

**FOLLOW-UP PROVIDED BY THE COMMISSION TO THE OPINIONS
OF THE**

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

PLENARY SESSION OF JULY 2016

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1.	<p>The European Citizens' Initiative (review)</p> <p>Rapporteur: Antonio LONGO (GRIII-IT)</p>	<p>EESC-2016-00889-PA-TRA</p> <p>SC/043</p> <p>Own-initiative opinion</p>
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2.	<p>Recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation</p> <p>Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and repealing Council Directive 96/50/EC and Council Directive 91/672/EEC</p> <p>Rapporteur: Jan SIMONS (GRI-NL)</p>	<p>COM(2016) 82 final -2016/0050 COD</p> <p>EESC-2016-02684-AS-TRA</p> <p>TEN/595</p>
3.	<p>Aviation Package I</p> <p>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - An Aviation Strategy for Europe</p> <p>Rapporteur: Jacek KRAWCZYK (GRI-PL)</p>	<p>COM(2015) 598 final</p> <p>EESC-2016-00095-AS-TRA</p> <p>TEN/581</p>
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4.	<p>The making available on the market of CE marked fertilising products</p> <p>Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules on the making available on the market of CE marked fertilising products and amending Regulations (EC) No 1069/2009 and (EC) No 1107/2009</p> <p>Rapporteur: Cillian LOHAN (GRIII-IE)</p>	<p>COM(2016) 157 final -2016/0084 COD</p> <p>EESC-2016-03054-AS-TRA</p> <p>NAT/691</p>

5. SG D2 associate d	<p>Steel: Preserving sustainable jobs and growth in Europe</p> <p>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank - Steel: Preserving sustainable jobs and growth in Europe</p> <p>Rapporteur: Andrés BARCELÓ DELGADO (GRI-ES) Corapporteur: Enrico GIBELLIERI (GRII-IT)</p>	<p>COM(2016) 155 final</p> <p>EESC-2016-01953-AS-TRA</p> <p>CCMI/146</p>
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7.	<p>Industry 4.0 and digital transformation: Where to go</p> <p>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Digitising European industry. Reaping the full benefits of a Digital Single Market</p> <p>Rapporteur: Joost VAN IERSEL (GRI-NL) Corapporteur: Nicola KONSTANTINOU (GRII-EL)</p>	<p>COM(2016) 180 final</p> <p>EESC-2016-01017-AS-TRA</p> <p>CCMI/141</p>
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DG TRADE

12.	The impact on key industrial sectors (and on jobs and growth) of the possible granting of market economy treatment to China (for the purpose of trade defence instruments) Rapporteur: Andrés Barceló Delgado (GRI-ES) Corapporteur: Gerald Kreuzer (GRII-AT)	EESC-2016-00786-AS-TRA CCMI/144 Own-initiative opinion
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<p>N°1 The European Citizens' Initiative (review) (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2016/0889 – SC/043 518th Plenary Session - July 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Antonio LONGO (GR11-IT) SG – First Vice-President TIMMMERMANS</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1. EESC points out that Europeans are at the heart of the European venture and the ECI could help overcome the democratic deficit by promoting active citizenship and participatory democracy.</p>	<p>The Commission fully agrees with the EESC on the importance of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) as a mechanism for promoting participatory democracy at EU level through active participation of citizens in EU policy-making.</p>
<p>1.2. The EESC considers that the ECI has not achieved its full potential because of the regulation which should be revised.</p>	<p>The Commission attaches utmost importance to the ECI and is committed to making the instrument work, so that it can achieve its full potential.</p> <p>For this reason, the Commission is focusing its work on improving the implementation of the ECI Regulation¹, in its current form.</p>
<p>1.3. and 1.4. The EESC proposes a list of modifications to be introduced in the ECI Regulation, and namely:</p> <p>(i) the modification of the initiative lifecycle timeline;</p> <p>(ii) the recognition of the legal status of the citizens' committees;</p> <p>(iii) the setting up of the one-stop-shop to support the organisers through the ECI process;</p> <p>(iv) the lowering of the minimum age for taking part in the ECI;</p>	<p>While no legislative modification of the ECI is envisaged at this stage, the Commission takes note of the suggestions expressed by the EESC.</p> <p>As regards points (i) and (ii), the Commission recalls that the issues at stake have been identified also in its Report of March 2015² as challenges for the organisers, which it continues to monitor.</p> <p>As regards points (iii) and (v), the Commission is of the opinion that the suggestions put forward by the EESC do not require a legislative modification to be</p>

² COM(2015)215 final.

² COM(2015)215 final.

<p>(v) the transfer of the role of "mentor" for the ECI towards the EESC in order to resolve the alleged Commission conflict of interest between its role of "mentor" and of "judge";</p> <p>(vi) the reinforcement of the follow-up obligation with regard to the successful initiatives by setting a 12 months deadline for the Commission to prepare a legislative proposal following the end of campaign or supplying appropriate justification for the decision not to present a proposal. Should no proposal be presented, the EESC would hope that the European Parliament would bring pressure to bear on the Commission under Article 225 of the TFEU.</p>	<p>implemented.</p> <p>The Commission established, already in 2012, a point of contact providing information and assistance to citizens, based in the Europe Direct Contact Centre. Since the ECI Regulation entered into application in 2012, around 1 300 questions from citizens on the ECI rules and procedures have been replied via this channel, in all official EU languages. Moreover, the Commission offers now to the organisers an improved assistance service for the setting up and certification of their online collection systems based on the free of charge hosting provided by the Commission.</p> <p>The Commission welcomes the measures already implemented by the EESC in support of the ECI and is grateful for the Committee's ideas to further develop this support.</p> <p>As regards point (vi), the Commission recalls its firm attachment to the principles and instruments of its "Better Regulation" policy, which are fully applicable also to those initiatives which can be proposed under an ECI. The Commission believes that a fixed 12-month deadline may in many cases prove insufficient and not flexible enough to ensure a proper application of all better regulation tools and principles.</p>
<p>1.5. The EESC points out to those aspects of the functioning of the ECI which could be improved without reviewing the Regulation. It insists on tackling them rapidly to avoid discouraging potential organisers and making the mechanism more effective and user-friendly. The EESC calls in particular for the following measures to be implemented:</p> <p>(i) adopting clear and straightforward</p>	<p>A number of challenges at issue are already being addressed by the Commission. The Commission would like to highlight some of the measures already taken and currently in preparation.</p> <p>As regards point (i), the registration procedure for the new initiatives has been improved in order to provide greater transparency and give organisers more</p>

procedures regarding the registration process, providing detailed answers and possible solutions when initiatives are declared inadmissible;

(ii) insisting in negotiation with the Member States on the simplification, reduction and harmonisation of the personal data requirements specific for each Member State. The EESC proposes in this context specifically limiting requests for personal identification documents and enabling all Europeans to sign the initiatives from their countries of residence;

(iii) establishing of a free OCS system³ on a permanent basis in order to simplify the collection and cataloguing of statements of support as well as the checking of these statements by the national authorities. The Committee also calls for this tool to be made available to people with disabilities.

time to set up their online collection systems before starting to collect signatures. As regards the Commission decisions refusing registration of a proposed citizens' initiative, the Commission provides an answer to organisers in all cases and provides detailed reasons for the refusal of the request for registration in application of the existing requirements under the ECI Regulation. Furthermore, it also informs organisers of all possible judicial and extrajudicial remedies available to them. As regards transparency of Commission replies, this information is also made publicly available in the ECI Register.

As regards point (ii), the Commission continues its efforts to encourage Member States to simplify their data requirements for ECI statements of support (via modifications of Annex III to the ECI Regulation), in order to allow all EU citizens to actually make use of their right to sign an ECI.

In parallel to this continuous effort, the Commission will launch before the end of 2016 two studies that are relevant in this respect: the first one in order to assess the scope for simplifying personal data requirements; and the second assessing the technical options for the use of electronic identification (eID) by EU citizens to support ECIs.

As regards point (iii), the Commission would like to recall that in its Report of March 2015 it has committed itself to continuing the hosting service to organisers free of charge and as long as needed. While online collection systems

³ OCS is the acronym for the free of charge Commission software allowing the online collection of statements of support.

	<p>using the Commission hosting service need to respect the requirements set out in the ECI Regulation and in particular are subject to a certification by the national authorities, the Commission is doing its utmost to assist the organisers throughout the process of setting up and operating the system. Moreover, the Commission intends to further explore, by means of a study, the possibility of streamlining the technical specifications as set out in the Commission Implementing Regulation on the ECI⁴ in order to simplify them as far as possible and in particular in the case of systems based on the Commission hosting.</p> <p>The user-friendliness of the Commission OCS is systematically improved. The two new releases of 2016 feature improved connection with social media and the remote services.</p> <p>The developments in preparation for 2017 focus on further improving the general user experience of both signatories and organisers, better adaptation of the OCS for use on mobile devices (smartphone, tablet) and facilitation of use for visually impaired signatories.</p>
<p>1.6 1.6. With a view to distributing and establishing the ECI, the EESC recommends more generally:</p> <p>(i) to provide the public with more information and raising awareness of the ECI mechanism and, more specifically, to publicise the follow-up to successful initiatives;</p> <p>(ii) to guarantee multilingualism and explore</p>	<p>As regards point (i), the Commission fully recognises the need for further awareness-raising and improving the communication on the ECI. The Commission welcomes in this context the EESC engagement in favour of promoting the ECI. On its side, the Commission communicates actively on the ECI, namely via "Europe direct"⁵, the Commission Representations in the Member States, participation in</p>

⁴ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1179/2011 of 17 November 2011 laying down technical specifications for online collection systems pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the citizens' initiative

⁵ https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en.

new methods of linking up the online collection of signatures with social and digital media in order to reach out to an ever larger audience;

(iii) in principle, enabling every EU citizen to organise an ECI by guaranteeing the option of covering a campaign's unavoidable expenses for registered ECIs.

conferences, through press releases, via brochure⁶ dissemination and on the Commission website⁷, which also provides updated information on the follow-up given to the successful initiatives.

