

GROUP III's leadership is made up of well-experienced members, elected democratically every two-and-a-half years.



Group III Presidency for the 2010-2013 half-mandate:

Photo (from left): President & Vice-presidents:

Arno METZLER (Germany) Vice-President

Luca JAHIER (Italy) President

Maureen O'NEILL (United Kingdom) Vice-President

Pavel TRANTINA (Czech Republic) Vice-President

The administration of Group III is ensured by an active and dynamic Secretariat team whom you can always contact, should you be interested in finding out any further information about the activities of Group III.

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EESC

The European Economic and Social Committee is the Consultative body of the European Union, set up by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. It is the voice of organised civil society in the Union's decision-making process. It is a forum for consultation, representation and information which enables representatives of Member States' economic, social and civic organisations to play an integral part in the process of shaping Community policies and preparing Community decisions.

The added value of the EESC's work

- Considerable expertise under one roof, from the whole European civil society spectrum
- Through the opinions issued, the EESC's work ensures that the EU's legislative and executive bodies reflect the experiences, expectations and proposals of representative economic, social, socio-occupational and civic organisations
- Divergent interests find a place for compromise and consensus for the benefit of a healthy participatory EU governance

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European Economic and Social Committee

**Group III
VARIOUS INTERESTS**



**Diversity in democracy
Consensus building
European civic engagement – local action**

September 2011

Achieving real participatory democracy in the EU through civil dialogue



DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY

The presence of the Various Interests' Group, alongside the Employers' Group and the Workers' Group, ensures that the Committee is a dynamic force and is empowered to give full voice to the concerns of the various social, occupational, economic and cultural organisations that make up civil society in the Member States.

In line with the changes introduced in the new Lisbon Treaty, Group III is made up of «other representatives and stakeholders of civil society, particularly in the economic, civic, professional and cultural field.»

Academia (scientists, economists, sociologists, etc.)

Citizens' Participation and Empowerment

Consumers

Civil Society Development

Environment, Heritage & Sustainable Development

Farming, Agro-industry, Fisheries and Forestry

Family and Voluntary organisations

Human Rights (anti-discrimination, children, youth, women and gender equality issues, minority, migrant, marginalised groups, persons with disability and the elderly)

Professions (lawyers, medical doctors, architects, engineers, pharmacists, journalists, etc.)

Social Economy (cooperatives, mutualities, associations, charities and foundations)

Small, Medium-sized Enterprises and Crafts

CONSENSUS BUILDING

Consensus building can be seen at work at every level of our society. In Group III, consensus building is achieved through:

effective communication and networking

working together

reaching agreement

majority support

cooperation

Group III is a lively forum for various interest groups. When representatives of consumers and producers come together we are able to find common ground that advances the interests of both sides, and shows where a compromise might be possible on contentious issues.



EUROPEAN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT - LOCAL ACTION

In democratic governance, it is the citizens who determine in which direction they want to go, and the role of their representatives and bureaucratic agencies to get them there.

We take pride in the fact that most of our members take home, to their organisations and networks, the discussions on the opinions we deliver on EU legislative proposals. If our membership only comprised of representatives of organisations that already have an EU-Brussels presence, we would have little new to bring or add to the process that enables organised civil society to be part of and to influence European Union policy framing.

Nevertheless, two-way contacts with all other European civil society organisations are particularly important to us. We cultivate a good and fruitful relationship with the EESC Liaison Group organisations and with other non-profit European civil society networks who have a broad representation at European level. We often offer them logistic support for their meetings at our headquarters in Brussels.

Group III consists of 109 members from all 27 Member States of the European Union. They come from strong representative organisations in the Member States, are nominated every 5 years by the Government of each country, and are formally approved and appointed by the Council of the European Union.

CATEGORIES – OUR GROUP'S STRENGTH

Group III supports, through its Secretariat, the activities carried out by the categories. *Categories* bring together the EESC members who have a common interest in terms of their organisations' profile and their areas of interest and activity. Their role is to add value to the consultative work done by the EESC, through the high level of expertise they offer in their respective fields.

FARMERS

CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENT

SOCIAL ECONOMY

SMEs, CRAFT SECTOR & THE PROFESSIONS