



## WHITE PAPER ON THE **FUTURE OF EUROPE**

**National consultations of  
organized civil society**



*European Economic and Social Committee*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

On 1 March 2017, the European Commission published its White Paper on The Future of Europe: Reflections and scenarios for the EU 27 by 2025.

On 4 April 2017, the European Commission officially referred the White Paper to the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). A draft resolution, prepared by the EESC ad hoc group on the Future of Europe, will be voted at the EESC Plenary in July 2017.

At the same time, the European Commission also highlighted the key role which the EESC could play, on behalf of organized civil society in Europe, in the broader discussion on the White Paper in the "Future of Europe debates" throughout the Union. Consequently, in May and June 2017, the EESC held 27 national debates in the Member States, consulting organized civil society on the White Paper and on the various reflections and scenarios contained in it.

The outcome of the national debates has been compiled in this document. Listed by country, each national contribution includes a report by Members of the respective EESC delegations that were nominated, a list of participants and a programme of the event.

## **AUSTRIA**

## **Report**

### **How does the future of Europe affect me?**

**Friday 19 May 2017, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**Haus der Europäischen Union, Wipplingerstraße 35, 1010 Vienna**

### **A summary of the points of view expressed in the debate in response to the EESC's questions**

#### **1. From your perspective, which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

- The debate about the White Paper isn't about more or less Europe, but rather which Europe.
- Differing viewpoints – hybrid forms in between scenarios 3, 4 and 5

##### Additions for individual policy areas:

###### ❖ Foreign and defence policy:

- Border controls at EU internal borders are implemented as a result of inadequate security at the external borders and massively disrupt the internal market. Has effects on tourism and on craft industries which operate across borders.
- Securing the external border is important, then we can guarantee social affairs internally.
- The asylum question has thrown up problems. Measures to encourage people to stay in their country of origin rather than to move towards the EU are important.
- A single-minded focus on defence and internal security must not be misused as a distraction tactic.

###### ❖ More Europe:

###### Divergent viewpoints:

- Some consider Europeanisation in the budget or Eurobonds to be fundamentally worth supporting.
- Others ask where the money will come from and who will profit.
- The emergency lending institution is already a kind of European monetary fund.
- The position of the Chamber of Agriculture has always been that other policy areas should follow the example of the CAP and be made communal.

###### ❖ Research and development

- In research, joint development projects are possible (e.g. the Eurofighter). We are, however, far from communal research.

###### ❖ Investment

- The EFSI (European Fund for Strategic Investment) has had a successful start.

- Public investment is necessary but must also be paid back. The Member States have to keep their debt in mind as a result of the Maastricht criteria, which some see as too restrictive.

❖ National competition

- There is too much attention given to export and competition in the debate.
- The displacement of industry is a problem.
- One problem is that multinationals such as Amazon derive a competitive advantage from low wages in their logistics centres.
- In agriculture there is strong competition owing to lower wages in neighbouring countries.
- The EU has no competency over wages.

❖ Agricultural policy:

- Cultivators also care for the land and therefore make a significant contribution to, amongst others, the quality of food and tourism.
- We have to move away from subsidy policies in agriculture.

**2. Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so why? How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

❖ Democracy:

- Democracy is neglected in the White Paper, but the Member States have reservations about more democracy, as this would make decision-making in the Council more difficult.
- The EU has never been more democratic, which can be seen in the example of social dialogue.

**3. Is more visibility of, and better communication on, the European Union required, and how?**

- Communicating with citizens about Europe is important, because people are disillusioned and don't expect anything from Europe.
- It is necessary to hold events across the Member States in order to discuss the EU with the populace and to combat prejudices.

**4. Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

❖ Economic orientation: (trade union viewpoint)

- From the perspective of workers, this is too neoliberal, as has been shown during the crisis in the form of attacks on pensions and on the rights of unions. Moreover, at the moment, internal market freedoms are facing social questions (social dumping).

- We need both supply-side and demand-side measures to stimulate the economy.

❖ Social policy:

- There is little in the White Paper about the social dimension, and still not enough in the reflection paper which has already been published.
- From the perspective of workers, an imbalance between social rights and the free market dominates the EU.
- In the economy, social policy must always be seen in context. Incomes generate demand and cannot just be seen as a cost.
- Unemployment must be combated and the welfare state must be developed. The demographic transition poses a particular challenge to these needs.
- Employers point to the high social benefits which need financing in the EU: the EU has 7 per cent of the world's population and generates 20-25% of the global GDP, but pays out 50 per cent of the world's welfare.
- From an employer's point of view, some of the Court of Justice's judgements are unacceptable. For example, employers object to the principle of 'the same pay for the same job at the same place'.

❖ Tax policy:

- EU tax law is an 'enormous work in progress' – tax competition is a massive problem, because the Member States use tax policy to strengthen their national interests.
- Workers see unanimous decision-making in taxation as the main obstacle.
- Many businesses (especially SMEs) complain about the low effective tax burden on transnationals (Amazon, etc.).
- There is little motion in business taxes, but the BEPS (Base Erosion and Profit Sharing) initiative is welcome.
- Increasingly, those who are not mobile are carrying the tax burden. Rich top athletes, for example, face a low rate of taxation because they are mobile.

❖ Institutional:

- The EU lacks mechanisms for applying sanctions. Money is an effective mechanism for sanctions.
- When European principles are violated, European grants should be removed.
- Some participants took the view that the Commission should be reduced in size.
- A lack of transparency prevails in the Council.

❖ Trade:

- From a worker's perspective, trade agreements of the type there has been up until now pose a threat to social standards, especially investment protection clauses.

**5. Regarding ‘the way ahead’, how should debates on the future of Europe across national Parliaments, cities and regions be structured? What role should organised civil society play in the ‘way ahead’ and how?**

- Alliances between civil organisations are needed, and the EESC has an important role to play in that regard.

**6What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

This question was not answered.

**7. How can the role of citizens be more empowered in shaping the future of Europe?**

- The EU is a work in progress – its relationship to its citizens must be restored.
- The complex legislative process has to be brought closer to citizens so that they understand where they can get involved.
- In debates, we often find ourselves in a bubble, reproducing our own reality.

❖ Institutional:

- The European Parliament lacks a right of initiative.
- The European Parliament is highly transparent; the Council, considerably less so.

❖ Role of stakeholder organisations:

- Business representatives and works councils must be taken to Brussels to see where they can get involved.
- To become active regarding lobbying in Brussels.

❖ Role of civil society:

- We owe it to civil society to collect information.
- The EU is present in many areas which people use. (e.g. Erasmus, euro). This should be communicated more clearly.

## Participants

Title	First name	Surname	Institution>Note
Mr	Franz	Bauer	
Ms	Sarah	Bruckner	M.A.; Vienna Chamber of Labour, labour market and integration
Ms	Ye	Chen	
Mr	Peter	Degischer	
Mr	Karl G.	Doutlik	
Ms	Vedrana	Dramac	
Ms	Anna-Sophie	Ecker	M.A.I.S., M.Sc., B.Sc.; Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, Enterprise Europe Network
Mr	Marc	Fähndrich	
Ms	Veronika	Gallé	
Mr	Claes	Gernandt	Dkfm.
Ms	Claudia	Golser	BA, Makk., M.A.I.S., LL.M.; Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, economic policy unit
Mr	Maximilian	Gorke	M.A.; BMEIA, office of international law, European law division
Mr	Wolfgang	Greif	
Mr	DIV	Grimm	
Ms	Ulrike	Hassmann-Vorbach	Austrian Federal Economic Chamber
Ms	Margit Maria	Havlik	Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, EU coordination division
Mr	Alfred	Heidler	M.Eng.; KONE AG
Ms	Karin	Hoitsch	
Mr	Herbert	Knauthe	Dr
Mr	Heinz	Kogler	
Mr	Bernhard	Kühr	
Mr	Jürgen	Lang	Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, legal policy department
Ms	Marika	Levena	
Mr	Christian	Lovrinovic	M.A., Raiffeisen Zeitung, economy and Europe division
Mr	Nikolaus	Morawitz	
Mr	Franz	Neunteufl	
Ms	Gertrude	Oelmack	M.A.

Title	First name	Surname	Institution>Note
Mr	Michael	Palfinger	
Mr	Dušan	Pšeničnik	M.A.; Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, Head of the economic department
Mr	Wolfgang	Riemer	
Mr	Carlo	Ritzerow	
Ms	Paule	Ritzerow	
Mr	Oliver	Röpke	
Mr	Clemens	Rosenmayr	M.Sc., M.Sc., B.Sc.; Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, department for the environment and energy policy
Ms	Jennifer	Saßmann	
Mr	Helmut	Schramke	
Ms	Yasmin	Soetopo	M.A., MES; Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, EU coordination unit
Ms	Katalin	Tóth	European Journalist Association
Ms	Celebic	Vukadinovic	Embassy of Montenegro, First Embassy Counsellor
Mr	Damir	Vusic	
Mr	Karl-Heinz	Wanker	M.B.A., M.Sc.; Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, EU coordination unit
Mr	Valentin	Wedl	
Mr	Peter	Weichselbaum	
Mr	Benedikt	Weingartner	
Ms	Dagmar	Weingärtner	
Ms	Eveline	Wilfert	M.A.; Austrian Trade Union Federation, EU projects and project control
Mr	Manfred	Winkler	Dr
Mr	Jörg	Wojahn	

## **Programme**

**‘How does the future of Europe affect me?’**

**Date:** Friday 19 May 2017, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Entry and registration from 9.30)

**Location:** **Haus der Europäischen Union**, Wipplingerstraße 35, 1010 Vienna

Introduction by **Oliver Röpke**, Member of the EESC, and **Jörg Wojahn**, Representative of the European Commission in Austria.