The Commission is open to discuss ways of further improving communication on the ECI with other Institutions and stakeholders, including the EESC.

As regards point (ii), the Commission would like to highlight that its communication with regard to the ECI, both online and on paper, has always been done in all 24 official EU languages. Similarly, the Commission OCS is available in 24 languages. The Commission takes this opportunity to express its appreciation for the translation services that the EESC has made available since 2015 for the ECI organisers.

As regards social media, the latest released 1.9 version of the OCS improves specifically the social media features, allowing a signatory of an initiative to share his vote with his Facebook, Twitter or Google+ social networks. The remote services (allowing third party applications to get data from OCS instances and the ECI website) introduced earlier this year, and the RSS feed feature, available for two years now on the ECI website, will further facilitate communication.

As regards point (iii) and given that the ECI Regulation does not contain any specific provisions concerning direct financial support for ECI organisers and their campaigns, the Commission

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/files/guide-eci-en.pdf>.

⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome>.

	<p>considers that such a measure would entail an excessive risk of fraud or misuse. It also notes that direct funding of ECI campaigns by the Commission could go against the principle of independence of ECIs.</p> <p>However, the Commission would like to emphasise that it already implements measures to alleviate the administrative and financial burden for organisers of ECIs ranging from the free of charge hosting services, OCS and related technical and administrative support to communication measures to promote awareness of the ECI.</p>
<p>1.7. The EESC proposes to set up an institutional forum on the participation of European citizens, to become a permanent platform for discussion and debate at the Committee along the lines of the European Migration Forum, building on European Citizens' Initiative Day. The EESC could draft a specific, more detailed proposal in an own-initiative opinion.</p>	<p>The Commission has always supported the EESC in organising the "ECI Days". The Commission is open to further discussing such an initiative with the EESC.</p>

<p>N°2 Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and repealing Council Directive 96/50/EC and Council Directive 91/672/EEC COM(2016) 82 final – EESC 2016/2684 – TEN/595</p> <p>518th Plenary Session - July 2016</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Jan SIMONS (GRI-NL)</p> <p>DG MOVE - Commissioner BULC</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The EESC agrees with the objectives pursued by the Commission proposal and supports the proposed measures.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the EESC opinion and will take into account its general and specific suggestions within subsequent negotiations with the other Institutions.</p>
<p>The EESC attaches great importance to continued and broadened close cooperation between the European Commission and the River Commissions, especially the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR).</p>	<p>The Commission shares the view that close cooperation with the River Commissions is important. In particular, joint efforts of the CCNR and the Commission to harmonise and modernise the rules remains indispensable for the good governance and sustainable development of the European inland waterway network.</p>
<p>The EESC recommends communicating the principles and purposes of the chosen policy underpinning the proposal more explicitly.</p>	<p>In its relations with the EESC, the other Institutions and the public, the Commission is paying particular attention to a didactic approach.</p>

<p>N°3 Aviation Strategy for Europe COM(2015) 598 final – EESC 2016/0095 - TEN 581 518th Plenary Session - July 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Jacek KRAWCZYK (GRI-PL) DG MOVE - Commissioner BULC</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.3. (...) However, the EESC encourages the European Commission to undertake further practical measures to prevent the negative effects on employment, as pointed out previously in opinion TEN/565 on Social Dumping in the European Civil Aviation Sector⁸, creating good quality jobs.</p> <p>1.6. The EESC strongly insists that the Aviation Strategy is implemented on the basis of a constructive social dialogue. At EU level, the EU institutions should consult the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Civil Aviation on any initiatives which concern the aviation sector.</p> <p>4.4. There is need to further clarify the labour law and social security applicable to highly mobile workers in civil aviation.</p>	<p>The Aviation Strategy explicitly emphasizes the need to reinforce the social agenda and to create high quality jobs in aviation. It proposes four concrete actions to achieve this: (1) supporting social dialogue, in particular through the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Civil Aviation; (2) strengthening its analysis on jobs and employment in aviation with Member States and open it to interested parties; (3) publishing a practice guide on applicable labour law and the competent court, to be issued by the European Judicial Network in civil and commercial matters; and (4) considering the need for further clarification of applicable law and competent courts vis-à-vis employment contracts of mobile workers in aviation.</p> <p>Since the adoption of the Aviation Strategy, the Commission has met the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on three occasions and has published a practice guide on competent jurisdiction and applicable labour law issues.</p> <p>Besides, it should be noted that together with the Aviation Strategy, the Commission has published a study on</p>

⁸ OJ C 13, 15.1.2016, p. 110–115.

	<p>employment and working conditions in air transport and airports addressing a wide range of employment and social issues in the industry, in both quantitative and qualitative terms (see http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/studies/doc/2015-10-employment-and-working-conditions-in-air-transport-and-airports.pdf.)</p>
<p>1.10. The issue of fair competition also includes respect of workers' rights. (..) Any agreements in the field of the EU External Aviation Policy should seek to ensure that ILO principles are addressed and that mutually acceptable means of securing adherence are sought.</p>	<p>In the upcoming negotiations, the Commission will also address social aspects in air transport. The objective is to ensure that the parties' respective policies and laws support high levels of protection in the labour and social domain.</p>
<p>1.11. The role of Member States, but also of other parts of the aviation value network, like manufacturers of aircraft, engines and their components, needs to be further addressed in the implementation of the Strategy.</p>	<p>In its Aviation Strategy, the Commission has emphasised that the successful implementation of that Strategy will depend on the willingness of all players - including Member States - to collaborate in a coherent and consistent manner.</p> <p>Besides, it has recognized that the aeronautical industry is one of the top five advanced technology sectors in Europe. Today, research and innovation efforts remain a key factor of the success of the aeronautical industry. Aircraft manufacturers and their supply chain undertake huge efforts to improve the environmental footprint of aviation, increase the safety of air traffic, reduce operational costs and cope with the increasing demand for new aircraft. The Clean Sky 2 public-private-partnership is a good example of this. The development of advanced manufacturing processes, the use of new materials and actions in line with the circular economy are</p>

	other examples of these efforts.
<p>1.12. EU aviation requires more clarity on how ownership and control provisions could be handled more flexibly on the basis of reciprocity while ensuring harmonised application and enforcement throughout the EU and the continued compliance with Union law of such company controls.</p> <p>3.4.1. (..) The Commission's suggested interpretative guidelines may not be sufficient as a tool to resolve systematic issues and differences in application, legal certainty and effectiveness of the provisions.</p>	<p>The Commission recognises the sensitive nature of ownership and control provisions for EU aviation. Considering that the public consultation carried out in the context of the Aviation Strategy has shown a demand for guidelines on how the requirement of ownership and control should be assessed, the Commission is currently developing interpretative Guidelines to bring more legal certainty as to the application of current provisions. This should facilitate investment in full compliance with EU rules.</p> <p>Besides, as announced in the Aviation Strategy, the Commission has started working on an evaluation of Regulation 1008/2008 on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community (recast) with the purpose to assess whether that Regulation has achieved its objectives, i.e. the creation of an efficient internal aviation market, improved safety level and better consumer protection. In particular, a roadmap was published on 21 November 2016 and is available online at http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/index_en.htm. Stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on this document during a period of four weeks. The provisions of the Regulation to be assessed will include those on ownership and control.</p>
<p>1.16. The EESC recommends that inclusion of stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategy should be accompanied by a structured and concrete explanation of the way in which the Strategy will be implemented. Next to an</p>	<p>The Aviation Strategy Communication provides an indicative action plan, which is being followed. Besides, the Commission has used any opportunities to meet stakeholders in order to present to them possible</p>

<p>action plan listing which initiatives will be presented and when in the coming years, a "road map" is required to elaborate how the Commission will reach out to the stakeholders to secure such crucial engagement.</p> <p>4.6. Information on the Strategy and its implementation needs to be delivered on a continuous basis. Well-targeted information events with stakeholders need to be organised regularly.</p>	<p>concrete steps in the implementation of the Strategy (including, as mentioned, three meetings with the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for civil aviation between March and June 2016). Stakeholders are also being consulted on files such as guidance documents, studies, evaluations, etc. according to well-established procedures.</p>
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<p>N°4 Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules on the making available on the market of CE marked fertilising products and amending Regulations (EC) No 1069/2009 and (EC) No 1107/2009</p> <p>COM(2016) 157 final – EESC 2016/3054 - NAT/691</p> <p>518th Plenary Session - July 2016</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Cillian LOHAN (GR11-IE)</p> <p>DG GROW – Commissioner BIENKOWSKA</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>Environmental protection (1.2.; 3.3.):</p> <p>The EESC supports the proposal to extend the scope of the existing Regulation [...]. The EESC recommends maintaining and applying all the key principles of environmental protection, including the precautionary principle.</p>	<p>The Commission supports the EESC's opinion that a high level of environmental protection needs to be ensured and indicates that one of the key objectives of this proposal is to address environmental concerns arising from contamination of soils, water and eventually the food chain due to the presence of cadmium in very widely used inorganic phosphate EC-fertilisers under the existing Fertilisers Regulation.</p>
<p>Labelling and traceability (1.3.; 3.4.):</p> <p>The EESC recommends establishing an official analysis method to verify the credentials of any labelling system and to ensure that there is adequate robustness in the integrity of any labelling applied.</p>	<p>This is part of the market surveillance by the national competent authorities. Analytical methods for checking the conformity with the new quality, safety and labelling requirements will be adopted under the new Fertiliser Regulation</p>
<p>Soil protection (1.4.; 3.6.):</p> <p>The EESC observes that soil fertility and protection is a key aspect of the Commission proposal, but notes that this goal will be hard to achieve without a Soil Framework Directive. Moreover, it highlights the need to bear in mind the differences in soils among Member States, which should entail the adoption of</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of the call for a proposal for a European Soil Framework Directive. The Seventh Environment Action Programme, which entered into force on 17 January 2014, recognises that soil degradation is a serious challenge and set the objective that by 2020 land is managed sustainably in the Union and soil is</p>

