



## Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) EVPA Progress Activity Report January-December 2016

—

In January of 2014 EVPA and the European Commission entered into a 4-Year Partnership Agreement. The Partnership was awarded under the financial Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), as the European Union's intended to foster cooperation with pan-European networks active in promoting access to social finance. In addition, the Partnership aims to increase access to finance to VP/SI practitioners in emerging and developing European markets.

The Partnership recognises the role EVPA plays as a network promoting societal impact through venture philanthropy and social investment and is aimed at encouraging further development of social finance in Europe.

Establishing this Partnership has increased EVPA's ability to work closely with EU institutions and better represent the interest of its members by strengthening the links between European institutions and practitioners alongside the possibility to voice the concerns and expectations of EVPA members to EU policy makers directly.

As part of the Partnership agreement EVPA focuses on four priorities:

- Support the Commission in its outreach activities at EU, national and local level with the aim of ensuring the implementation of European policies in the relevant area;
- Reinforce the capacity of the network's members, including through offering a platform for the exchange of good practices in the relevant field, and raising awareness on relevant EU policies;
- Voice the concerns and expectations of organisations facilitating access to finance to (potential) entrepreneurs from disadvantaged and under-represented groups / social enterprises; and
- Provide data / research on developments in the field and on priority topics.

These four priorities have informed a number of projects and events throughout 2016. From January to December, the following activities were undertaken by EVPA:

### **Priority 1.** *Support in outreach and member awareness raising of EU policy initiatives*

**Exchanges with EU and multilateral authorities:** Throughout 2016, EVPA's Policy Team was regularly in contact with various DGs of the European Commission, the European Parliament and its Social Economy Intergroup, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Investment Bank & Fund. Since July 2016, EVPA is also an official observer to the Global Social Impact Investment Steering Group and it is continuously collaborating with the OECD.



**EVPA policy roundtable:** For the first time, EVPA organised a dedicated policy roundtable gathering a selected group of 19 prominent VP/SI practitioners and EU representatives. Taking place at the Philanthropy House in Brussels on the 13th of October, EVPA's "High-Level Policy Roundtable on Social Enterprise Funding" was an open and interactive discussion between policy makers and VP/SI practitioners on how to co-create the conditions to improve the ecosystem for social enterprises funding, with a focus on the concept of hybrid finance.

**EU webinars:** In 2016, EVPA continued the "EU Webinar Series" it had initiated in 2014 to address European topics of interest to the VP/SI community. Three sessions were organised in 2016, covering the following topics: Crowdfunding for Impact (in March), Ordinary People as Social Impact Investors – Exploring Emerging Retail Models (in June) and EU Funding, more particularly EFSI Equity for Social Impact (in November). In 2016 alone, the Series attracted 214 "live" participants whereas the sessions' recording were viewed 355 times online afterwards.

**EU news:** In order to better inform its members of EU developments, EVPA published short articles on EU related topics in its monthly newsletter and on its website. In 2016 they covered the topics such as the European Social Innovation Competition, EVPA's contribution to non-financial reporting consultation, the EU start-up consultation as well as the recent developments of the GECES Expert Group or the revision of the EuSEF Regulation.

---

**Priority 2.** Reinforce the capacity of the network's members, including through offering a platform for the exchange of good practices in the relevant field, and raising awareness on relevant EU policies.

**Sectorevents and encounters with members:** Over 2016 EVPA hired two country representatives for Germany and France, to help foster more interaction between existing members and to further build out the sector in their countries. Several encounters and sector events were held to expand the network and increase awareness about EVPA activities. The events were coordinated with local partners and were directed at organisations that have the potential to become active in the field VP/SI sector.

EVPA's CEE representative worked to promote the practice of VP/SI practitioners in Bulgaria, Hungary and Serbia.

These combined activities resulted in EVPA bringing on board 32 new members from 19 countries.

**Annual conference:** The EVPA Annual Conference took place in November of 2016, and was co-organised with local partners. The event brought together European grant makers, investors keen to contribute to stronger societies, social entrepreneurs and policy makers and corporates seeking social innovations. 525 participants attended over 20 sessions to share best practice, discuss trends and debate different approaches. Several EU related topics were treated.

**Relaunch of EVPA website and online directory :** EVPA's launched a completely new digital platform in October 2016. This platform significantly enhances the ease with which members and stakeholders but also the general public, can find key information and tools and resources on the sector. It has a specific focus on national policy frameworks (Nexus) in United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal. It also includes an enhanced EU webinar and news section. The launch saw a big increase in traffic post launch.

The platform includes an online directory serving to create visibility and enhance connectivity among members. A detailed online directory – including organisational contacts- can be accessed by login. As part of the project a number of EVPA materials and digital components were redesigned and updated,



including an online networking application/portal for our conference. This portal was widely used and saw over 400 active users.