Discussion of the future of Europe with experts at the podium:

- **Heinz Kogler** (Head of division at the Enterprise Europe Network, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber)
- **Valentin Wedl** (Head of the EU and international department, Vienna Works Council)
- **Nikolaus Morawitz** (Head of the EU and international relations department, Austrian Agricultural Council)

Moderation: **Marc Fähndrich**, advisor for economic policy coordination and the European Semester at the European Commission.

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## **BELGIUM**

## **Report**

### **CONCLUSIONS OF THE BELGIAN EESC MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF BELGIAN CIVIL SOCIETY**

**Discussion on 24 May 2017**

#### **Foreword**

Discussions on the future of Europe cannot be limited to simply choosing one of five (or more) scenarios. There are other issues affecting the European project that are not included in any of the scenarios, such as the decision-making process of the various European structures (including the EESC), as well as those within them. One of the merits of the White Paper is its recognition of this fact.

In view of the rather gloomy picture it paints, the White Paper gives the impression that trust in the EU and its legitimacy are being called into question, stating that:

"Despite this, many Europeans consider the Union as either too distant or too interfering in their day-to-day lives. Others question its added-value and ask how Europe improves their standard of living. And for too many, the EU fell short of their expectations as it struggled with its worst financial, economic and social crisis in post-war history."

Indifference towards and lack of trust in authority create a breeding ground for populist and nationalist rhetoric, although the results of recent elections in Austria, the Netherlands and France, and perhaps those soon to be held in Germany, do give grounds for some pro-European optimism. Even so, the large number of votes obtained by populist and/or anti-democratic candidates remains a serious concern.

It is also necessary to distinguish between cause and effect. The causes probably lie in certain choices made by the EU and its Member States to retreat into nationalism. Similarly, some of the decisions made have further increased the distance between the EU and its citizens and businesses. The White Paper describes a European Union embattled by a lack of understanding by the public, to whom it is not being presented properly. But does that not also mean that the administration itself is driving the public yet further from the EU? Expanding and strengthening support for the EU relies on the simultaneous efforts of multiple layers of responsibility, at European level, at local and national level, and by representative organisations such as those represented in the EESC. In this regard, we cannot overstate the role that is necessarily incumbent on all players involved, to ensure clear communication based, of course, on clear and comprehensible content.

The current situation shows that it is essential, at the highest level, to clearly describe the objectives of the European Union in all its aspects. As Angela Merkel recently said, we can only rely on ourselves!

Indeed, the European Commission needs to consult and inform the public and businesses via the representative organisations of the social partners and civil society. It is the most efficient way of reaching the target groups.

Discussions on the future of Europe must be based on "ambition" as well as "realism". While these virtues are not necessarily contradictory, they are nonetheless liable to interfere with each other – particularly in the context of efforts to increase levels of support.

In addition, as is normal with any decision-making process, there is the very important link between decision-making structures, representative organisations (including civil society organisations) and the public. It is beyond all shadow of a doubt that the Belgian members of the EESC are legitimate representatives and stakeholders. They are aware that, when it comes to European issues, they also need to work to improve communication internally, so as, for example, to ensure that the EESC's opinions are debated more within their national bodies. At the same time, they bear witness to the fact that the national and regional levels pay little attention to the messages coming from representatives of the European institutions.

Finally, it is worth emphasising that all local, regional and national authorities tend to blame Europe for the negative effects of its policy decisions, while taking credit for all the benefits as being the result of their own policy choices. This behaviour sows the seeds of anti-European populism and digs the grave of any supranational approaches.

## **THE SCENARIOS**

The Commission's decision to lay out five scenarios without explicitly coming out in favour of any one of them could be seen as showing a lack of leadership. Or is it trying to increase the chances of commitment to the future of Europe? That is what needs to be made clear in the next stages of the process set out in the White Paper between now and the 2019 elections.

### **SCENARIO 1: CARRYING ON**

If we take this scenario to mean sticking strictly to the status quo, it too shows a serious lack of both ambition and realism. No organisation, whatever its size, can afford to take a scenario of "simply carrying on as before" as the basis for its future operation. At the moment, the implementation of decisions taken by the EU is in a state of paralysis. That is the responsibility of the Member States, but it is still a symptom for which the status quo cannot be a valid cure.

That is not to say that we need to change everything about the way the EU currently works, but the minimum objective should be "doing better", which by definition means "doing something different".

### **SCENARIO 2: NOTHING BUT THE SINGLE MARKET**

An EU that is simply a single market presents serious threats, first and foremost in the social arena. Moreover, it could be argued that (like scenario 1) this too is a much too unambitious approach, which would leave the EU with no answers to new transnational challenges, problems and opportunities. It is highly doubtful whether this scenario would be able to increase support for European policy.

This assessment does not detract from the fact that the single market is of crucial importance for EU policy. Thus, in practice, it is a case not of "single market and nothing more", but of "single market and nothing less".

### **SCENARIO 3: THOSE WHO WANT MORE DO MORE**

This scenario is the most promising in terms of opportunities for progress. The idea of States that act as "engines" and, in the long term, bring others with them on the road to transnational agreements is a

reality that has shown its full potential over the past 60 years. It will nevertheless be necessary to identify the areas where this "two-speed" concept is useful and those where it is not at all. The principle of "single market and nothing less" (see comments on scenario 2) does indeed set a necessary limit on the two-speed concept.

The EU, the euro area, the Schengen area and the European Economic Area already constitute a patchwork of groups of States in terms of obligations and cooperation. In addition, the single market could further fragment as a result, with all the consequences that entails, including the distortion of competition between the Member States in question and added complications in the various applicable regulations. Practicability, monitoring and transparency in the decision-making process are thus issues that must be taken into careful consideration in this scenario.

#### **SCENARIO 4: DOING LESS MORE EFFICIENTLY**

Efficiency is a very laudable objective; it is unlikely that anybody would come up with the idea of working less efficiently. What exactly is meant by "more efficiently" needs to be made more tangible, showing what it provides in terms of opportunities. In some cases, a speedy decision-making process is no guarantee of adequate support, and in fact risks lengthening the process. "Efficient" and "less complex" seem to go hand in hand; to achieve this, the Member States need to agree more explicitly to the transfer of exclusive competences to the transnational level. This situation will by definition apply to fewer areas. This scenario thus overlaps with the previous one (scenario 3), which specifically provides for fewer States wanting to do, and doing, more.

#### **SCENARIO 5: DOING MUCH MORE TOGETHER**

This scenario should be the most ambitious one, but it comes up against the experiences of current policy, and thus reality. For the time being, there are enough opportunities and challenges in terms of doing more together, with no need to make additional structural choices. Just think, for example, of migration, refugee issues and the issue of defence. Deepening and broadening existing competences in these fields would in itself be implementing this scenario.

Alongside this, we want to point out the differences, in functional terms, between the EU and the euro area. Specifically with regard to the latter, targeted efforts are needed to "do more" to strengthen more automatic stabilisers.

In any event, and thus regardless of the scenario, the method, timetable and checks with respect to the realities and the ways the Member States implement EU decisions are hugely important in terms of how the public and businesses will respond to them.

## **Participants**

**Meeting attended by:**

Name of participant	Name of organization
Philippe de Buck	EESC (Group I)
Ferre Wyckmans	EESC (Group II)
Ronny Lannoo	EESC (Group III)
Yves Somville	EESC (Group III)
Daniel Mareels	EESC (Group I)
Alain Coheur	EESC (Group III)
Raymond Coumont	EESC (Group II)
Ferdi De Ville	Ghent University/asbl Minerva
Thomas Pirard	Advisor on European Affairs, Unizo
Olivier Joris	Policy Officer for European Affairs, Federation of Enterprises in Belgium
Chris Botterman	Head of Social Affairs, Boerenbond [Farmers' League]
Luc Van Oirbeek	Common agricultural policy, Boerenbond
Thomas Van Zwol	International Affairs Department, Christian Trade Union Confederation
Rafaël Lamas	International Affairs Department, General Federation of Belgian Labour
Adam Plezer	EESC secretariat

## **BULGARIA**

## Report

### Background

The debate with civil society in Bulgaria, coordinated by Milena Angelova (Group I), Plamen Dimitrov (Group II) and Dilyana Slavova (Group III), was held in Sofia on 2 June 2017. Over eighty representatives from civil society attended, as well as ones from the government and legislature and from the European Commission's representation in Bulgaria. The debate was held jointly with Bulgaria's Economic and Social Council (ESC), which is drafting an opinion on the White Paper, and was opened by Lilyana Pavlova, Minister for the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU Council. The ESC's rapporteurs – Vasil Velev, chairman of the board of the Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association, Dimitar Manolov, president of the Podkrepa Confederation of Labour, and unaffiliated academic Vera Pirimova – contributed to the debate.