<p>targeted standards.</p>	<p>adequately protected. It also calls for The Union and its Member States to also reflect as soon as possible on how soil quality issues could be addressed using a targeted and proportionate risk-based approach within a binding legal framework. The Commission launched an inventory and gap analysis of EU and Member States soil policy and started to reflect with Member States on the 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) commitments on soil. The Commission agrees that the diversity in soils among Member States must be duly taken into account.</p>
<p>Market fragmentation (1.6.; 3.5.):</p> <p>Due to the potential impact of diverging national rules and standards on market distortion and fragmentation, [the EESC] would highlight the importance of an approach that avoids unfair competition and non-compliance with the highest traceability, quality and safety standards.</p>	<p>The Commission is of the opinion that the proposed optional harmonisation reflects the existing diversity of fertilising products, by recognising different trade practises and customer needs.</p>
<p>Alignment to Waste Directive (1.7.; 4.2.):</p> <p>In order to improve implementation of the new Regulation, the EESC recommends more thorough integration and harmonisation with the existing Directive on Waste. [...] [T]he EESC suggests: making a clearer distinction between “agricultural material used in farming” (excluded from the scope of the Waste Framework Directive) and the definitions of waste, by-product and end-of-waste status. [...]; establishing a better definition of a by-product when it is used as fertiliser; introducing a further distinction between productive waste/by-products used directly in agriculture as fertiliser (i.e.</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of the EESC recommendations. The Commission notes that these terms are already covered in the existing guidance document⁹. The Commission would like to maintain the principle of using as component materials only <u>processed</u> animal by-products, by-products and other materials not covered by Directive 2008/98/EC on waste and wastes that fulfil the specific legal requirements set by the Fertilising Products Regulation.</p>

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/pdf/guidance_doc.pdf.

<p>faecal matter and digestate) and when such products are used as components.</p>	
<p>End-of-waste status (4.3.): End-of-waste status, as defined in the Commission proposal, applies to fertilisers and not to their components. The EESC suggests that this concept should apply to the components [...].</p>	<p>The Commission is of the opinion that within the scope of the proposed Fertiliser Regulation no general end-of-waste status should be granted to the component materials. Only when such materials are used in a compliant manner for the production of CE marked fertilisers they may leave the waste status. Directive 2008/98/EC on waste is applicable for the determination of the waste/non-waste status of these component materials or other waste derived secondary raw materials where they are used for other purposes than the production of CE marked fertilisers.</p>
<p>Incentives for businesses (1.8.): The EESC recommends providing incentives to encourage enterprises that are interested in changing their production, and undertaking initiatives aiming to support the change in the field of information, raising awareness, education and vocational training.</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of the EESC proposal, which is already encouraged by the proposal itself and could be further encouraged and accompanied in the future to help towards this transition for fertiliser producers as well as for farmers.</p>
<p>Waste water as raw material (1.9.; 4.5.): Member State strategies on wastewater treatment, infrastructure and management should recognise the value of waste water and sludge as sources of raw materials for the organic fertiliser industry.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with EESC position. As an element of the implementation of the Action Plan on Circular Economy, the Commission will in 2017 present a Proposal for a Regulation on minimum quality requirements for reused water. The initiative will establish a common approach on water re-use across the EU providing clarity, coherence and predictability to market operators who wish to invest in waste water reuse under comparable regulatory conditions. The main aim is to reduce pressures on the water environment, in particular water scarcity, by fostering the development of safe reuse of treated</p>

	wastewater.
Plant bio-stimulants (4.1.): The EESC agrees that plant bio-stimulants should be included in the framework of CE marked fertilising products [...]. Nevertheless, the EESC invites the Commission to monitor the process carefully in order to ensure that this is not used to circumvent the law on plant protection products, posing potential health and environmental threats.	The Commission fully shares the concern of the EESC and will collaborate with the Member States' control authorities to avoid that plant protection product legislation will be circumvented.
REACH exemptions (4.8.): Exemptions from the REACH [...] legal framework need to extend beyond composts to encourage new market opportunities and innovation in areas such as struvite and related products.	This exemption for compost in REACH only relates to obligations pertaining to Title II (Registration), Title V (Downstream Users) and Title VI (Evaluation), not to other titles. The Commission will however consider the EESC proposal, taking into account that a high level of safety and environmental protection needs to be ensured.
Component material categories (4.9): The EESC encourages the Commission to include additional component material categories in the Annexes, to keep up with technological progress allowing the production of safe and effective fertilisers from recovered, secondary raw materials, such as biochar and ashes.	The Commission's proposal foresees such adaptations to technological progress. The Commission has initiated the scientific review of additional secondary raw materials, such as biochar, struvite and ashes from incinerated bio-wastes, including sewage sludge to be included at a later stage as additional component material categories.
Recycling of livestock manure (4.10.): The EESC encourages the Commission to create incentives to support the recycling of livestock manure under the principles of the circular economy. At the same time, it is important that we do not create systems that support the excessive production of manure.	The Commission is of the opinion that the fertiliser Regulation can be an important instrument to incentivise the recycling of livestock manure as it eases the export of processed products. The Commission supports the EESC's opinion that it is important to avoid excessive production of manure.

<p>N°5 Steel: Preserving sustainable jobs and growth in Europe COM(2016) 155 final – EESC 2016-1953 – CCMI/146 518th Plenary Session - July 2016 Rapporteur: Andrés BARCELÓ DELGADO (GRI-ES) Corapporteur: Enrico GIBELLIERI (GRII-IT) DG GROW - Commissioner BIENKOWSKA</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.1.3. The EESC calls for the immediate re-establishment of the High-Level Group on Steel, as there are specific issues that cannot be addressed in the broad Group on Energy-Intensive Industries.</p> <p>1.1.4. The EESC appeals to the Commission for the High-Level Group on Steel, once reinstated, to include the Commission, Member States, the EIB, the social partners, industry and the unions, the R&D technological platform and competence centres.</p>	<p>The work of the High-Level Group on Steel proved to be useful in helping stakeholders with the implementation of the Steel Action Plan, proposing new ideas to the Commission and exchanging best practice between industry and trade unions but also Member States.</p> <p>In light of the fact that most of the issues that energy-intensive industries (EII) are facing are common to all of them, the Commission decided to transform the High-Level Group on Steel into a High-Level Group on Energy-Intensive Industries (HLG on EIIs).</p> <p>The HLG on EIIs, established as a Commission expert group through a Commission Decision adopted on 26 October 2015, provides advice and expertise to the Commission for future policy discussions also with the Council. Membership of the group has been decided on the basis of an evaluation of responses to a call for expressions of interest that closed on 16 November 2015.</p>
<p>1.1.5. The EESC urges the Council and Commission to produce a roadmap, with specific implementation commitments,</p>	<p>In the Communication of 2016, the Commission set out policy measures to support the European steel sector to</p>

<p>resources, and targets that will make it possible to deal with the threats and challenges described in the analysis.</p>	<p>overcome the challenges it faces.</p> <p>As stated in the Communication, the Commission keeps the situation of the steel industry under close review and stands ready to take further action, as necessary. In the Communication, the Commission also called on Member States to support the joint European efforts and initiatives with a greater sense of urgency.</p>
<p>1.1.8. The EESC calls on the EU Institutions, as long as China does not meet the EU's five criteria¹⁰ in order to qualify as a market economy, to use a non-standard methodology in anti-dumping and anti-subsidy investigations into Chinese imports, under Section 15 of the China WTO Accession Protocol.</p> <p>1.1.9. The EESC requires any change in the treatment of Chinese imports to be accompanied by appropriate measures to prevent EU industry from being harmed by unfair trade practices.</p> <p>3.1.5. The EESC hopes that the current impact assessment being carried out by the Commission will be comprehensive and sector-based, and will also take into account the specific impact of granting MES to China, especially on some European regions, without appropriate and truly effective accompanying measures.</p>	<p>On 9 November 2016, the Commission presented a proposal for a new method for calculating dumping on imports from countries where there are significant market distortions, in particular where the state has a pervasive influence on the economy. The purpose is to make sure that Europe has trade defence instruments that are able to deal with current realities – notably overcapacities – in the international trading environment, while fully respecting the EU's international obligations in the legal framework of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The proposal, which introduces changes to the EU's anti-dumping and anti-subsidy legislation, follows a broad public consultation and is accompanied by an impact assessment.</p>
<p>1.1.7. The EESC encourages the Commission to significantly enhance and accelerate the effectiveness and efficiency of existing trade defence instruments in order to be able to immediately address unfair trade practices on the part of exporting countries and re-establish a level</p>	<p>Pending the Trade Defence Instruments (TDI) modernisation package-proposal of 2013 to come through, the Commission is currently using the full range of available instruments to address unfair trade practices:</p> <p>(1) the Commission has opened</p>

¹⁰ Council Regulation 1225/2009, Basic Anti-Dumping Regulation OJ L 343, 2009.

