Commission is looking for innovations in tools, services and models to equip all members of society with the skills they need to be able to integrate and compete in a changing economy. Ideas could include, but are not limited to:

- New technologies and business models that make the digital economy more inclusive or use collaborative solutions to reduce inequality;





- Innovations that empower disadvantaged people to fully participate in the digital economy and gain revenue from employment or entrepreneurship;
- Initiatives that equip those at risk of being shut out of the labour market with the appropriate skills to shape the knowledge economy, such as creativity, communication or problem-solving;
- Solutions to protect and support low wage/skilled workers in the evolving labour market.

The competition is open to entrepreneurs, social innovators, students, designers, makers, tech enthusiasts, educators, individuals, groups and organisations from throughout the European Union and in countries participating in the European Horizon 2020 programme.

The competition will help the most innovative ideas and projects to achieve sustainable impact. Thirty of the most promising applications will be chosen as semi-finalists and will be invited to a social innovation mentoring academy in Madrid in July to progress their ideas.

The three most effective projects will each be awarded with a prize of €50,000 at the awards ceremony in October 2017 in Brussels.

Applications are open until 07 April (12 noon Brussels time). For full details please visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/social-innovation-competition>.

For questions about applications please contact: [info@socialinnovationprize.eu](mailto:info@socialinnovationprize.eu)

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NOTES TO EDITORS

### **About the European Social Innovation Competition**

The European Social Innovation Competition, launched in memory of Diogo Vasconcelos, is a challenge prize run by the European Commission across all European countries, now in its fifth year. The theme of the 2017 competition is Equality Rebooted and seeks to find innovations in tools, services, and models that can close the gap and allow everyone to seize the opportunities offered by technological change.

The competition is organised by the European Commission, supported by [Nesta](#), [Kennisland](#), [Shipyard](#), [Impact Hub](#) and [Matter&Co.](#)

For information about previous competitions and winning projects see:

2016: [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item\\_id=8973&lang=en](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=8973&lang=en)





  
EQUALITY  
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## European Social Innovation Competition 2017

2015: [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item\\_id=8567&lang=en&title=These-are-the-winners-of-the-2015-European-Social-Innovation-Competition](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=8567&lang=en&title=These-are-the-winners-of-the-2015-European-Social-Innovation-Competition)

2014: [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item\\_id=7531&lang=en&title=Three-projects-meet-the-European-Job-Challenge-and-receive-the-Social-Innovation-Prize](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=7531&lang=en&title=Three-projects-meet-the-European-Job-Challenge-and-receive-the-Social-Innovation-Prize)

2013: [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item\\_id=6699&lang=en&title=Best-social-innovation-ideas.-New-ways-to-create-new-jobs-and-businesses](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=6699&lang=en&title=Best-social-innovation-ideas.-New-ways-to-create-new-jobs-and-businesses)

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