### **Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

Participants identified as main challenges for the European Union its failure to cope with the problems it faces, such as the grave economic crisis and absence of prosperity, increasing migration and a lack of cohesion. At the same time, globalisation, robotisation and digitalisation of the economy are putting strains on the European social model, fostering dissatisfaction with politics and political passivity and creating niches for populism. On the broader scale, the Union must adapt to Europe's rapidly changing place in a developing world and seek political emancipation. Bulgaria is facing these same challenges, but must also contend with other problems, including migration within Europe resulting in a demographic crisis and problems such as a lack of highly qualified and skilled labour, insufficient economic growth to foster greater convergence and improved quality of life vis-à-vis other European countries, low investment growth and administrative hurdles to the development of small and medium-sized businesses.

It is against this backdrop that the participants discussed the scenarios outlined in the White Paper, expressing the following views on each of them. **Scenario 1: Carrying On** was criticised because sticking with the status quo would not permit the EU to address the problems facing it, although the scenario also envisages improving the functioning of existing mechanisms and focuses on the creation of new jobs and growth. **Scenario 2: Nothing but the Single Market** was also criticised as being a step backward, but participants emphasised that the role of the single market in promoting European integration must not be underplayed and its achievements need to be taken into account, given that the European Union is, after all, the most successful of economic unions. **Scenario 3: Those Who Want More Do More** was often seen as being bad for Bulgaria, since the country risked being turned down for enhanced cooperation. On many occasions, the question of openness and an inclusive approach to other countries wishing to join enhanced cooperation in a particular area reminded people of Bulgaria's desire to join the euro area and the fact that, although it met all the formal criteria, there were found to be additional conditions. Some speakers argued that a multi-speed Europe was inevitable or was already a reality, particularly as regards the euro area, and cited as examples proposals for specific institutions for that area in the discussion paper on economic and monetary union.

Participants thought **Scenario 4: Doing Less More Efficiently** and **Scenario 5: Doing Much More Together** were possible scenarios for Bulgaria. Criticism of the fourth scenario had to do with the fact that it could involve risks, because if more is done in some areas, less may be done in other areas where added value is limited, such as social policy. Some trade union representatives therefore rejected this scenario on these grounds. Employers, on the other hand, saw some advantages in the scenario, which will make it possible to work more effectively in fewer areas. Criticisms of the fifth scenario were that it may prove unrealistic, since it requires the transfer of more powers and resources on a pan-European basis and may raise a number of questions concerning the relationship between sovereignty and solidarity.

Overall, these scenarios were considered to fall short and there was some consensus that a new scenario was needed that would build on the fourth and fifth, include cohesion policy, make it possible to work more effectively and improve the balance between Europe's economic and social dimensions.

**Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why? Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

#### **How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

The participants discussed in detail the economic and social dimensions for the future of Europe and agreed that these aspects are not sufficiently explored in the scenarios. On the economic front, they have almost nothing to say about cohesion and cohesion policy, which need to be added as a core issue. Participants stressed that the continuation of cohesion and structural funds after 2020 and the implementation of policies for the economic convergence of Member States were a priority for Bulgaria and essential for maintaining the unity of the European Union and for meeting the challenges of globalisation and digitalisation. They agreed that the scenarios must deepen convergence within the Union and also noted regarding the need in terms of the economy for a move towards federalisation. It was also stressed that Europe must come up with policies to help it benefit from the new economy and digitalisation. The need to reduce administration for businesses as part of the programme for better lawmaking and boosting growth and employment were also flagged up as being important in economic terms.

It was pointed out that the social dimension was fundamental and that the current crisis was evidence of widening inequalities, which would lead to a loss of trust. There were comments about the balance between the economic and social dimension of the future of Europe and the fact that the latter was not addressed in detail in the White Paper itself and that the supporting document – unlike the White Paper – sets out only three scenarios (1. limiting the social dimension to the free market, 2. those who want, do more – particularly in the euro area, and 3. deepening Europe's social dimension). Cited as essential elements of the social dimension that must be included in the scenarios were social protection, the development and improvement of the legal framework for collective bargaining and social dialogue at national and European level based on ILO conventions and recommendations in this field and the elimination of social dumping in the European Union. The idea was also put forward of including a protocol on social progress in the EU Treaties that could generate rights. There was also a

proposal for the twenty principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights to be included in the European Semester.

The democratic deficit and red tape were repeatedly cited as a hurdle to furthering the European Union's credibility and making it more meaningful to citizens. A proposal was made to include in the scenarios a better mechanism for decision-making, with more involvement of representative civil society.

The participants also pointed out that, in order to raise trust in the European Union, Member States needed to shoulder their responsibility and not use the European Union as a scapegoat for problems. It was also underlined that Member States, when transposing European directives into national legislation, should not add unwarranted requirements that make life more difficult for businesses or render implementation of European legislation ineffective.

**Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how? How can the citizen be more empowered in the shaping of the future of Europe?**

Participants agreed on the need for better presentation of the European Union and the individual rights of citizens within it. They stressed it was essential that young people be engaged in the European debate. It was noted that the European Union now played a large part in people's lives and that they had to have the possibility of participating in shaping its future. The Bulgarian ESC said there were plans to stage debates about the future of Europe in larger cities and proposed liaising with legislative and executive tiers on the findings and proposals coming out of these debates. It was noted that Bulgaria's position on the future of Europe must be constituted on a firm footing using a bottom-up approach.

The opinion was also voiced that European decisions must in future be better agreed with representative civil society through existing platforms such as the European Economic and Social Committee and national bodies of the same kind.

**Regarding "the way ahead", how should the "Future of Europe Debates across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organized civil society play in "the way ahead" and how?**

Participants stressed the need to continue the debate in the relevant committees of the Bulgarian parliament, with civil society on board. It was also noted that the Bulgarian presidency of the Council of the EU was an opportunity for in-depth discussion of the European Union, its future and the priorities of Bulgaria. This would allow Bulgaria to mark out a clear position on the future of Europe and to look for partners from other Member States to uphold this position.

**What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

The conclusions of the consultations in Bulgaria are that the European project has a future and that the question is not whether – but how – it is to be delivered. Bulgarian civil society supports the country's EU membership and believes that the scenarios for the future of Europe need to include further solidarity, cohesion and convergence and a balance between the economic and social dimensions of

the Union. Two things are of strategic importance: firstly, after Brexit Europe has to find the right approaches to emerging from the crisis of confidence; secondly, it has to make a clear political commitment to the countries of the Western Balkans and give them the chance of prospective EU membership in the foreseeable future.

## **Participants**

### **Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association**

1. IVELIN ZHELYAZKOV – Bulgarian economic and social council (ESC) .....
2. BISERKA BENISHEVA .....
3. MIHAIR TACHEV .....
4. MONIKA GADZHUNOVA .....
5. ILYANA SPASOVA .....

### **Bulgarian Industrial Association**

1. KAMEN KOLEV .....
2. BRANIMIR HANDZHIEV .....
3. VESELIN ILIEV .....
4. DOBRI MITREV .....
5. MIROSLAV TONCHEV .....
6. ANTOANETA KATSAROVA .....
7. DIMITAR BRANKOV .....

### **"PODKREPA" Confederation of Labour**

1. VANYA GRIGOROVA – ESC .....
2. PAUNITA PETROVA – ESC .....
3. VALERI APOSTOLOV .....
4. BILYANA BARBANOVA .....
5. MARIANA KRASTEVA .....
6. MARIYA PETROVA .....
7. ADRIAN ILIEV .....
8. KATRIN STANCHEVA .....
9. VESELINA STARCHEVA .....
10. IVELINA HUBENOVA .....
11. ROSITSA KRACHUNOVA .....

### **Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria**

1. EKATERINA RIBAROVA – ESC .....
2. ASYA GONEVA .....
3. NIKOLAY NEDEV .....
4. YULIYA SIMEONOVA .....
5. VELICHKA MINOVA .....
6. TODOR KAPITANOV .....
7. MARTIN IVANOV .....
8. DIANA NAYDENOVA .....
9. MIHAELA TODOROVA .....
10. ANTON GENCHEV .....

11. VALENTIN VALCHEV	.....
12. MIROSLAV VALENTINOV	.....
13. TODOR TOMOV	.....
14. ELENA STANCHEVA	.....
15. GEORGI STANCHEV	.....
16. EVGENI YANEV	.....
17. MAYA POPOVA	.....
18. YULIYA PASTUCHOVA	.....
19. SIMONA VELEVA	.....
20. KRASTINKA PASTUCHOVA	.....
21. VASIL YANACHKOV	.....
22. NIKOLAY STOYANOV	.....
23. VIOLETA IVANOVA	.....

**Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

1. VALENTINA ZARTOVA – ESC	.....
2. LACHEZAR ISKROV – ESC	.....
3. BOYKA PAVLOVA	.....
4. TANYA KAMENOVA	.....

**Third Group  
Bulgarian Economic and Social Council**

1. ILYA LINGORSKI	.....
2. SVETLA CHAMOVA	.....
3. VELKO IVANOV	.....
4. VYARA GANCHEVA	.....
5. ALEKSANDAR EVTIMOV	.....
6. GEORGI GUSHLENOV	.....
7. RUMEN GALABINOV	.....
8. IRINA KAZANDZHIEVA	.....
9. ANTOANETA IVANOVA	.....
10. MARINA STEFANOVA	.....