<p>playing field.</p> <p>1.1.10. The EESC points out, particularly to the Member States, that it is important to conclude the package modernising trade defence instruments, as it will speed up the process and remove the so-called "WTO+ elements" from the EU system, particularly the "lesser duty rule".</p> <p>1.1.11. The EESC highlights the fact that, as the import duty on steel products is zero under the Common Customs Code, it is imperative that the lesser duty rule for steel products be abolished.</p> <p>1.1.12. The EESC welcomes the Commission's commitment to further accelerating the adoption of provisional measures. With regard to calculating the injury margin, the current practice of setting the target profit must be better defined, in a transparent way, in order to ensure that target profits are realistic, that they promote R&D in Europe and that the injury is effectively removed.</p> <p>1.1.14. The EESC urges the Commission to register imports prior to the adoption of provisional measures and to retroactively apply definitive antidumping and/or countervailing duties three months before the adoption of provisional measures under the Basic Regulation.</p>	<p>investigations based on 'threat of injury';</p> <p>(2) the Commission has 'registered imports' where warranted (the Union industry is protected earlier from the effects of unfair dumped imports);</p> <p>(3) the Commission has also introduced a 'prior surveillance system' on steel products since the beginning of May 2016, to have early statistical information regarding market developments.</p> <p>The Commission's TDI modernisation proposal of 2013 provides, among other things, that the "lesser duty rule" should not be applied in cases where governments of exporting countries distort the market in favour of their industry. The Commission continues its determined efforts for a swift adoption of the proposal by the co-legislators, including a Council General Approach before the end of 2016.</p> <p>The Commission is also determined to speed up the imposition of provisional measures. Its first aim is to impose provisional measures at the latest in eight months instead of nine in the most urgent cases, when feasible, which can be achieved without requesting legislative changes. Further measures to speed up the procedures depend on the Council and the European Parliament since such steps require legislative changes.</p>
<p>1.1.15. The EESC encourages the Commission to ask that other trade partners are fully transparent with regard to State aid and indirect state support to the steel industry, requesting their engagement to avoid state intervention to backstop steel</p>	<p>The Commission has intensively engaged in dialogue with its trading partners and with China particularly over the last few months. As such, in the margins of the EU-China Summit, the Chinese Premier and EU</p>

<p>facilities that cannot survive under market forces.</p> <p>3.2.2. Tackling the causes of overcapacity needs a strong commitment to periodical reporting on State aid schemes and specific measures agreed under the OECD and the WTO umbrellas.</p>	<p>Commission and Council Presidents agreed to set up a bilateral platform on steel to address the issue of overcapacity in the steel sector. They concurred that the platform should allow keeping alive the discussions related to steel overproduction. The platform has to deal with monitoring and verification of commitments in relation to excess capacity and should look at the possibilities to bring this problem to a good end. President Juncker has publicly announced the platform's establishment in a press statement following the Summit.</p> <p>At the G20 summit of Hangzhou of 4-5 September 2016, the EU's efforts helped deliver important progress as the G20, including China, not only recognised the negative effects of overcapacity on trade and workers but also agreed to form a Global Forum on steel excess capacity facilitated by the OECD to cooperate and exchange information with a view to enhance market function and encourage adjustment in the steel sector. A progress report will have to be provided to the G20 in 2017. The Commission services are following up to set up this Forum, in close cooperation with other partners.</p>
<p>1.1.18. The EESC asks the Commission to review the current specific rules on State aid in order to evaluate the possible inclusion of the steel industry in the general framework.</p> <p>6. The EESC calls on the Commission to organise a workshop with Member States and the social partners in the second half of 2016 in order to draw up guidelines to implement the flexibility allowed under the</p>	<p>To a considerable extent the steel industry can already benefit from the general framework of State aid rules. State aid rules allow Member States to grant State aid for competitiveness enhancing objectives such as research and development and innovation (R&D&I), training aid and environment with specific provisions allowing greater support for energy-intensive</p>

<p>new State aid rules framework.</p>	<p>industries (see also point 1.1.21 hereafter).</p> <p>There is no real demand for changing the existing rules, notwithstanding the extensive consultations which have taken place in view of the revision of nearly all State aid control rules: the Council has consistently reiterated its endorsement of this position in the past months, as has the industry itself.</p> <p>As regards interpretation questions concerning the new State aid rules framework, the Commission stands ready to provide targeted advice to or gather with Member States and stakeholders on the basis of concrete requests on possibly unclear points of the framework.</p>
<p>5.1. The EESC fully supports the Commission's communication, but it lacks a detailed action plan to ensure that steel remains an attractive industry for talented young people. The EESC calls on the Commission and Member States to define a clear and effective methodology for managing the restructuring process in a socially sustainable way, utilising all the available instruments (EGF, Structural Funds, etc.), further ensuring their flexibility and ability to respond to the challenges of the fast-changing global economy. Promoting social dialogue in order to improve workers' skills in adjusting to new challenges will require a specific roadmap and a detailed schedule to be agreed on by the Commission and the social partners.</p>	<p>The EGF (European Globalisation Adjustment Fund) stands ready to provide support to cushion the negative side effects on the local and regional communities affected, should Member States experience further major layoffs in this sector.</p> <p>Until today, the steel sector has been subject to five EGF applications. About EUR 15.3 million of financial support was granted by the EGF, offering help to more than 3 700 workers made redundant in this sector. It should be noted that other sectors, such as the automotive industry or the shipbuilding sector, are directly or indirectly affected by the difficulties of the steel industry as well.</p>
<p>1.1.19. The EESC urges the Commission, taking into account the specificities of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel (RFCS), to:</p>	<p>The outcomes of the most recent RFCS project selection shows a strong 42% participation of private commercial entities in terms of funding allocation which surpasses the 40% initial set</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keep the same level of participation in the industry, as this assists the Commission in managing the RFCS programme by preserving the original specific features, whose efficiency and effectiveness were identified in the Monitoring and Assessment Report; - retain the network of experts, which has been active in the course of more than 60 years of collaborative research, and ensure their full involvement in the selection of RFCS proposals and in monitoring ongoing projects; - prevent the RFCS from being undermined by other programmes. 	<p>target.</p> <p>The Monitoring and Assessment exercise completed in 2013 indeed confirmed that the RFCS fulfils its mandate to support the competitiveness of the coal and steel industry in the European Union. However, the assessment made by the Commission in 2014 of the operation and the effectiveness of the multi-annual technical guidelines indicated that a number of changes are warranted to ensure a transparent, simplified, sound and efficient management of the RFCS.</p> <p>It is on this basis that, in February 2016, the Commission put forward to Council and Parliament a proposal to amend the RFCS legal base. As clearly stated in the accompanying explanatory memorandum, this proposal leaves the principles, objectives and scope of the RFCS untouched, and keeps it fully in line with the relevant Protocol annexed to the Lisbon Treaty.</p> <p>On the point of the advisory and technical groups, it is necessary to adapt the RFCS legal base in line with the horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups, as adopted by the Commission in May 2016. It is, however, assured that the RFCS expert groups will continue to play a pivotal role in assisting the Commission in managing the Research Programme, and that they will be provided with all the information needed to fulfil their tasks.</p>
<p>1.1.21. The EESC emphasises that full compensation for indirect costs, resulting from the increase in electricity prices derived from the ETS and support for</p>	<p>In the Impact Assessment accompanying the Commission's proposal for the revision of the EU ETS, the Commission considered</p>

renewable energies, must be provided in a harmonised manner to avoid the current distortion of the EU Single Market.

several policy options for compensation of indirect carbon costs, including further harmonisation at EU level. The analysis concluded that a harmonised system would need to capture a wide variety of carbon intensities of electricity production across Member States, varying integration of national/regional electricity markets and a range of exemptions for industry.

Considering the associated administrative burden, the Commission proposed to continue with the existing state aid approach, while actively encouraging Member States to provide compensation from their auction revenues.

Member States are also encouraged to compensate indirect financing costs of renewable energy support schemes.

With regard to energy prices, the decreasing wholesale prices in the EU and policies to increase energy efficiency are making a positive contribution.

EU State aid rules allow Member States to partially exempt energy intensive users from the indirect costs derived from ETS or Renewable Energy Sources (RES) funding. Nevertheless, the right balance must be struck between preserving the long-term competitiveness of EU-based energy-intensive undertakings (EIUs), and maintaining an incentive for them to innovate and emit less greenhouse gas – including for those who have already innovated. The current compensation caps strike such a balance.

Regarding the degree of harmonisation between Member States, there again

	<p>exists a delicate balancing exercise: on the one hand, EIUs need to be protected from high energy prices, yet on the other hand, Member States need a sufficiently large fiscal base to fund their ambitious climate policies, which come at a price. Member States are best placed to define the right parameters of this balancing exercise, depending on their national context, as long as those parameters are transparent, objective, and in line with the State aid framework.</p>
<p>9.7. The EESC insists that the EU ETS must not be reformed at the expense of steel industry employees. Any reform must reconcile the ambitious EU climate targets with a renewed and modernised steel industry, and ensure that the European steel industry is revived and modernised while it works towards achieving the European climate targets.</p>	<p>In line with strategic guidance of the European Council in the context of the 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework, the Commission’s proposal for the revision of the EU ETS envisages continuation of free allocation to address the risk of carbon leakage. Approximately 6.3 billion allowances will be available for this purpose between 2021 and 2030. The proposal also contains a number of rules to distribute the free allowances in such a way that energy-intensive industries exposed to carbon leakage, including the steel sector, receive an appropriate level of support and continue to reward the best performers.</p> <p>It should also be noted that Member States can use their revenues from auctioning of EU ETS allowances for, <i>inter alia</i>, social policy measures to support the transition towards a low-carbon economy for companies, their workers and consumers (specifically, promotion of skill formation and reallocation of labour affected by the transition of jobs in a decarbonising economy).</p> <p>The Communication also underlines</p>

	<p>that investments in innovation, supported by a range of European funds, as well as the revised EU ETS, are crucial for preserving sustainable jobs and industrial competitiveness.</p>
<p>8.2. Active measures should be taken to ensure that energy prices do not undermine the competitiveness of the EU steel industry.</p>	<p>Energy prices are set by the market and the Commission and Member States have limited tools to influence these. As a recent report from the Commission¹¹ shows, the improvements of the EU industry in terms of energy intensity can and do help to offset increasing energy prices.</p> <p>As the Communication underscored, wholesale energy prices, the proxy for energy prices paid by energy-intensive industries, are now at historically low levels which means that energy costs should now be a less important part of production costs.</p> <p>The energy prices and costs report to be published by the Commission in the second half of 2016 will look in more detail at the effects of energy prices on the competitive position of the European economy, both at a broad macro-economic level and at sectors of selected energy-intensive industries including iron and steel.</p>
<p>1.1.22. The EESC requests that the Commission take the necessary measures to guarantee that waste shipments out of Europe are handled and processed in full compliance with environmental rules and human health.</p>	<p>Under the Waste Shipment Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006, Member States' competent authorities shall require and endeavour to secure that any waste exported is managed in an environmentally sound manner in the third country of destination. Environmentally sound management means taking all practicable steps to ensure that waste is managed in a</p>

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2014/pdf/ee1_en.pdf.