**Training Academy:** EVPA's training academy offers access to organised learning opportunities to advance the professionalisation of the sector. The academy offers practical guidance and thus fosters the societal impact of both social investors and the social purpose organisations they support. The first module of the 2016 Training Academy took place in June 2016 in Barcelona, Spain and the second in September in Brussels, Belgium.

In order to ensure that the Training Academy remains easily accessible to interested EVPA members, the Partnership enabled the financing of travel and entrance fees for interested members in underrepresented member nations.

---

**Priority 3.** *Increase collective knowledge - Voice the concerns and expectations of organisations*

**Access to finance blog** - a blog offering a platform to voice member concerns and challenges was launched in 2014 and continued over 2015 - 2016. The blog is designed to glean an understanding of the concerns and expectations of VP/SI practitioners offering access to finance across Europe and to allow practitioners to voice their concerns and expectations to the public, EU and national bodies. Over 2016 EVPA published 6 blog articles capturing the concerns and expectations of practitioners. These were also shared in our newsletter going out to all EVPA members and contacts.

**EVPA's National Policy Nexus:** Through a number of interviews and the consultation of numerous reports, EVPA's Policy Team developed the "*National Policy Nexus*", a project designed to allow EVPA members to have a comprehensive overview of their national policy landscape, while in turn developing a community of Policy Experts and identifying policy best practice benchmarking and sharing. In 2016, the Nexus focused on the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and Portugal.

**Exchanges with EVPA Members:** Throughout the year, numerous exchanges took place with EVPA members, in the context of EVPA's Nexus project, through which the policy team collected and facilitated access to information about the regulatory landscape of a selection of European Member States, but also through the quarterly calls EVPA held with its Policy Committee and various other requests re. EU policy applicable to the VP/SI sector.

**Consultations:** In 2016, EVPA contributed to 3 European consultations (one of its contributions having been submitted in December 2015 already) related to the revision of the EuSEF Regulation, payment by results schemes for social impact and the reporting of non-financial information by companies. The concerns and expectations of social enterprise funders were also captured through EVPA's proactive involvement within the GECES, where EVPA's Research & Policy Director represented the association, acting as the rapporteur of a working group focusing on improving access to funding for social enterprises, which led to a set of concrete policy recommendations adopted in Q4 2016.

**EVPA conference attendance:** Between January and December 2016, EVPA staff represented the experiences and concerns of social investors on 15 conferences in at least 7 different countries all over Europe. These included events in the Nordics, CEE and Western Europe.

---

**Priority 4.** *Provide data / research on developments in the field and on priority topics*

**Annual survey:** Over 2016, EVPA finalised the fifth report of the EVPA Industry Survey. The EVPA Industry Survey is a unique source of data for practitioners to understand the sectors' trends and it is used to



EUROPEAN  
VENTURE  
PHILANTHROPY  
ASSOCIATION

PROGRESS ACTIVITY REPORT 2016

inform data driven policy making in Europe. The report was launched at the 12th EVPA Annual Conference in Paris, in front of an audience of 525 practitioners and experts and in various online channels.

The industry survey report was also disseminated by way of webinar and an infographic. In order to ensure the maximum outreach and spread of our industry survey, we produced the multimedia format “An interactive journey through Venture Philanthropy and Social Investment in Europe – The EVPA Survey”.

**Event for corporates and corporate foundations:** This event was held in the lead up to EVPA’s annual conference and saw 90+ people attend. The aim was to show newcomers into the VP/SI space how corporates can engage in the venture philanthropy space, using the tools provided by venture philanthropy. This event was an excellent occasion for EVPA to show how the VP-approach works, leveraging the case studies developed through the years in previous EVPA research.

**Increase knowledge of key practices:** In 2016 EVPA worked on curating the work of other research and training institutions, to inform an even broader range of stakeholders on key sector learning and trends. EVPA participated in several exchanges and seven academic oriented conferences, both to present the work of EVPA and to exchange experiences and research insights with potential academic members.

EVPA also developed a database with contacts of academic members and other members conducting research in order to improve the way it selects and disseminate key research.

EVPA regularly disseminated, through its online channels, selected academic and sector reports to members and other VP/SI stakeholders.

**Best practice case studies:** In order to increase the knowledge and awareness of best practices in the VP/SI space, EVPA produced “VP in a nutshell – Case studies and good practices.” It was launched at the 12th EVPA Annual Conference in Paris, in front of an audience of 525 practitioners and experts. More than 200 copies of the booklet were distributed at the KC booth at the Annual Conference.

**The EVPA Training Academy webinar** “Commit time not only money. How social organisations grow through non-financial support” was held in June of 2016. It aimed at increasing the knowledge and awareness of best practices on how to plan and deliver non-financial support by leveraging the case study research developed by EVPA and the high-level expertise of key practitioners within the VP/SI space. The webinar presented through three cases, the key elements of on non-financial support.