**Bulgarian Economic and Social Council**

1. STILIYAN BALASOPULOV – ESC	.....
2. NENO PAVLOV – ESC	.....
3. YANKA TAKEVA	.....
4. STEFCHO STEFANOV	.....

## Programme

Бялата книга за бъдещето на Европа

Дебат с гражданското общество в България, организиран от

Европейския икономически и социален комитет и

Икономическия и социален съвет на България

Петък, 2 юни 2017

Хотел София-Балкан, пл. Света Неделя 5, зала Роял 1

На 1-ви март 2017 година, Европейската комисия публикува Бяла книга за бъдещето на Европа "Размисли и сценарии за ЕС-27 до 2025 г.", в която се посочват възможни пътища за бъдещето на Европа. Бялата книга представя пет сценария, които предлагат поглед към потенциалното бъдещо състояние на Съюза в зависимост от избора, който Европа ще направи.

Бялата книга бележи началото, а не края на този дебат и целта е преди изборите за Европейски парламент през юни 2019 г. да се представи план, визия и начертан път за бъдещето на Европа. Участието на гражданското общество в този дебат е от изключителна важност. Председателят на Европейската комисия г-н Юнкер възложи на председателя на Европейския икономически и социален комитет (ЕИСК), г-н Дасис, изработването на становище относно Бялата книга. ЕИСК от своя страна реши да организира дебати в 27 държави-членки в сътрудничество с националните икономически и социални съвети. Българският Икономически и социален съвет също подготвя становище относно предложениета, изложени в Бялата книга.

Целта на дебата, организиран в България, съвместно с българския Икономически и социален съвет, е да се анализират и оценят петте сценария, очертани в Бялата книга, и при нужда да се предложат други възможни сценарии за бъдещето на Европа. Дебатът ще послужи също така за критичен анализ и изработване на препоръки относно по-активно участие на гражданското общество в изграждането на бъдещето на Европа.

8.30 -9.00	<b>Регистрация</b>
9.00-9.15	<b>Откриване</b> Г-н Лалко Дулевски, Председател на ИСС Г-жа Лиляна Павлова, Министър за Българското председателство на Съвета на ЕС Г-н Бисер Петков, Министър на труда и социалната политика на Република България Г-н Христо Христов, зам. ръководител на Представителството на Европейската комисия в България
9.15-10.15	<b>Дискусационна тема 1:</b> Икономическите измерения на бъдещето на Европа и възможни алтернативи <i>Как Европа би могла да се подготви най-добре за посрещане на бъдещите предизвикателства на глобализацията и да извлече ползи от нея? Как българската икономика най-успешно би се вписала в променящата се международна икономическа конюнктура? Кои елементи на европейската интеграция са критични за България? Еврозоната и България. Икономическото управление на ЕС – възможности на Европейския семестър. Бъдещето на кохезионната политика. Възможности за насърчаване на конкурентоспособността на българската икономика –</i>

	<p><i>преодоляване на дефицитите на пазара на труда, намаляване на административните прегради пред бизнеса, политики за подкрепа на малките и средни предприятия.</i></p> <p><b>Ключови говорители:</b></p> <p><i>Г-н Петър Кънев</i>, Председател на Комисията по икономическа политика на 44-то Народно събрание на Република България</p> <p><i>Г-н Емил Караполов</i>, Министър на икономиката на Република България (очакваме потвърждение)</p> <p><i>Г-н Васил Велев</i>, Председател на УС на АИКБ, докладчик на ИСС по темата</p> <p><i>Г-н Любен Томев</i>, Директор на Института за синдикални и социални изследвания, главен икономист на КНСБ</p> <p><i>Г-н Любомир Дацов</i>, икономист, член на Фискалния съвет</p> <p><b>Модератор на дискусията:</b></p> <p><i>Г-жа Милена Ангелова</i>, член на ЕИСК, група 1, Главен секретар на АИКБ</p>
10.15-11.15	<p><b>Дискусионна тема 2:</b> Социалното измерение на бъдещето на Европа</p> <p><i>Европейският стълб на социалните права и мястото му в Европейския семестър - въздействието на документа относно социалното измерение на Европа върху България Как да приспособим нашите социални модели към настоящите и бъдещите предизвикателства? Трябва ли да се задълбочава социалната интеграция на Европа или трябва да се ограничи само до свободното движение? Какви допълнителни политики са нужни за подобряване на социалната кохезия в Европа?</i></p> <p><b>Ключови говорители:</b></p> <p><i>Г-н Хасан Адемов</i>, Председател на Комисията по социална политика на 44-то Народно събрание на Република България</p> <p><i>Г-н Димитър Манолов</i>, Президент на КТ "Подкрепа", докладчик на ИСС по темата</p> <p><i>Проф. д-р Искра Белева</i>, Българска академия на науките</p> <p><b>Модератор на дискусията:</b></p> <p><i>Г-н Пламен Димитров</i>, Член на ЕИСК, група 2, Президент на Конфедерацията на независимите синдикати в България</p>
11.15-12.15	<p><b>Дискусионна тема 3:</b> Петте сценария на Бялата книга за бъдещето на Европа и възможни алтернативи</p> <p><i>Анализ на петте сценария и какви трябва да бъдат приоритетите на България в тези сценарии? Има ли възможни алтернативни сценарии? Кои политики и политически приоритети не фигурират или не са достатъчно залегнали в петте сценария? Кои политики и действия биха укрепили доверието на гражданините в Европейския съюз? Как би трябвало да бъдат структурирани дискусиите относно бъдещето на Европа в организацията на гражданското общество, националните парламенти, градовете и регионите на Европа? Как могат гражданините да получат по-голяма</i></p>

	<p><i>възможност да участват в изграждането на бъдещето на Европа и във функционирането на Европейския съюз?</i></p> <p><b>Ключови говорители:</b></p> <p><i>Г-н Кристиан Вигенин</i>, Председател на Комисията по европейски въпроси на 44-то Народно събрание на Република България</p> <p><i>Доц. д-р Вера Пиримова</i>, Член на ЕИСК, група 3, председател на Комисията по международно сътрудничество и европейска интеграция, докладчик на ИСС по темата</p> <p><i>Г-н Михаил Бояджиев</i>, Председател на Съюза на българските фондации и сдружения</p> <p><i>Г-н Румен Христов</i>, преподавател в Аграрен университет Пловдив и ЮЗУ</p> <p><b>Модератор на дискусията:</b></p> <p><i>Г-жа Диляна Славова</i>, Член на ЕИСК, група 3, председател на Комисията по външна политика</p>
<b>12.15-12.30</b>	<b><i>Обобщение на модераторите</i></b>

**CROATIA**

## **Report**

**Zagreb, 29 May 2017**

### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **I. THE SCENARIOS**

*Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?*

##### **The optimum scenario and its realism**

- Federalisation of the European Union, and in particular of the euro area (the option closest to scenario 5) – in other words, political union – asserts itself as a necessary solution: it is the only one that is rational and consistent, and capable of producing optimum effectiveness and uniformity in the single market, ensuring the long-term survival of the single currency, allowing fiscal union and making the European Union a stable, sustainable community of states. This federalisation of Europe entails giving it the prerogatives of a State entity, subject to application of the subsidiarity principle.
- In these times when nation states are beset by centrifugal tendencies, participants in the debate expressed the hope that all EU Member States – or at least a majority – would be able to agree on this path, which would be a real landmark.
- If that could not be achieved, the academic community, associations and trade unions issued a warning: Europe will continue to flounder in its own contradictions until the next major crisis hits, which could seriously undermine the dysfunctional structure of a Europe that will then be almost incapable, in itself, of withstanding the test.

##### **The imperatives of the European Union – conditions for its survival**

- Regardless of the scenarios proposed, the European Union can have no future if it neglects the following aspects:
  - ✓ a decision-making process that has democratic legitimacy and acts for and on behalf of the European public,
  - ✓ sustainable development (environmental sustainability, eradicating poverty, etc.),
  - ✓ the competitiveness of businesses on the world market, developed in the context of the European Union's social market economy,
  - ✓ the European Pillar of Social Rights and the full implementation of the European social model,
  - ✓ solidarity and cooperation between the public and the States, instead of a competition that leads to backsliding in the area of social rights and tax regimes,
  - ✓ education, culture and science, which are prerequisites for an operational economy, an advanced society and a mature political community.

*How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?*

##### **The need for convergence and cohesion policies**

- As regards the conditions for the free movement of labour, capital and goods, the Croatian trade unions would like to note that it is not possible to ensure that the single market functions properly and fairly in the absence of a common budget that is based on adequate and suitable tax revenues and an optimal currency area, and managed by a federal state structure that can respond quickly to the asymmetric shocks that crises cause in the Member States and can pursue long-term strategic action to ensure greater convergence in the development of the countries in the EU.
- It should be ensured that the EU budget continues to provide the necessary resources for the development of less developed regions and countries. Without cohesion policy, a united Europe would cease to be an area of equal rights for States, citizens, entrepreneurs and different strata of society.

### **Solidarity**

- With regard to taxation, solidarity between Member States, rather than competition, is a prerequisite for strengthening EU regions whose development is lagging behind and for maintaining and developing the European social model.

*Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why?*

### **Gaps identified in the White Paper**

- The White Paper does not address the issue of errors made by the Commission so far in pursuing contractionary macroeconomic policies whose consequences for the future of Europe in economic, social and democratic terms are as yet impossible to foresee.
- The analytical underpinnings of the various scenarios are unknown, and there has been no assessment of the impact each of them would have.
- Vitally important issues – sustainable development, culture and education – are not covered.
- The White Paper does not look at what forms a future union of states could take.