	<p>manner which will protect human health and the environment against its adverse effects. In 2014, the Regulation was revised and it now ensures that the authorities involved in inspections may require the person who arranges the shipment to submit relevant documentary evidence, provided by the recovery facility and, if necessary, approved by the competent authority of destination.</p>
<p>10.2. The EESC cannot support the statement that the end-of-waste criteria have helped to stimulate higher demand for recycled steel. The application of end-of-waste criteria is limited to some EU Member States and, contrary to the Commission's assertion, has not helped to improve scrap quality; its low level of implementation is due to the fact that it imposes a greater administrative and regulatory burden on the domestic scrap trade without any benefit or improvement to the recycling process.</p>	<p>To monitor the impacts of the end-of-waste Regulation on ferrous and aluminium scrap, a study was carried out for the Commission in 2013/2014¹² which found almost no evidence that end-of-waste has caused any negative impacts on the market, whether that be to scrap quality, availability/ trade or on the environment. On the contrary, a number of the survey participants, both from industry and competent authorities, highlighted the perceived benefits of the introduction of end-of-waste for metal scrap. These perceived benefits include: creating a simplified regulatory framework and offering companies greater flexibility and legal certainty. Some companies identified improved scrap quality and increased sales prices. The results of the study show that more than 1 100 scrap industry companies were already using the end-of-waste criteria across Europe. Uptake is most pronounced in Italy, where over 1 000 scrap companies generate end-of-waste compliant scrap. This rapid uptake in Italy is due in part to a specific legal framework on secondary raw materials already in</p>

¹² <http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/activities/waste/documents/LF-NA-26884-EN-N.pdf>.

	<p>place before the introduction of the end-of-waste criteria. In the rest of Europe there were a further 100 scrap companies active in end-of-waste scrap. In terms of the quantity of end-of-waste compliant scrap available on the market, this study estimates that, as a lower bound, at least 15% of EU scrap steel was compliant with the end-of-waste criteria.</p>
<p>10.3. The Circular Economy Package has plenty of good intentions but lacks the necessary ambition to genuinely promote the use of by-products, such as slag, without unnecessary administrative burdens, as some Member States are trying to impose. The use of by-products contributes substantially to reducing the use of natural resources and dumping sites.</p>	<p>In the legislative package on waste, the Commission has proposed changes to clarify rules on by-products which will increase the level of common understanding between Member States on what should be classified as such. This should help the use of and cross-border movement of by-products and thus, facilitate industrial symbiosis.</p>
<p>1.1.23. The EESC urges the Commission and Member States to take into account, and properly reward within the public procurement regulations, the voluntary sustainability schemes developed by the steel industry, aiming to increase corporate commitment to current and future generations, as the best way of promoting the sustainability approach across the entire EU market.</p>	<p>The Commission recognises the importance, as a policy tool, of the inclusion of social and environmental sustainability requirements in public procurement. For these purposes, turning to existing regulatory instruments and making appropriate use of schemes such as labels, standards and certifications constitutes an effective approach in this context.</p>

<p>N°6 The digital pillar of growth: e-seniors, a potential 25% of the European population (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2016/0950 – TEN/584 518th Plenary Session – July 2016 Rapporteur: Ms Laure BATUT (GRII-FR) DG CNECT – Commissioner OETTINGER</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>EESC Recommendation (1):</p> <p>"the approach to the Silver Economy be changed in view of the fact that digitalisation bridges the age divide and that older people are active agents in the value chain and in their own lives." Paragraph (1) (page2/12).</p> <p>2.10., 2.11. and 2.13. "The Committee wishes to emphasise the need to adopt an approach to age – older people should not be treated just as being in the final stage of life and digitalisation should not be limited to technical/ medical aid".</p> <p>"A holistic and inclusive approach could give all "older" Europeans the assurance that digital innovation is relevant to them".</p>	<p>The Commission services' background paper "Growing the European Silver Economy" (February 2015) recognises the current and potential socio-economic contribution of "active" citizens above the age of 50. The document identifies the potential in different areas, including travel and tourism, entrepreneurship and socio-economic participation. The overall approach to the Silver Economy and demographic change includes the "Active Ageing Index (AAI)" which is focused on the contribution older people make to society and hence on the sustainability of high welfare standards for older people in ageing societies. It includes data on employment rates per age-group, participation in society (voluntary activities, care for children, grandchildren and political participation), amongst other aspects of ageing. The Commission services' background paper also recognises the potential of senior entrepreneurship as part of the Silver Economy.</p> <p>The EIT-KIC¹³ on Health and Ageing launched in February 2014 by the Commission is mandated with linking activities of innovation and higher</p>

¹³ European Institute of Innovation & Technology's Knowledge and Innovation Communities (EIT-KIC).

	<p>education with the already existing research base. It will put emphasis on higher education curricula, new skills development (for technology), and strengthening entrepreneurial aspects.</p> <p>Moreover, the Commission has launched a study to further explore the potential of the Silver Economy in different activity areas and scenarios that go beyond independent living and health. The study will be published in February 2017 (http://www.smartsilvereconomy.eu/).</p>
<p>EESC Recommendations (2) and (3):</p> <p>(2) "(...) the European Summit on old people in December 2016 promote the digital inclusion of older people to address two transitions: digital and demographic." (page 2/12) paragraph (2).</p> <p>(3) "a global system of governance be developed to bringing older people into the digital world and developing efficient public services that are resourced at every level, including local level and exempted from the requirements of the European Semester".</p> <p>3.1.1. "The Committee hopes that (...) the Summit in December 2016 will be able to promote the digital inclusion of older people, and an improvement in their living and working conditions. This is necessary in order to respond to the two transitions: digital and demographic".</p>	<p>The central theme of the European Summit on Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing in December 2016 will discuss how digital innovation can improve the quality of life of the ageing population, whilst fostering economic growth. This will include discussing EU measures as well as national and regional measures to meet the needs of an ageing "active" population. In particular, understanding how innovation can assist independent living but also harness the important economic and social contributions of the ageing population in the fields of entrepreneurship, the workplace and the social economy. The Summit will also bring together for the first time the leadership from 74 Reference Sites of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, awarded the title in July 2016. They are regional ecosystems (including, public authorities, industry, civil society organisations and academia) that have invested and are committed to invest in the development of coherent and long-term strategies for active and healthy ageing innovation.</p>
<p>EESC Recommendations (4) and (5):</p>	<p>The central theme of the European</p>

<p>(4) "a horizontal EU clause be framed on "equality of older people" with the government ministries responsible for equality in the Member States encouraged to implement it".</p> <p>(5) "the EESC and associations representing older people be invited to take part in the discussions of the stakeholder group on the sharing economy sector recommended by the European Parliament".</p>	<p>Summit on Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing in December 2016 will discuss how digital innovation can improve the quality of life of the ageing population, whilst fostering economic growth and long term sustainability of health and care systems. This will include discussing EU policy instruments available at present and potential future measures that can be pursued in articulation with stakeholders' national and regional authorities across Europe.</p>
<p>EESC Recommendations (6) and (13)</p> <p>(6) "Older people's access to digital technology and the accessibility of that technology based on acquisition of knowledge and skills be facilitated, and their education and lifelong learning, adaptation of equipment and software, and mentoring be developed without delay so as to ensure their successful inclusion";</p> <p>(13) "promote a form of "community service" as a way of addressing digital illiteracy".</p>	<p>As announced in the new Skills Agenda for Europe (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2039_en.pdf), the Digital Skills and Job Coalition will be launched by the Commission to support spreading digital competence, not only for the workforce, but for all citizens, including the elderly, to actively participate and benefit from the opportunities offered by the digital economy and society.</p>
<p>EESC Recommendation (7):</p> <p>"Indicators be devised to measure the economic impact of older people, their quality of life and the benefits provided by innovation".</p>	<p>In cooperation with the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP on AHA) and other stakeholder groups, the Commission is developing a Monitoring and Assessment Framework (MAFEIP). It measures the impact of innovative solutions on quality of life, efficiency of public health and social care systems and economic growth and jobs. An external contractor will be appointed in 2017 to further develop the methodology and initiate data gathering.</p>
<p>EESC Recommendation (8):</p> <p>"older people's access be facilitated to an</p>	<p>Different projects seeking to generate and measure improvements in the quality of life of the older population have been</p>

<p>EU programme for exchanging good practice, which could be a platform called for instance "Seneca: Erasmus Senior Programme" (Page 3/12).</p>	<p>funded under EU programmes and including the Erasmus+ Programme. Notably, during the 2015-2016 period, Erasmus+ funded a project called Promoting Physical Activity and Health in Ageing (PAHA) in eight partner countries. The aim of the PAHA project was to demonstrate if a six-week intervention of structured exercise, exercise counselling and behavioural change support is effective in increasing physical activity levels in previously self-perceived inactive individuals (55-65 year old). The outcomes of this successful Programme will be presented at the next European Summit on Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing (December 2016).</p> <p>The European Commission also funded the development of the first Innovative Practices Repository of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing. This platform was launched in July 2016, and is an open system already available for free to all stakeholders who wish to share their innovative practices with other organisations.</p>
<p>3.3.1. and 3.3.2. "The Commission should include every generation (...) and have a long time horizon (to 2060) since the ageing curve is set to steepen in all the Member States".</p> <p>3.5.1.2.1. "The Committee (...) asks the Commission to continue to assess how the digital revolution shapes European society. The EESC believes that this assessment should take account of developments affecting older people".</p>	<p>The EIP on AHA brings together relevant stakeholders to support innovation for ageing on a European scale. It involves more than 3 000 stakeholders and over 70 reference sites (regional and local ecosystems of civil society, research organisations, public authorities and industry/ entrepreneurs). The EIP mobilises its own funding of more than EUR 4 billion.</p> <p>The Commission's Communication on "Digitising European Industry" {SWD(2016) 110} calls for "a comprehensive dialogue on the social</p>

