



**WILCO**

Welfare innovations  
at the local level  
in favour of cohesion

## **Studying social innovation**

Lessons from the WILCO project

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# Design of WILCO



- ❏ International comparative project: Welfare Innovations at the Local Level in Favour of Cohesion
- ❏ Time period: 2010-2014
- ❏ Funded by the 7th European Framework Programme
- ❏ Coordinated by Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands

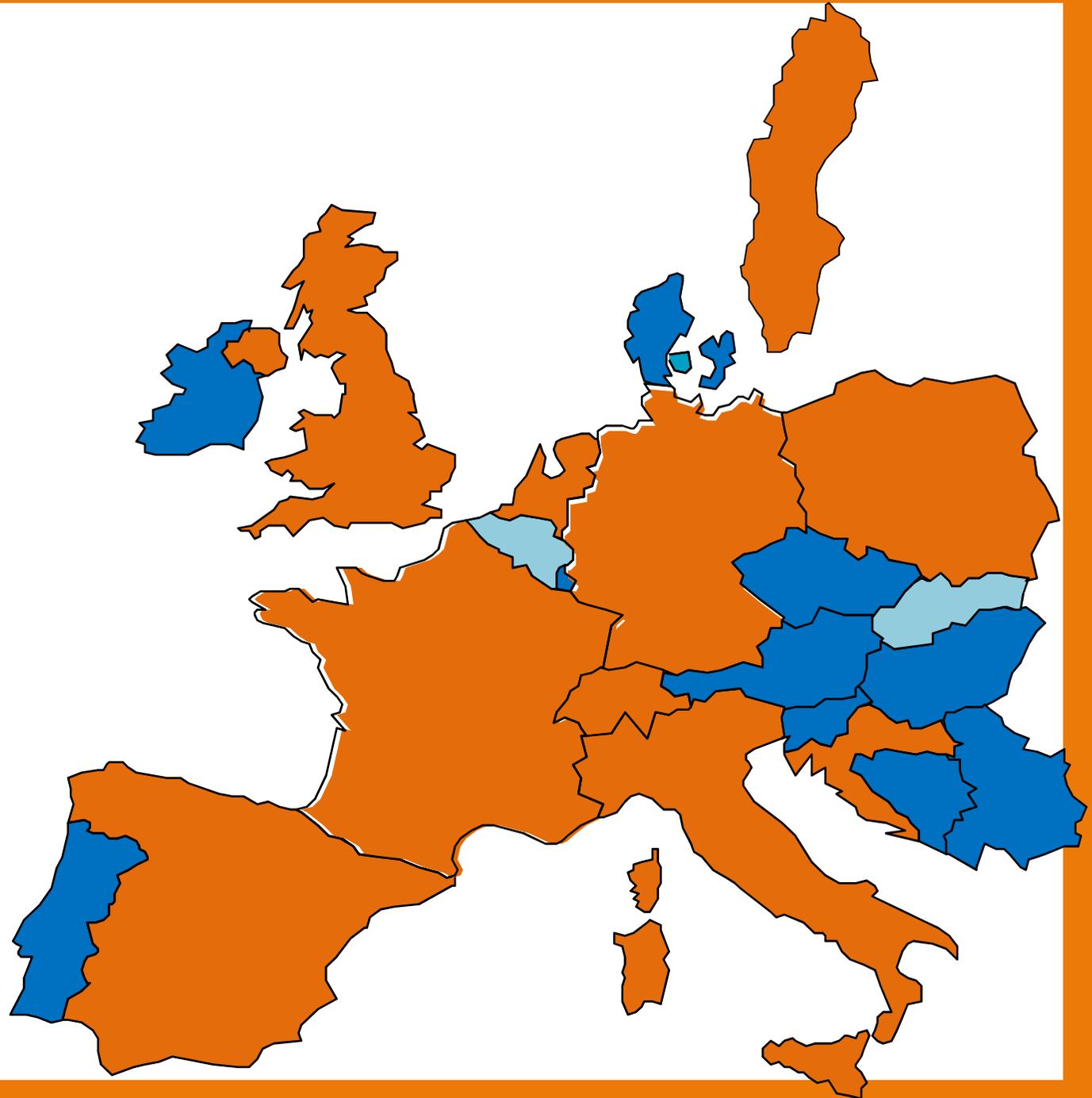


WILCO

Welfare Innovations  
at the Local level  
in favour of Cohesion



<b>Radboud University Nijmegen (Coordinating Institution)</b>
<b>Westfälische Wilhelms- Universität Münster</b>
<b>Politecnico di Milano</b>
<b>Université de Genève</b>
<b>University of Barcelona</b>
<b>University of Zagreb</b>
<b>Centre de Recherche et d'Information sur la Démocratie et l'Autonomie</b>
<b>University of Warsaw</b>
<b>University of Kent</b>
<b>Ersta Sköndal University College</b>
<b>Justus-Liebig University</b>
<b>EMES European Research Network</b>
<b>European Research Services GmbH (ERS)</b>
<b>The Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPACEE)</b>



# Goals of the WILCO project

- ③ To identify innovative practices in European cities and the factors that make them emerge and spread
- ③ To set them against the context of current social problems and urban policies
- ③ To make recommendations how to encourage local social innovation

# Dealing with the complexity

- ☐ Many different types of audiences: professionals, policymakers, academics, general public
- ☐ Multi-level analysis (starting from the most remote point)
- ☐ Fuzzy concept

Which means we had to:

- ☐ Accept that social innovation has different meanings and purposes to the people we work for
- ☐ Assess different needs and build multiple constituencies
- ☐ Integrate multiple objectives and types of messages from the very start

# Testing policy assumptions



Goal: challenging policy assumptions and myth-busting, for example:

- ⊞ Economic growth and social innovation always being part of a single, harmonious strategy
- ⊞ The emphasis on successful examples that can be scaled up
- ⊞ The presentation of social innovation as inevitable progress, only needing to overcome temporary barriers'

# Academic contribution

- ⊞ Goal: bringing social innovation research in tune with other work from established disciplines + producing sound evidence
- ⊞ For example, placing social innovations in the context of social policy research; innovation transfer research; pinpointing your own contribution





# Engaging local stakeholders

- ③ Goal: agenda-setting; trickling down of insights
- ③ Grassroots events: working through local/regional debates
- ③ Training modules



SEMINARIO  
PUBBLICO

Le città tra vulnerabilità e  
innovazione.

Elementi di discussione a partire  
da una ricerca europea

Venerdì 24 gennaio 2014  
Sala Maranta  
Via San Faustino 70, Brescia

# Different products

[www.wilcoproject.eu](http://www.wilcoproject.eu)



# Conclusion

- ⊞ In studying local social innovations, we faced many of the problems that we studied
- ⊞ A project such as this must recognise and embrace multiple ambitions
- ⊞ If that is done, the generative potential of the research is huge