### **An additional scenario**

- The civil society associations and trade unions would argue that, separately from the debate on the five scenarios with a view to finding institutional solutions, there is also a need to discuss the reasons why the EU has found itself in a position where it needs to redefine itself. We need to know what kind of Europe we really want. The EU's current problems are well known: a democratic and participatory deficit, the excessive influence exerted by corporatist viewpoints to the detriment of the public interest, the reduction of sustainable growth to nothing more than a slogan, when it should be a key principle, and the lack of credibility of Europe's discourse on social policy.

As a result, the debate particularly focused on "scenario 6: A sustainable Europe for its citizens", in line with the joint call from civil society organisations and trade unions to European leaders. Stakeholders felt that this line of action was an exceptionally important tool that should be an integral part of the ideal approach, as it elevated sustainable development,

citizens and economic, social and environmental welfare to the status of key reference points around which the future of Europe will need to be built.

### **Substitute scenarios**

- In the context of the genuine option of a federal structure bringing together only certain Member States, debate participants warned of the possibility that this could create groups of first- and second-class countries, and thus widen current gaps in levels of development, at the expense of the cohesion of the Union itself. All three categories agreed that no current Member State should be required to meet any preconditions in order to join a political Union of this kind.
- In the event that this move towards federalism does not occur, and the consensus-based approach that has prevailed to date is retained, Croatian trade unions and civil society associations would highlight that Member States outside the euro area must be exempted from the commitments made when the euro was introduced, which were agreed to in circumstances and times very different from today. The stagnation of the economy following the global financial crisis raised public awareness in many countries of the failures and risks of a currency that, in times of crisis, operates in a sub-optimal currency area. Against the background of the periodic crises inherent to capitalism, the effect of a single currency is to impose a restrictive economic policy (austerity) as the only way of resolving cyclical swings. And it is precisely this way of conducting anti-crisis economic policy that constitutes the basic underlying reason for the social and political crisis in which the European Union is now floundering.
- The assumption is that Croatia will not join the euro during the period in question, which runs until 2025. The different groups agree that, on the question of whether adoption of the euro would be good or bad for Croatia, there is a need to conduct analyses and to hold a broad debate with the public, with all stakeholders in the public and private sectors. In any event, Croatia must first ensure the stability of its economy before it can consider introducing the euro.

*What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?*

### **The difficulties faced by Croatia during the European Union's transformation process**

- Croatia has no alternative path to participation in the European Union, not least because it shares its cultural values.
- The representatives of trade unions, civil society associations and academia must nonetheless point out that the country is facing mass emigration on an unprecedented scale, which particularly affects young skilled workers but has also, in recent times, been coupled with an exodus of lower-skilled workers. This is one of the effects of a long period of economic depression, exacerbated by the multi-annual macroeconomic constraints imposed by the European Commission in its austerity recommendations, at the same time as the country's accession to the EU brought about free movement of labour. On top of this, Croatia is experiencing serious demographic decline, to the extent that it is facing a shortage of the skilled workers who are needed if the country is to recover and the economic upturn is to gain momentum. Although Croatia has benefited from EU funds, the EU has not established mechanisms to compensate for such a catastrophic situation where, in practice, this very poor

country is exporting its most precious human capital for the benefit of prosperous States. While it fully supports the internal processes of European integration, Croatia therefore needs to set its own path and to draw on its internal strengths, undertaking essential reforms but also evaluating its options very carefully. The country needs the tools to combat such an acute crisis. If the EU does not have such tools, Croatia needs to keep its own, at least until Europe creates them. In the current circumstances, the levers provided by monetary and fiscal sovereignty are all the more relevant.

## II. FIELDS FOR ACTION

*Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?*

### **Social market economy, single market and trade agreements**

- The development of the competitiveness of the Croatian economy is based on integration in the **single market**. The smooth functioning of the European Union is thus of particular relevance for the private sector in Croatia.
- To create a level playing field and fair competition, it is necessary to ensure the smooth functioning of the single market, based on the four freedoms of movement, as well as to implement the smart regulation and better regulation policy and to remove existing barriers and unnecessary administrative requirements, as prerequisites for establishing a conducive environment for the private sector, economic growth and social prosperity in the EU. The key to success and job creation is to reduce bureaucracy, ensure a favourable environment in the EU for trade – both internal and external – and promote investment in research, development and innovation.
- The EU needs to include among its priorities socio-economic issues and challenges linked to employment, education, skills, culture and science. The frameworks and principles of education and science policy should be the responsibility of the European Commission. In order to reduce youth unemployment, particular attention should be paid to education, which must adapt to today's digital age and to current labour market requirements.
- For a small economy like Croatia's, access to global markets is of paramount importance. Our status as a member of the EU and a party to many international trade agreements offers us opportunities for exports, and the strength of the European Union is essential in achieving better results in international negotiations. In the opinion of the private sector, the EU should continue to conclude comprehensive **trade agreements**, taking into account the need to protect European values regarding labour, environmental and consumer protection standards.
- There is no other way than that of the **social market economy**. Strong social policies should be one of the foundations of the European Union. The parameters measuring development should include social indicators, as GDP can no longer constitute a qualitative standard on its own.

### **Demographic and migration policy**

- In view of the ageing European population, it is suggested that a common demographic policy should be pursued, with a focus on anticipation.

- It is also worth laying the foundations for a common migration policy.

#### **Common security and defence tools**

- The participants support the establishment of a common security and defence system for the European Union.

### **III. TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION WITH CITIZENS**

*Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how?*

- It is vital for the European institutions to work in greater transparency. It seems that discussions are held without the knowledge of the public, and that decisions are taken out of the public eye; this approach promotes inconsistency between different political levels.
- Nonetheless, the Union's communication with its citizens is not a one-way affair: it also depends on the public's own interest. In other words, increasing the European Union's visibility and stepping up its communication depend, to a very large extent, on its level of influence. Increasing the EU's budgetary resources, allocating it a specific segment in the tax system or giving it competences in key public policy areas would all be ways of improving the European political sphere's communication with the public. Similarly, people would undoubtedly be more interested in the EU if they could have a significant influence in selecting the people who make decisions in these areas.

*How can the citizen be more empowered in the shaping of the future of Europe?*

#### **Making citizens the centre of attention**

- The EU must reflect the will of the European people. The vision that it has of its own future makes no sense to them: it is too bureaucratic and too remote. It is therefore necessary to do everything possible to encourage participatory and representative democracy.

## Participants

**NACIONALNA RASPRAVA – BIJELA KNJIGA O BUDUĆNOSTI EUROPE  
HRVATSKA GOSPODARSKA KOMORA, ZAGREB, ROOSEVELTOV TRG 2  
VIJEĆNICA, 1. KAT**

**PONEDJELJAK, 29. SVIBNJA 2017. OD 9:30 DO 14:30**

### Popis sudionika

No.	Ime Prezime	Institucija
1	DRAGICA MARTINOVIC	HGK – predstavništvo Bruxelles
2	TONI VIDAN	Zelena akcija
3	VILIM RIBIC	Matica hrvatskih sindikata
4	VIŠNJA SAMARDŽIJA	Institut za razvoj i međunarodne odnose
5	BORIS COTA	Ekonomski fakultet
6	ZVONIMIR SAVIC	Hrvatska gospodarska komora
7	DAVORKO VIDOVIC	Hrvatska gospodarska komora
8	MATIJA RAOS	HDNP
9	DENIS PARAMIC	
10	MAJA PLEIC	Centar za mirovne studije
11	ANTON FLORIJAN BARIŠIĆ	Chromos Info
12	VESNA ERŠEČOĆ	Documenta
13	MAJA BOŽIĆEVIĆ VRHOVČAK	DOOR
14	KRUNOSALV RADELJAK	EEP d.o.o.
15	ALAN KEČKEŠ	EP
16	MAJA RADMAN	Comité économique et social européen
17	JOSIP HRGETIĆ	FORUM ZAGREB HUP
18	DUJE PRKUT	GONG
19	ZLATKO KOZMAN	Hrvatska gospodarska komora – KARLOVAC
20	MARKO BABIC	Hrvatska gospodarska komora
21	ANA KARLIĆ	Hrvatska gospodarska komora
22	EMA CULI	Hrvatska gospodarska komora
23	TOMISLAVA RAVLIC	Hrvatska gospodarska komora
24	DARKO PRISTEAR	Hrvatska obrtnička komora
25	MATIJA DUIĆ	Hrvatska obrtnička komora
26	FILIP MAJCE	Hrvatska obrtnička komora
27	GORDAN KARLIĆ	Hrvatska obrtnička komora
28	NEVENA KURTET	Hrvatska obrtnička komora
29	VLATKA VUŽIĆ	Hrvatska obrtnička komora
30	SANJA ŽELINSKI MATUNEC	Hrvatska obrtnička komora
31	KREŠO JUŠIĆ	Hrvatska obrtnička komora
32	ZORAN VARGA	Hrvatska obrtnička komora
33	VIOLETA JELIĆ	Hrvatska obrtnička komora