	<p>aspects of digitisation that engages all stakeholders involved in all aspects of work, education and training." At the 2015 Conference of Partners of the EIP on AHA, the Commission invited civil society, public authorities, industry and entrepreneurs to work together with the Commission in the development of a "Blueprint" that enshrines a shared forward-looking vision on how digital innovation can transform Europe's Ageing Society in the 21st Century. A shared vision that would: (a) boost (ageing) citizen empowerment (b) move to results-based delivery of economic efficiencies in healthcare and other areas, and (c) develop new business models and economic opportunities in consumer markets which can scale across Europe and beyond. This "Blueprint" will be further discussed at the European Summit on Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing (December 2016) and will inform future policy initiatives of the Commission in the field of active and healthy ageing innovation.</p>
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<p>N°7 Industry 4.0 and digital transformation: Where to go COM(2016) 180 final – EESC 2016/1017 – CCMI/141 518th Plenary Session - July 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Joost VAN IERSEL Corapporteur: Ms Nicola KONSTANTINO DG CNECT – Commissioner OETTINGER</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
1.1. The EESC strongly welcomes the Communication on "Digitising European Industry".	The Commission appreciates the strong welcome by the EESC in its opinion.
1.10. Increasing disparities between Member States in terms of industrial output and technological performance are worrying. The EESC urges that properly designed cooperation should kick start convergence instead.	<p>As part of the implementation of the initiative mentioned in the Digitising European Industry (DEI) Communication, COM(2016)180, the Commission will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish a European Platform of National Initiatives on Digitising Industry; and - promote the setup of national policy initiatives in Member States where there is none yet. <p>These governance mechanisms, together with the Roundtables and the Stakeholder Forum, where experiences can be shared, collaboration and joint investments can be triggered, common approaches to regulatory problems be explored and means for re-skilling of the workforce be further exchanged, aim at convergence between Member States.</p>
1.11. The EESC welcomes the planned EUR 5 billion R&D funding for ICT in H2020 as well as funding from a range of other European funds, including the Juncker Investment Plan. The European Commission must clarify how these policy	Together with Member States and Industry, the Commission will reflect on the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) building block and industrial platform priority developments as well as how Member States and

<p>intentions will be put into effect.</p>	<p>regions could commit to align and co-invest on the same industrial priorities in order to reach critical mass. A working group was launched on 20 September to that effect, which will deliver in spring 2017 on the joint mobilisation of investments.</p>
<p>1.12. Substantial additional financial resources are apparently needed. The European Commission is speaking of EUR 50 billion only in ICT investments. This means serious financial involvement by the public and private sectors across Europe. It is as yet unclear how these financial provisions will be implemented within a reasonable timeframe.</p>	<p>The Commission clarified in the Memo accompanying the Communication how the financial resources will be implemented in the timeframe 2016-2020 (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-16-1409_en.htm).</p> <p>Moreover, to ensure delivery of the Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and co-investment by industry, investments by the private sector in PPPs including the targeted leverage are regularly monitored by the Commission, and corrective measures are taken as needed.</p>
<p>1.15. The Communication is disappointingly concise on the considerable social consequences of digitisation in industry. Net effects are unpredictable. [...]</p>	<p>The Communication recognised the wider social, work and economic implications of the ongoing world-wide wave of digitisation. It is essential to monitor and address these challenges in the dialogues with social partners.</p>
<p>1.20. Furthermore, the EESC expects an active role of the European Commission in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - raising awareness in all parts of society, in particular to promote acquisition of digital skills; - analysing the worldwide picture and providing improved statistical data on services; - presenting EU effective coordination as an example to national 	<p>The New Skills Agenda for Europe¹⁴ presented in June 2016 gives particular importance to the topic of digital skills and proposed a number of actions at national and European level.</p> <p>The recently adopted connectivity package on telecoms review¹⁵ includes proposals that encourage investment in very high-capacity networks and accelerate the roll-out of 5G wireless technology and free Wi-Fi access points</p>

¹⁴ COM(2016) 381/2 final.

¹⁵ COM (2016) 587 final.

<p>governments;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increasing pressure on investments in infrastructure (telecommunication, broadband); - ensuring that the implementation of the GDPR will not lead to disharmony in the EU market; - pushing for transparent public and private financial arrangements; - monitoring, benchmarking and evaluating, including CSRs in the annual Semester; - promoting 4.0 Platforms and PPPs as well as cooperation among stakeholders, including by bringing them together at EU level; - promoting the Digital Innovation Hubs as centres for advanced training of the workforce; - deepening EU social dialogue at all levels to discuss labour market consequences as well as adjustments in the field of social and labour law, in particular concerning economic and political measures that should ensure protection for the entire workforce. 	<p>in public spaces.</p> <p>The Commission plans to invest EUR 500 million from the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme in digital innovation hubs so that every industry, large or small, high-tech or not, can get access to knowledge and testing facilities in the latest digital technologies. These centres of excellence would be based in technical universities or research organisations and should provide companies, in particular SMEs, with access to facilities for digital innovation; supply advice on potential sources of funding or finance; make available spaces for testing and experimentation; and help workers find the necessary skills and training.</p> <p>The Commission will invite digital innovation hubs to bid for EU funding in a series of calls for proposals over the next five years. It will also encourage Member States and regions with no appropriate hub or facilities to invest in them, in particular with EU regional funding.</p>
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<p>N°8 EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking COM(2016) 87 final – EESC 2016/1875 – NAT/686 518th Plenary Session - July 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Cillian LOHAN (GR11-IE) DG ENV – Commissioner VELLA</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.4. The EESC believes that structured dialogue and cooperation with third countries should be enforced by including the fight against wildlife trafficking as a prerequisite for all EU bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.</p>	<p>Strengthening the global partnership is one of the pillars of the Action Plan, at multilateral and bilateral level. The European Commission will continue to negotiate specific provisions in free trade agreements to fight illegal wildlife trade.</p>
<p>1.6. The EESC regrets the absence in the Commission proposal of any reference to the threat represented by wildlife trafficking to public health and to native animal and plant species.</p>	<p>See 5.4.</p>
<p>1.7. The EESC proposes that the Commission should place much greater importance on the impact of e-commerce on wildlife trafficking and implement specific measures to protect the legal and sustainable wildlife trade from the illegal trade, run through a distorted use of e-commerce websites and social media or with specific illicit networks created in the deep-web.</p>	<p>See 5.5.</p>
<p>1.8., 5.6. The EESC highlights the importance of the upcoming 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17) to CITES and urges the EU to take a strong position to support the objectives of this Action Plan. The EESC calls for the Commission to support the proposal for the closure of domestic markets for ivory as a critical contribution to the prevention of the threat of extinction to</p>	<p>The European Commission shares the EESC position and has, in line with the agreed EU position, defended an ambitious agenda for the CITES CoP to promote the objectives of the Action Plan. The EU played a central role at CITES CoP17 which resulted in the EU meeting all its main objectives for the meeting. In relation to the EU priority to address wildlife trafficking, CITES</p>

<p>African elephants.</p>	<p>CoP17 agreed on a number of targeted recommendations in relation especially to ivory, rhino horns and tiger trafficking.</p> <p>At the EU level, there is a total ban on ivory trade, except for old ivory items acquired before 1990 and under strict conditions. So far, the European Commission has seen no connection between this internal trade and international ivory trafficking. The EU will reinforce its regime further. The EU Action Plan against wildlife trafficking will bring strengthened controls on the internal market for ivory, to make sure that there are no abuses.</p>
<p>5.1. The EESC proposes to undertake a broad European awareness-raising campaign in order to involve consumers and the private sector in reducing the supply and demand of illegal wildlife products. Due to the broad definition of "wildlife trafficking", the EESC recommends focusing on non-iconic plants and animals and derived products as well.</p>	<p>Awareness-raising campaigns and efforts for behaviour change with regard to the demand for illegal wildlife products are necessary within Europe and in key consumer countries. Europe-wide measures need to be coordinated with the Member States. For this purpose, Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 established an Enforcement Group consisting of representatives of each of the Member States' authorities that have responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Regulations, such as Customs, Police and Wildlife Inspectorates. The Group is chaired by the European Commission, discusses awareness-raising regularly and facilitates sharing of best practices in that regard (see action 1).</p>
<p>5.2. The EESC reiterates its willingness to support and participate in initiatives the EU may wish to undertake, e.g. drawing on the EU-Africa network of economic and social players set up at the Committee. The EESC</p>	<p>The European Commission thanks the EESC and welcomes its readiness to support efforts to fight wildlife trafficking with concrete events which could, for example, also engage</p>

<p>would welcome any initiative by the Commission to establish a forum for discussion on the implementation of the Action Plan and would also be open to the option of hosting an event on this.</p>	<p>relevant business sectors for which the EESC is an important forum.</p>
<p>5.4. The EESC regrets the absence in the Commission proposal of any reference to the threat represented by wildlife trafficking to public health and to native animal and plant species. This issue is highly relevant and so the EESC urges that it be included in the EU Action Plan. The EESC emphasises that the labelling and traceability systems mentioned earlier, together with an appropriate veterinary and plant health control mechanism, can help to counter the emergence and spread of such diseases around the world. Cooperation with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) should be strengthened.</p>	<p>The potential threat to public health has been acknowledged in the Commission's Staff Working Document accompanying the Action Plan, and implementation of the Action Plan will be an effective way of countering this threat in addition to using the dedicated tools under veterinary and phytosanitary legislation. The Commission also supports (see Action 7) additional private sector initiatives for sustainable sourcing and would welcome further engagement of the EESC in that regard.</p>
<p>5.5. The new frontier of illegal wildlife trade is e-commerce. The EESC notes that there are several illegal e-commerce tools such as the distorted use of trading websites and social media forums or restricted specialised online platforms created in the deep-web. As regards the first case, the EESC underlines a number of best practices that should be taken into consideration by the European Commission, such as the agreement signed in June 2013 between the Italian Forestry Corps and the two main online advertising sites, "eBay annunci" and "Subito.it"; more information is included for the benefit of consumers and offers considered to be suspicious can be swiftly removed. The agreement also enables advertisements to be filtered, allowing only those guaranteeing traceability of the object on sale. As regards the deep-web, the EESC proposes the creation of a specific task-force with the support of cybercrime experts.</p>	<p>The Commission shares the views of the EESC on the risks associated with e-commerce in the context of illegal online trade and will bring the item on the agenda of relevant fora (Action 21). The Commission is also considering the establishment of a dedicated working group under the CITES Enforcement group consisting of representatives of the Member State's enforcement authorities, such as Customs, Police and Wildlife Inspectorates, in which cybercrime experts can participate. Engagement of Member States to deal with cybercrime cases, e.g. engaging in dark web investigations and abuse of virtual currencies, will be essential (Action 21).</p>

