

## **The Awards Ceremony of the second European Social innovation Competition**

This Ceremony took place in Brussels the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, as a conclusion of a 2 days Social Policy Innovation Conference launched by the DG Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission.

The 3 winners (out of 1 254 ideas received) were awarded a prize of 30 000 € each by Mr. Michel Barnier, European Commissioner.

This event, where the IAFP was represented by Jean-Michel Content, Secretary General, was an occasion for Michel Barnier to remind the key social challenges for the European Union, and incidentally to ask everybody to participate in the next ballot for the European Parliament. He particularly insisted on the statements included in “Europe 2020” on the subject and on the achievements by the Commission in this field.

The three winners, from three countries (Italy, Belgium and Ireland) presented very different projects:

- Italy: “From waste to wow”: fashion business demands perfection, and slightly damaged textile cannot be used for top brands. The project intends to recycle this first quality waste into limited collections and thereby provide jobs to disadvantaged women. This is about creating highly marketable products and social value through recycling.
- Belgium: “Urban Farm Lease”: urban agriculture could provide 6 000 direct jobs in Brussels, and an additional 1 500 jobs considering indirect employment (distribution, waste management, training and events). The project aims at providing training, connection and consultancy so that unemployed people take advantage of the large surfaces available for agriculture in the city (e.g. 908 hectares of land or 394 hectares of suitable flat roofs).
- Ireland: “Voidstarter”: all major cities in Europe have “voids”, units of social housing which are empty because city councils have insufficient budgets to make them into viable homes. At the same time these cities also experience pressure with social housing provision and homelessness. Voidstarter will provide unemployed people with learning opportunities alongside skilled tradespersons in the refurbishing of the voids.