No.	Ime Prezime	Institucija
34	ANICA PRAŠNJAK	Hrvatski strukovni sindikat medicinskih sestara – medicinskih tehničara
35	LIDIJA HOTVATIĆ	HUP
36	IVAN MIŠETIĆ	HUP
37	IVANA TURJAK	HUP
38	ZORAN BOHAČEK	HUP
39	MARINA FUNDUK	IRMO
40	JAKŠA PULJIZ	IRMO
41	HRVOJE BUTKOVIĆ	IRMO
42	MARGARITA JURIŠIĆ	IRMO
43	IVAN BEDENIKOVIĆ	IRMO
44	JOSIP PELIN	KOTKA d.d.
45	MIRELA BOJIĆ	MATICA HRVATSKIH SINDIKATA
46	ROBERT BROZD	MATICA HRVATSKIH SINDIKATA
47	KRISTINA RADIĆ	MATICA HRVATSKIH SINDIKATA
48	IVANA ŠEPAK-ROBIĆ	MATICA HRVATSKIH SINDIKATA
49	MATIJA KROFLIN	MATICA HRVATSKIH SINDIKATA
50	VELIMIR ŽUNAC	MRRFEU
51	MARIJA HANŽEVAČKI	Nezavisni hrvatski sindikat
52	MERI UVODIĆ	Nezavisni hrvatski sindikat
53	SINIŠA KUHAR	Nezavisni hrvatski sindikat
54	ŽELJKA OBRADOVIĆ	Nezavisni hrvatski sindikat
55	MARIJA JUKIĆ	Nezavisni hrvatski sindikat
56	CVETAN KOVAČ	Nezavisni hrvatski sindikat
57	DARIJE HANZALEK	Nezavisni hrvatski sindikat
58	SUZANA CURAVIĆ	Nezavisni hrvatski sindikat
59	ASJA GRGIĆ	Nezavisni sindikat knjižničara Hrvatske
60	NIJAZ KARIĆ	Nezavisni sindikat zaposlenih u srednjim školama Hrvatske
61	ZVONIMIR ŠIKIĆ	Nezavisni sindikat znanosti i visokog obrazovanja
62	MILJENKO ŠIMPRAGA	Nezavisni sindikat znanosti i visokog obrazovanja
63	SAŠA CECI	Nezavisni sindikat znanosti i visokog obrazovanja
64	ŽELJKO IVENKOVIĆ	NSZVO
65	LIDIJA PAVIĆ-ROGOŠIĆ	ODRAZ
66	MARIO MUNTA	ODRAZ / Fakultet političkih nauka
67	DON MARKUŠIĆ	odvjetnik
68	BRANKO BARIČEVIĆ	PREDSTAVNIŠTVO EK-a
69	MAJA RAGUŽ	Pro Mente Hrvatska
70	TOMISLAV KOVAČOĆ	PSP
71	ANA TUŠKAN	Sindikat hrvatskih učitelja
72	ANA MILIĆEVIĆ PEZELJ	SSSH
73	STJEPAN TOPOLNJAK	SSSH
74	JASENKA VUKŠIĆ	SSSH

No.	Ime Prezime	Institucija
75	ZLATICA ŠTULIĆ	SSSH
76	DENIS PARADIŠ	SSSH
77	BOŽICA ŽILIĆ	SSSH
78	SUNČICA BENOVIĆ	SSSH
79	VESNA MLINARIĆ	SSSH
80	BORIS FEIS	SSSH
81	SUNČICA BRNARDIĆ	SSSH
82	ZLATICA ŠTULIĆ	STH
83	CARMEN MAJETIĆ PAVIĆ	TAGORAS D.O.O
84	NIVES KOPAJTICH ŠKRLEC	Udruga gradova u RH
85	SLAĐANA NOVOTA	udruga SMART
86	SANDRA VLAŠIĆ	udruga Terra Hub
87	VIKTOR KOSKA	Ured za udruge Vlade RH
88	MAJA TOMICIC	Ured za udruge Vlade RH
89	LJILJANA BREULJ ŠTIMAC	Ured za udruge Vlade RH
90	VESNA LENDIĆ-KASALO	Ured za udruge Vlade RH
91	SAŠA ŠEGRT	Ured za udruge Vlade RH
92	DAMJAN JANJUŠEVIĆ	UZS
93	ANDREA ŠTEFAN	WWF
94	VLADIMIR RADE	

## **Programme**

### **NATIONAL DEBATE – WHITE PAPER ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE**

Debate among key stakeholders from the private sector, trade unions, civil society and academia on  
"What future do we want for the European Union and for Croatia within it?"

### **CROATIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, ROOSEVELTOV TRG 2, ZAGREB**

**Auditorium, first floor**

**Monday 29 May 2017, 9.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.**

### **PROGRAMME**

9:00-9:30	Registration of participants
9:30-9:45	<b>Welcome and introductory remarks</b> Dragica Martinović and Mislav Togonal, moderator
	<b>European Commission White Paper on the Future of Europe – Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025</b> Branko Baričević, head of the representation of the European Commission in the Republic of Croatia
09:45-10:30	<b>Review of EU development scenarios by EESC members, in terms of sustainable development, economic growth, labour rights, social rights and entrepreneurship</b> Toni Vidan, Green Action Vilim Ribić, Croatian Trade Union Association Dragica Martinović, Croatian Chamber of Commerce
10:30-11:20	<b>Questions and discussion</b>
11:20-12:00	<b>Break and refreshments</b>
12:00-13:00	<b>Geopolitical, economic and socio-cultural aspects of the different scenarios and Croatian membership of the EU (summary of the previous discussion)</b> Višnja Samardžija, Institute for Development and International Relations Boris Cota, Faculty of Economics Zvonimir Savić, Croatian Chamber of Commerce Danijela Dolenec, Faculty of Political Sciences
13:00-14:20	<b>Debate focusing on conclusions and recommendations</b> Debate focusing on proposals for recommendations for the EU and national authorities
14:20-14:30	<b>Conclusion and closing address (moderator and EESC member)</b>

## **CYPRUS**

## **Report**

### Background

On the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017, the European Commission published a White Paper on "the future of Europe, reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025", which describes five potential scenarios concerning the future of the European Union. The Commission asked the EESC to prepare an exploratory opinion on this White Paper. The EESC appointed an ad hoc group to work on this opinion which is to be finalised within the following months. It was further decided to launch public debates in all member States, in order to consult civil society organisations on a local level, and forward this information to the ad hoc group so that it can be of use in the forthcoming opinion.

Subsequently, a public debate took place at the "House of Europe" in Nicosia, Cyprus, on 19/05 and was attended by numerous CSO representatives, including youth organisations' representatives. The debate was co-chaired by Mr. Mavrommatis (EESC member of Group I), Mr. Antoniou (EESC member of Group I), Mr. Pavlakkas (EESC Member Group II), Mr. Epistithiou (EESC Member Group II). The EESC members made an introduction by referring to the meaning of the White Paper, the role of the EESC and the goals of that public debate. During the lively discussion that followed, a number of thematic issues of concern were highlighted and some scenarios were selected. This report will first of all mention critical points that participants stipulated (I), second, it will present the scenarios that participants chose (II) and the EESC members conclusions (III).

### I. Thematic issues of concern

#### **1. Difference between EU political declarations and reality regarding labour rights.**

Participants stressed that we need a different orientation in Europe. Salary cuts did not lead to an increase in competitiveness; on the contrary, it was proven that competitiveness in Cyprus decreased despite these cuts. The importance for all Member States to be on an equal level regarding growth and competitiveness and for further unification of labour markets was highlighted by a representative of the national Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The representative of the Pancyprian Workers' Federation mentioned that although president Juncker's proposals have generally been promising, in reality they were ineffective, giving the example of Europe 2020 that failed to reach its goals. He was also critical that White paper follows a neo-liberal approach and in fact none of the scenarios has addressed the need for better quality of living, regulating working conditions, improving labour standards, and guaranteeing decent pension rights.

#### **2. Democratic deficit in the EU.**

Some participants saw the White paper as an acknowledgement of failure and enlisted thematic areas where citizens feel alienated from the EU, mentioning the lack of social dialogue regarding labour rights, the secrecy in decision-making in the EU especially when it comes to country-specific budgetary issues, transparency and participation of citizens in decision-making. More concretely, a representative of Pancyprian Workers' Federation explained that European citizens often vote "no" in referendums concerning the EU, such as in the UK and the Netherlands, because they feel they don't participate effectively in EU politics. Moreover, a representative of the United Democratic Youth Organisation stated that the European Commission monopolises legislative initiatives whereas

citizens seem to be constrained due to bureaucratic impediments. A representative of 'Protoporia' Students' Youth Organisation stressed the need for more transparency regarding fund administration.

### **3. The EU deals with too many topics without being able to reach completion.**

It was proposed by the representatives of Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Employers and Industrialists Federation, 'Panagrotikos' Farmers Organisation and the Youth Organisation of Cyprus that the EU should prioritise a limited number of topics and concentrate its work in these domains in order to be more successful. The tendency to deal with such a big number of topics prevents the EU from delivering tangible results, for instance in the area of the internal market, and should therefore be avoided, at least for the time being.

### **4. The need for more social Europe and less austerity.**

The Pancyprian Workers' Federation representative mentioned youth unemployment and the social dimension of austerity policies as two examples in which social dimension has been neglected in Europe. Furthermore, the representative of Cyprus Workers Confederation criticised cuts in savings as a punitive EU measure and stressed that instead of punishing Member States the EU should rather stop austerity measures and invest in growth and productivity. The representative of Employers and Industrialists Federation added that economy and social policies are interdependent.