<p>N°9 Conservation of fishery resources and protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures COM(2016) 134 final – EESC 2016/2507 - NAT/683 518th Plenary Session - July 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Gabriel SARRÓ IPARRAGUIRRE (GR11-ES) DG MARE - Commissioner VELLA</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The EESC fully supports the Commission's approach regarding the need to update and simplify how technical measures are currently governed; this governance should be based on a long-term strategy to manage and conserve resources.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the Committee's opinion and detailed analysis of the Technical Measures proposal and notes its support for the approach taken.</p>
<p>The EESC calls on the Commission to review the proposed changes in mesh sizes and to use the baseline meshes that have been employed by the fleet for various fisheries without unjustified or unnecessary increases or decreases.</p>	<p>In its proposal on technical measures, the Commission has tried to maintain as much as possible the minimum mesh sizes that are currently regulated. However, in order to achieve substantive levels of simplification, it was necessary to adjust some technical measures relating to mesh sizes and the use of square mesh panels.</p> <p>Using Western Waters as an example, currently there are 23 different gear configurations (mesh size plus additional selection devices) specified across a number of different regulations. The Technical Measures proposal has consolidated this to eight gear configurations.</p> <p>There are some examples where the simplification process has resulted in changes in mesh size for some fisheries and we acknowledge the point raised by the Committee in this regard and will take note of this in the discussions with the co-legislators.</p>

<p>The EESC reiterates the importance of not using the proposal to modify the minimum sizes that are applied for certain species, without the necessary justification.</p>	<p>In its proposal on Technical Measures, it was not the intention of the Commission to introduce wide scale changes to the Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes (MCRS). Only one change (mackerel in the North Sea) has been introduced and this was to harmonise with the MCRS applied in Western Waters.</p> <p>The Commission notes the Committee's comment regarding the application of a minimum size for sea bream in the Atlantic and notes that this is subject to ongoing discussion with the co-legislators.</p> <p>The Commission acknowledges that there was also a change in the Minimum Size for sea bass in the South Western waters, but notes that this is a technical error in the proposal and the current provision (36cm) will be retained. The Commission will raise this point in its discussions with the co-legislators.</p>
<p>The EESC is of the opinion that rules that enable innovation and value creation in relation to unwanted catches should be introduced.</p>	<p>The EU provides financial support to investments in added value to unwanted catches through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Recital 44 states:</p> <p><i>"In accordance with the discard ban introduced by the CFP, the EMFF should support investments on board aimed at making the best use of unwanted fish caught and exploiting underused components of the fish caught. In view of the scarcity of the resources, and in order to maximise the value of the fish caught, the EMFF should also support investments on board aimed at adding commercial value to the fish caught."</i></p> <p>Further, Article 42 states "Added value,</p>

	<p><i>product quality and use of unwanted catches</i>" of the EMFF makes the following provisions:</p> <p>1. In order to improve the added value or quality of the fish caught, the EMFF may support:</p> <p>(a) investments that add value to fishery products, in particular by allowing fishermen to carry out the processing, marketing and direct sale of their own catches;</p> <p>(b) innovative investments on board that improve the quality of the fishery products.</p>
<p>The EESC urges greater flexibility in terms of the caps on fishing capacity measured in gross tonnage (GT) imposed on Member States by the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) so as to adapt vessels to the LO and to promote the improvement of working conditions on board.</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of this point but would like to point out that the regulation of fishing capacity and the associated caps are defined in the Basic Regulation of the Common Fisheries Policy (EU) No 1380/2013 annex II and not through the Commission's proposal for a Regulation on Technical Measures. While the Commission notes the rationale behind the Committee's comments, the adjustment of capacity ceilings would require changes to the basic regulation of the CFP via co-decision.</p>
<p>The EESC asks the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission to establish a genuine dialogue with fishermen and their representatives before taking any decision on the proposals. The tacit agreement and cooperation of fishermen are needed if the rules are to be respected, which is more likely if fishermen are fully involved in the debate.</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of this and agrees that in order to maximise the potential benefits of regionalisation, this type of dialogue with the sector and other stakeholders is of crucial importance. The Commission draws the attention of the Committee to the requirement for Member States to consult with advisory councils when considering regional cooperation on conservation measures specified under Article 18.2 of Regulation EU (No) 1380/2013 (CFP). In the preparation of</p>

	<p>the proposal for Technical Measures, the Commission undertook a broad public consultation process in which the sector and other stakeholders were invited to provide input and expertise. Since the adoption of the proposal in March 2016, the Commission has also presented the proposal in all advisory councils for input and further discussion with the sector and other stakeholders.</p>
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<p>N°10 Action Plan on VAT COM(2016) 148 final – EESC 2016/2343 - ECO/406 518th Plenary Session - July 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Daniel MAREELS (GRI-BE) DG TAXUD – Vice-President MOSCOVICI</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The EESC welcomes the "Action Plan on VAT", and calls to implement all parts of it as an indivisible whole.</p> <p>The EESC underlines that the transformation of the current system should result in a definitive VAT system that is clear, consistent, robust and comprehensive, as well as proportionate and future-proof; it endorses the proposal to opt for the country of destination principle, as it will create a level playing field for all suppliers in the same national market.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the EESC’s broad support for the aims of the Action Plan on VAT.</p> <p>The Commission can assure the EESC that full consideration will be given to this point of the opinion and the requirements set out when preparing the legislative proposals to implement the definitive VAT system.</p>
<p>The EESC emphasizes that close attention should be paid to how business-friendly the system is; further-reaching simplification and reducing the administrative burden should be examined more closely, whereby consideration could be given to a proportionate approach that benefits SMEs.</p>	<p>The Commission shares the views of the EESC that the future EU VAT system should drastically reduce compliance costs of business and will take this into account when preparing the legislative proposals to implement the definitive VAT system and the ‘SME VAT package’ announced in the VAT Action Plan. With its proposals of 1 December 2016 on modernising e-commerce, the Commission proposes already an important step towards making the VAT system more business-friendly. It proposes that companies could sell online goods and services to customers in other Member States while only registering for VAT in their home Member State. Furthermore, invoicing and record keeping rules in relation to e-commerce</p>

	<p>will be the same as in the home Member State, irrespective of where the customer is located in the EU. This move to the single EU VAT registration and declaration portal will be 95% less costly for these businesses.</p> <p>Further-reaching simplification and reduction of administrative burden are indeed among the objectives of the review of the provisions of the VAT Directive on the SME scheme. The SME package will be looking at both the exemption from VAT and possible simplification of obligations.</p>
<p>The EESC calls for the comprehensive provision of useful information in a modern form, for example via a web portal, for the benefit of businesses.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that a VAT web portal could be a useful instrument for business and would facilitate business compliance notably in a cross-border context. The Commission services have launched a feasibility study on such a web portal. For the new rules on the place of supply for e-services and the Mini One Stop Shop, a web portal for VAT obligations is already available and is regularly consulted by businesses (more than 200 000 hits in 2015).</p>
<p>The EESC welcomes the strong focus on closing the VAT gap and tackling the susceptibility of VAT to fraud. There should be results delivered without delay, including by improving cooperation between tax administrations and with customs administrations, making tax administrations more efficient (in terms of human, financial and technical resources) and boosting Eurofisc's role, strengthening voluntary compliance with the rules, and improving tax collection.</p> <p>The EESC stresses that practical actions to combat fraud must be targeted and</p>	<p>The Commission concurs with the EESC that the fight against VAT fraud should be a priority, and therefore can assure the Committee that full consideration will be given to this point of the opinion when preparing the measure to improve cooperation between tax administrations and customs and law enforcement bodies and to strengthen tax administrations' capacity and the legislative proposals to enhance administrative cooperation and Eurofisc.</p>

<p>proportionate; “bona fide” enterprises should be protected and no new excessive measures should be imposed on them.</p>	
<p>The EESC welcomes the focus on new developments in e-commerce and business types.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the EESC’s broad support. The Commission has adopted on 1 December 2016 its proposals in view of modernising and simplifying VAT for cross-border e-commerce. Close monitoring will continue in these fast moving activities under the e-commerce umbrella.</p>
<p>The EESC feels that the future system of reduced rates must combine flexibility and legal certainty, be transparent, and, for the sake of simplicity, the number of reduced rates and exemptions must be limited. The option of an extension and regular review of the list of goods and services eligible for reduced rates is in this sense preferable to an abolition of that list coupled with allowing Member States greater freedom on the number of reduced rates and their level.</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of the EESC's opinion and full consideration will be given to this point when preparing the legislative proposals to implement the reform of VAT rates.</p>