### **5. The need to guarantee gender equality.**

The representative of the Cyprus Gender Research Centre emphasized that the White paper does not address sufficiently the lack of gender equality, especially in the business sector.

### **6. The need for increased solidarity, collectivity and unity in Europe.**

A representative of the Organisation of Young Scientists claimed that although Europe faces many problems, it still managed to restore peace and improve living conditions in Europe. Although decisions are being adopted at EU level, very often they are not well implemented at national or local level. The key to change this practice is solidarity, collectivity and a sense of unity, that will make people think and act together as Europeans. "We are not Cypriots, we are Europeans" she stressed. The representative of Employers and Industrialists Federation added that we need to adopt a humanistic approach, investing more on the human being. The representative of United Democratic Youth Organisation underlined that extensive border controls bring more losses of human lives and suggested creating legal pathways for refugees and more equal distribution amongst member States. A representative of Youth Council of Cyprus complained that each country focuses on its own interests and not on European interests.

Nationalism has been presented by most participants as a phenomenon closely linked with the inability of the EU to focus on specific topics and deal with them efficiently, with the ignorance of people as to which benefits they will lose being outside of the EU and with the demonstrated willingness of each Member State to prioritise its own personal interests.

## **7. The need to focus on European citizens.**

The general Secretary of 'Euro-agrotikos' Farmers Organisation expressed the idea that the EU puts too much emphasis on non-EU country nationals, such as migrants residing in the EU, and less on Europeans Citizens. He stressed that EU citizens feel excluded from social protection. He suggested concentrating more on how to provide creative solutions to problems people face in Europe rather than investing in external policies.

## **8. Critique against militarization.**

The representative of United Democratic Youth Organisation observed that the EU nowadays tries to enhance defense cooperation and criticised the large expenditure on military equipment. He further added that although there is peace inside the EU territory, EU is still involved in wars happening outside of its borders and that this has to stop. Another representative added that Cyprus spends a lot of money for defense and that this has to be taken into account at EU level.

## **9. The need to improve youth participation.**

A representative of 'Protoporia' Students' Youth Organisation recalled that in the case of referendums concerning the EU, it was evidenced that most young people voted in favour of remaining in the EU. The representative of the Youth Council of Cyprus stressed that Member States have to move from a nationalistic approach to an approach of unity, that Europe should focus on less topics, make decision-making procedures more accessible and find a solution for young people who want to study or work in the United Kingdom.

## II. White paper scenarios for the future of Europe – the choice of civil society.

Regarding the five scenarios described in the White paper, civil society representatives expressed different views, some of them concluding that none of them reflects their aspirations for the future of Europe and some others not taking any position at all. A representative of the Consumers Organisation stated that although they are interested in this topic, they prefer not to express their views for the time being. Nevertheless, the majority of participants was in favour of the 4<sup>th</sup> scenario of "doing less but in a more efficient way", explaining that we are not yet ready in Europe to opt for the 5<sup>th</sup> scenario of "doing more, all of us together" and therefore federalism has to be postponed.

More concretely, the representative of Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated that the 1<sup>st</sup> scenario has to be rejected because we will prolong the same problems, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> one giving the possibility to countries who want to do more to proceed and make coalitions was said to be confusing and dangerous. He mentioned that he prefers the 4<sup>th</sup> scenario. However, here lies the danger of not being able to choose the topics to prioritise, since every country seems to have its own agenda.

The representative of Cyprus Workers Confederation was also in favour of the 4th scenario, mentioning that we should keep a low profile until we reach the point where we have reached our targets and we can further expand our activities. He referred to this period as a crossroad in human history and claimed that we need to make a brand new start in Europe.

The representative of Employers and Industrialists Federation mentioned that it is better to concentrate on a few topics and do it well. He also recalled that the EU has offered a lot to Cyprus, mentioning the access to internal market and freedom of movement as examples. He thought that dismantling Europe would mean that everybody is on his own and this is a terrifying scenario.

A representative of 'Panagrotikos' Farmers Organisation chose the 4th and 5th scenario, claiming that we need to overcome our individualistic approach of one State acting unilaterally and that each State should act in a way that is beneficial to all.

United Democratic Youth Organisation explained that they endorse a critical but progressive at the same time approach towards the EU. They cannot choose any scenario from the list. On the contrary, they disagree with the question and stressed that first and foremost we have to decide about which Europe we talk about, what kind of Europe we want.

Finally, the Youth Council of Cyprus was in favour of the 4<sup>th</sup> scenario and if the situation allows it in the future, to move to the 5<sup>th</sup>. For them, the idea would be that all States would work together side by side, but this ideal seems far-fetched for the moment.

### III. Conclusions of the EESC members.

Mr. Pavlikas (Group II) emphasized that without a strong social pillar there cannot be any future for Europe and added that competitiveness is also important. He mentioned that there are issues in Europe that have been highly debated such as trade with the US and that Euroscepticism is raising. He expressed the wish for a more social and more democratic Europe. Less and less people vote in national elections. This means that people do not trust institutions and structures anymore. Cyprus belongs to the EU.

Mr. Epistithiou (Group II) mentioned that in principle the EU has reached most of the goals that were set upon its foundation. On the contrary, the EU has not successfully dealt with the financial crisis. Countries, especially the south Mediterranean ones, that have been implementing austerity measures found themselves not ready to face the challenges. Every organisation has its own problems and Europe will have to take some time to heal. For the Eurosceptics Mr Epistithiou stressed that many people do not know the benefits and the subsidies their countries are receiving from the EU. For this, we need to ensure that citizens are properly informed and encourage their active participation. The EU has offered huge funds in several sectors such as agriculture. At the same time technological improvements and digitalisation have rapidly brought many changes that are often difficult to keep up with. Digitalisation will affect the labour market, leading to loss of jobs but at the same time also to the creation of new ones. He urged people to cooperate and come up with common solutions on core issues such as refugees and international competition. He mentioned that the EU must be more careful with agreements with other countries such as Turkey and Korea, as well as with its relations with the US. He finally stated that the 4th and 5th scenarios seem to be the best option.

Mr. Antoniou (Group I) shared some details of his own life journey with the participants. He said that he was only ten years old when the invasion occurred. It was difficult for him to move to another European country and get a visa. Only in Greece did he manage to stay without any difficulties. "Our home country is Europe, our city is Greece and our neighbourhood is Cyprus" he stressed. Freedom of movement is taken for granted nowadays but for him it was not so. He mentioned that a Greek politician once told him that the EU is not the elite, it's the people. However, we let European affairs become the concern of a small elite. He stressed the need to find ways to resist populism. He also opted for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> scenarios and noticed that technocratic language seems to drop in Europe.

Regarding the need for more social Europe, he said that social aspirations balance economic considerations.

Mr. Mavrommatis (Group I) first of all mentioned that although he doesn't want to bury the problems of the EU, he still finds himself attached to the European ideal, as this is the best solution for the people in Europe. For him, the 4<sup>th</sup> scenario is not the preferred one because he expects the EU to be able to do more rather than less, so the 3<sup>rd</sup> scenario is the best approach. He explained that EU dysfunctions are often due to lack of homogeneity amongst Member States. Since we have to wait for unanimous decisions, our reaction comes too late, he noted. In the same sense, there are so many compromises and national interests trying to compete with each other. In the beginning of the EU, six countries showed that we can do miracles. Therefore, if some countries want to do more together, why not letting them do it? Those who are ready to convey a bigger part of their national sovereignty and accept the fact that supranational authorities will decide for your future should be allowed to do it. He concluded that this approach allows countries that have the same ambitions to move forward.

## **Participants**

1. Nikos Epistithiou, SEK (Cyprus Workers Confederation), EESC
  2. Manthos Mavrommatis, EESC
  3. Andri Vatari, Youth Council of Cyprus
  4. Nikolaos Christofis, Youth Organisation of Cyprus
  5. Christos Karidis, SEK (Cyprus Workers Confederation)
  6. Andreas Pavlikas, PEO (Pancyprian Workers' Federation)
  7. Leonidas Paschalidis, KEBE (Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
  8. Andreas Alexandrou, 'Panagrotikos' Farmers Organisation
  9. Lena Panagiotou, OEB (Employers and Industrialists Federation)
  10. Michalis Antoniou, OEB (Employers and Industrialists Federation)
  11. Xenios Mamos, Ministry of Labour
  12. Georgios Koukoumas, AKEL (Communist Party of Cyprus)
  13. Abtonia Chadjigeorgiou, ONEK (Youth Board of Cyprus)
  14. Panagiotis Chrysostomou, ONEK (Youth Board of Cyprus)
  15. Maria Paraskeva, ONE (Organisation of Young Scientists)
  16. Christofi Niavlas, Youth Council of Cyprus
  17. Lambros Achilleos, Euroagrotikos Farmers Organisation
  18. Charalampos Themistou, SEP-ATIK, Scientific staff organisation
  19. Christos Paschalidis, European Commission
  20. Kyriaki Kampouri, NEDISI (Students movement)
  21. Thomas Papandreou, Consumers Organisation
  22. Despoina Solomou-Charalampidou, EKIF (Cyprus Gender Research Centre)
  23. Niki Christofilou, Insurers Organisation
  24. Takis Taousianis, Synergatismos organisation
  25. Nikos Grigoriou, PEO (Pancyprian Workers' Federation)
  26. Christodoulos Louis, MAKI (Students movement)
  27. Despo Kostrikki, NEDISI (Students movement)
  28. Maria Petrou, FPK Protoporia ('Protoporia' Students' Youth Organisation)
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**CZECH REPUBLIC**

## **Report**

**Debate on the White Paper on the Future of Europe**  
**9 a.m. – 12 noon, 26 May 2017**  
**EU Representation in the Czech Republic, Jungmannova 24, Prague 1**

**DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

### **I. White paper**

**The discussion was preceded by a brief presentation of the aims of the White Paper on the future of Europe, its scenarios, the schedule for publishing Commission discussion documents on specific areas of the White Paper in the course of 2017, the role of the EESC in this process and the positions of the Czech Republic on the White Paper.**

Participants agreed that the White Paper on the Future of Europe and its five scenarios served merely for guidance for further debate at all levels.