<p>N°11 Building a coalition of civil society and subnational authorities to deliver commitments of the Paris Agreement (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2016/0713 - NAT/684 518th Plenary Session - July 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Lutz RIBBE (GR11-ES) Corapporteur: Ms Isabel CAÑO AGUILAR (GR11-ES) DG CLIMA – Commissioner ARIAS CAÑETE</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>A new multi-level government approach is needed. The EESC suggests the creation of an ambitious coalition of civil society actors, local and regional authorities, and the responsible political and administrative structures at national and European level.</p> <p>The coalition should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coordinate approaches at the various political levels of the European Union in order to stimulate non-state climate action; - demonstrate the potential and impact of these measures; and - provide a forum for structured dialogue between civil society and decision-makers at EU and national level, where civil society actors can put forward their ideas and the problems they encounter when trying to implement them, make recommendations to politicians as to how to proceed, and receive qualified answers to the issues and problems they have raised. 	<p>The Commission acknowledges the important role that civil society and other non-state actors including the private sector cities and subnational governments play in accelerating cooperative climate action.</p> <p>The Commission strongly engages with the EESC and civil society before any legal proposal on climate-related issues is to be tabled, as part of the strategy laid out in the 'Better Regulation' package. The consultation with civil society and other stakeholders is also an essential step in preparations of all major EU initiatives, which are based on a published impact assessment, including stakeholder consultation.</p> <p>Further, in the context of international climate action, the Commission has been a very strong supporter of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda, which became a framework to recognise and support civil society's role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Action Agenda, now referred to as the Global Climate Action Agenda, facilitates engagement between government representatives and non-state stakeholders, and creates venues for further cooperation and exchange.</p>

	<p>The Commission also welcomes the appointment and supports the two High Level Champions, appointed by the Conference of the Parties' (COP) Presidencies. The Commission would see as a key role of the Champions, contributing to sustaining the political momentum on the action agenda, i.e. through providing a link to the high-level dialogue, as well as through participating in relevant international fora to promote the Action Agenda, and by serving as a political convener for interested Parties, non-Party stakeholders or international initiatives, to help them scale-up cooperation and action, as expressed in a recent EU submission on this subject (http://www4.unfccc.int/Submissions/Lists/OSPSubmissionUpload/75_253_131_145158291059909-SK-01-08-EU%20Submission%20GCAA.pdf).</p>
<p>2.1. While there are already many success stories in the European Union that testify to the importance and effectiveness of civil society involvement in climate action, these examples are not systematically recorded and evaluated. There are no discussions about the political lessons that can be learned from these numerous and diverse initiatives, what hurdles need to be surmounted to make them even more successful and widespread, or the reasons why they fail.</p> <p>2.5. There is no strategy (nor the appearance of a strategy) to make use of civil society as a strategic partner in implementing the COP decisions. The same is true at European Union level. EU climate policy must therefore acquire a second pillar, alongside "climate diplomacy", to focus on understanding and enhancing civil society's</p>	<p>The Paris outcome recognises the important role non-Party stakeholders play in addressing climate change and it welcomes the continued efforts of non-Party Stakeholders to address climate change.</p> <p>Further, the Paris outcome invites continued dialogue between Parties and non-Party stakeholders both at technical and political level, to explore options for enhanced action on mitigation and adaptation prior to 2020.</p> <p>The Commission has been maintaining a regular dialogue with representatives of civil society throughout the negotiation process, during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) sessions and in Brussels. At the last UNFCCC session held in May 2016, the EU made</p>

<p>importance and role, and on making it easier for the wide variety of civil society actors to design and implement strategies to protect the climate in their particular sphere.</p>	<p>a proposal to hold an in-session workshop on increasing the role of non-Party stakeholders in implementation of the Paris Agreement at the UNFCCC session. The workshop will take place in May 2017.</p> <p>The EU has made enhancing strategic collaboration with non-state actors in the context of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda (now evolved to Global Climate Action Agenda) a part of its 2016 climate Diplomacy Action Plan. The Commission has invited representatives of the EESC and the Committee of the Regions to participate in the Green Diplomacy Network which, in close cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Members States, is ensuring the implementation of the Action Plan, including through an extensive network of EU Delegations in third countries.</p>
<p>3.19. Regions, cities and municipalities play an important role. The EESC very much admires the varied initiatives that have already arisen to coordinate these activities. Examples include the World Summit on Climate and Territories, the Covenant of Mayors, the ICLEI network, etc. In many cases, these initiatives have since started to additionally benefit from various forms of state support.</p> <p>3.20. Regional development and climate-friendly energy policy could complement each other if decentralised energy production were to take place via local or regional structures, meaning that value creation from using wind, solar and biomass energy would happen locally. It therefore makes sense to increase the range of actors, but this potential strategic link has not yet</p>	<p>The Commission recognises that civil society and subnational authorities play a crucial role in delivering commitments of the Paris Agreement, both on climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>The Commission has worked to streamline and reinforce coordination among the urban initiatives it (co-) manages. In this sense, the new Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, launched in 2015, now integrates both climate change mitigation and adaptation dimensions, promoting synergies between the two.</p> <p>Within the Covenant of Mayors, the Commission encourages local and regional authorities, as the closest</p>

<p>been sufficiently explored in any official EU document.</p> <p>3.21. This is a good example of how the EU does not make comprehensive enough use of civil society's potential. Even the Covenant of Mayors is primarily considered as being a source of support for implementing the objectives set by the EU. Meanwhile, the Covenant's role in terms of stimulating new policy initiatives is not sufficiently recognised or systematically used.</p>	<p>governance level to citizens, to engage and raise awareness of all relevant stakeholders and to empower their citizens. Local authorities are welcome, and receive the support from the Covenant of Mayors, to implement objectives that go beyond EU goals. Moreover, the Commission regularly consults local and regional authorities' representatives in order to know what their expectations and needs are.</p>
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<p>N°12 The impact on key industrial sectors (and on jobs and growth) of the possible granting of market economy treatment to China (for the purpose of trade defence instruments) (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2016/0786 - CCMI/144 518th Plenary Session - July 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Andrés BARCELÓ DELGADO (GRI-ES) Corapporteur: Mr Gerald KREUZER (GRII-AT) DG TRADE – Commissioner MALMSTRÖM</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.2 [...] if we lose the tools to ensure free and fair trade with China, an unacceptable figure of hundreds of thousands of jobs will be lost.</p>	<p>The Commission is aware of the important role that industry plays in creating jobs in Europe and the Commission is committed to ensuring that the industry in the European Union remains competitive within a rules-based multilateral trading system. To this end, maintaining an efficient trade defence instrument remains one of the Commission's priorities in the trade area, as stated in Commission Communication (2016) 690 "Towards a robust trade policy for the EU in the interest of jobs and growth" of 18 October 2016.</p>
<p>1.7 The EESC [...] considers that granting China market economy status (MES) would seriously jeopardise the industrial base and manufacturing jobs in the EU. It would adversely affect prospects for relaunching European industry through high-quality, stable jobs and the introduction and dissemination of technological innovation, research and development.</p>	<p>The possible change of dumping calculation methodology in trade defence investigations concerning China represents a complex issue with legal, economic and political repercussions. The Commission has carried out a thorough analysis of potential impacts of such change in dumping calculation methodology on EU employment. The analysis entailed an in-depth impact assessment, numerous contacts with industrial stakeholders, as well as further elements, such as an independent</p>

	<p>economic study (see below under 4.1.6.).</p> <p>On this basis, the Commission adopted, on 9 November 2016, a legislative proposal to amend the anti-dumping and anti-subsidy legislation. The Commission proposes to introduce a new dumping calculation methodology which will help maintain a strong trade defence system while giving effect to the EU's international legal obligations, thereby achieving a similar level of protection against distorted imports.</p>
<p>1.12 As long as China does not meet the EU's five criteria required to qualify as a market economy, the Commission should use a non-standard methodology in anti-dumping and anti-subsidy investigations concerning Chinese imports, in accordance with what remains of Section 15 of the China WTO Accession Protocol.</p>	<p>The legislative proposal adopted on 9 November 2016 addresses the issue of market distortions, inter alia where linked to state interventions, in any third country, including China. The purpose of the proposal is not to replace the existing MES criteria with new ones. Rather, the objective is to illustrate in a non-exhaustive way the circumstances that would lead to the conclusion that domestic prices and costs are unreliable in establishing normal value. For that purpose, the Commission has identified criteria that best relate to the distortions that can taint the reliability of prices and costs. As such, the proposal does not "grant market economy status" to any country.</p>
<p>4.1.6 Impact assessments have been carried out by various institutions. The European Commission has commissioned a study but this has not been published, making it impossible for the EESC to analyse the Commission's position on this urgent issue.</p>	<p>The Commission has indeed entrusted independent economic experts with assessing the potential impacts of changing the dumping calculation methodology on employment in the EU. The study, embedded in the wider context of the impact assessment, forms part of the information on which the Commission has been relying in its</p>

	<p>decision making process. The study has been published and is available under the following link:</p> <p>http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2016/november/tradoc_155080.pdf.</p>
<p>4.1.7 – 4.1.8 The Economic Policy Institute estimates the damage at somewhere between 1.7 and 3.5 million EU jobs at risk. This estimate is based on an input-output model [...]. The main drawback of this study is that it considers the effects of every Chinese import. [...] If only industries with anti-dumping measures are considered, direct and indirect job losses would lie between 0.5 and 0.9 million. According to the report, the total direct employment generated by industries vulnerable to surges of dumped imports is 2.7 million.</p>	<p>The Commission has carefully analysed the study, prepared by the Economic Policy Institute. In the Commission's view, the study arrives at seriously exaggerated and, in fact, erroneous conclusions concerning the potential job losses. Indeed, the most obvious reason for this exaggeration, also in the EESC opinion, is the assumption that prices of all imports from China will go down by 30 percentage points after the relevant methodology is changed. However, any such reduction can only apply to trade on which anti-dumping tariffs are actually levied or might be levied in the future and which represents a limited part of the overall trade exchange with China.</p> <p>The Commission's own estimates are based on the independent study referred to above under 4.1.6.</p>
<p>4.1.13 [...] the EESC reiterates that the jobs likely to be lost are not evenly distributed geographically. The concentration of job losses in certain areas may cause critical situations in those locations, even though other regions in the Union might not suffer badly. The countries worst affected could lose up to 2.7% of their workforce.</p>	<p>The Commission has analysed the potential impacts on the level of Member States and sectors. Detailed breakdowns form part of the economic study referred to above under 4.1.6.</p>