Some felt the scenarios had been poorly framed and could not be compared with one another because they were not drafted in the same terms. Some included instruments, while others set out targets, but none of the scenarios laid down tangible procedures. The time element also had to be considered: some of the scenarios were just short term, while others put the focus more on the medium and long term. No scenario was comprehensive. Staging was needed rather than a choice of one or other of the scenarios.

All the scenarios were on the optimistic side and there was no assessment of shortcomings or reflection on the mistakes the EU had made. But such critical examination is vital if we are to move forward.

Scenario 1 did not meet with any great support. Carrying on in the same way as now does not address current challenges. The EU has had time enough to implement the current programme and citizens are not convinced by the results.

If Scenario 2 were to be considered in the short term, the single market would have to be completed first. A functioning single market is a prerequisite for further steps/scenarios to be carried out. Constructing the EU's future on Scenario 2 alone would be a return to the past and it would be very difficult to explain and justify to citizens why they have to forego the benefits and achievements attained.

Business representatives singled out Scenario 4: Doing Less More Efficiently. They are in favour of smart regulation and rules that all must observe in order to ensure a fair environment for all businesses. They want to see less bureaucracy and red tape, open markets, strong trade policy and flexible labour markets. But they also need greater stability and security. Scenario 3 is seen more as a means to achieve the objectives.

Most participants found Scenario 5 unrealistic. The EU is not ready for such a scenario and the public would not accept it at this time. However, the participants did not exclude it in the future.

A "Scenario 6" has emerged from the ranks of non-profit organisations: a sustainable vision for Europe and its citizens, putting the citizen first, stressing participatory democracy, social justice and partnership between sectors and EU citizens as the main driver for the European Union's further evolution. Initiatives are currently being pursued in support of this scenario.

## **II. Points highlighted in the debate**

Trade unionists were not alone in thinking the social dimension of Europe needed to be foregrounded and citizens won over, because surveys show that people expected the EU to tackle social issues above all. In their view, none of the scenarios put citizens first and this gives rise to an insurmountable gulf between the EU and ordinary people. This is not just a Europe of countries, but above all a Europe of citizens.

The majority of participants agreed that if the Czech Republic were to prosper in the European Union, it had to be part of the euro area. Things were moving towards a multi-speed Europe and one of the conditions for being among the "higher speed" countries was having the euro. Given the healthy economic situation and the forthcoming elections the question of the Czech Republic's accession to the euro area had to be put back on the table.

The document says nothing about subsidiarity in the new arrangements. Yet it is vital that citizens have an idea of who is responsible for what and at what level.

There are huge economic and social disparities between Member States in the European Union. At this moment, there is no convergence going on in these areas (especially wages and salaries) and living standards in the new Member States are getting no closer to the EU average. This has a very bad effect on how people in those countries see the EU.

Peace is fundamental to the future of Europe. The situation at present is affected by a range of serious factors, such as unchecked illegal migration.

The EU is going through an unprecedented crisis and the Czech Republic could also be affected. The White Paper should say why we have got into this crisis and what to do differently to avoid a repetition. It is important to send a political signal that we can learn from the past and that the citizens have been listened to.

At the same time, some participants felt that any discussion of scenarios about Europe's future must be conducted in the light of the global sustainable development goals (SDGs) and for this reason welcomed the alternative "Scenario 6" presented by a number of European NGO networks.

### **III. Communication**

Citizens must be at the centre of this entire process. Information about the White Paper should be available – and above all intelligible – to the average citizen. Experts see things differently from ordinary EU citizens.

The public needs to be convinced of the benefits of the EU (including, for example, embassies abroad). We often witness negative attitudes to the EU in the Czech Republic (including from members of the government), while the benefits are not stressed. The public service media should provide objective and balanced information and perform an educational role on this.

The right way to take forward the discussion on the future of Europe is not with scenarios, but with dialogue. Strong political support needs to be marshalled for this discussion nationally and it should be framed rather in terms of "the Czech Republic and its future in the EU of the future". The right institutional platform needs to be identified – the existing National Convention on the European Union, for instance.

The EU should focus on implementing its fundamental objectives of citizens' security and prosperity.

There needs to be instruction at all stages of education, as well as in lifelong learning, about the EU, its organisational set-up and how it works. The civic education of pupils and teachers must be improved. As things stand, the EU is only touched on in basic social science courses.

## Participants

Name of participant	Name of organisation
Brzobohatá, Zuzana	členka EHSV, poradkyně, Úřad vlády České republiky
Čáp, Bohumil	Českomoravská konfederace odborových svazů
Drbalová, Vladimíra	členka EHSV, poradkyně SP pro EU a mezinárodní organizace - Svaz průmyslu a dopravy ČR
Haken, Roman	člen EHSV, ředitel Centra pro komunitní práci
Jiránek, Dan	zástupce výkonného ředitele - Svaz měst a obcí České republiky
Kaplan, Ivo	Unie evropských federalistů
Kovaříková, Dana	vedoucí zastoupení Evropské komise v České republice
Lacina, Lubor	vedoucí Ústavu financí Provozně ekonomické fakulty Mendelovy univerzity v Brně
Minčič, Ladislav	poradce prezidenta a ředitel odboru legislativy, práva a analýz - Hlavního odboru České republiky
Nejedlý, František	analytik - Gropolis
Němec, Vladimír	ředitel odboru – Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí ČR
Outrata, Edvard	místopředseda - Evropské hnutí v ČR
Popelková, Hana	členka EHSV, poradkyně ČMKOS
Potůček, Martin	vedoucí Centra pro sociální a ekonomické strategie (CESES) Fakulty sociálních věd Univerzity Karlovy
Samek, Vít	místopředseda, ČMKOS
Sokolová, Radka	místopředsedkyně, ČMKOS
Squerzi, Daniel	administrátor sekce INT, EHSV
Studničná, Lucie	členka EHSV, vedoucí oddělení pro evropské a mezinárodní vztahy, ČMKOS
Štechová, Dana	členka VRP ČMKOS,
Trantina, Pavel	člen EHSV, předseda sekce SOC, manažer projektů a spolupráce s EU v České radě dětí a mládeže
Urbanová, Barbora	ředitelka, Centrum pro dopravu a energetiku
Venclíkova, Věra	ředitelka, Platforma podnikatelů pro zahraniční rozvojovou spolupráci
Voleš, Ivan	konzultant, Hlavního odboru České republiky
Zahradník, Petr	člen EHSV, ekonomický analytik a konsultant, poradce prezidenta Hlavního odboru České republiky
Zvolská, Marie	členka EHSV, Poradkyně pro evropské záležitosti Konfederace zaměstnavatelských a podnikatelských svazů České republiky
Žáková, Pavlína	ekonomická poradkyně - Zastoupení Evropské komise v ČR

## **Programme**

Evropský hospodářský a sociální výbor (EHSV) Vás srdečně zve na diskusi o dokumentu Evropské komise

**,,Bílá kniha o budoucnosti Evropy“**

**26. května 2017  
9:00 - 12:00**

**Zastoupení Evropské komise v České republice, Jungmannova 24, Praha 1**

Dne 1. března 2017 předložila Evropská komise „Bílou knihu o budoucnosti Evropy: Úvahy a scénáře pro EU27 v roce 2025“.

Evropská komise zdůraznila klíčovou úlohu Evropského hospodářského a sociálního výboru (EHSV) jako zástupce organizované občanské společnosti v Evropě v diskusním procesu o budoucnosti Evropy. Z tohoto důvodu byl EHSV Evropskou komisí pověřen vypracováním průzkumného stanoviska, jež má být přijato v nadcházejících měsících.

V této souvislosti EHSV iniciuje v 27 členských státech EU diskuse s cílem konzultovat organizovanou občanskou společnost o různých úvahách a scénářích obsažených v této bílé knize. Diskuse bude vycházet ze série otázek, jež naleznete přiložené níže. Zprávy z diskusí v jednotlivých členských státech budou sloužit při přípravě stanoviska, které má být přijato na červencovém plenárním zasedání EHSV.

**Otázky k diskusi**  
**Bílá kniha o budoucnosti Evropy**

Online dotazník (odkaz)

**Přihláška na diskusi**

Jelikož počet účastníků je omezený, doporučujeme Vám přihlásit se nejpozději do 19. května 2017. Pro doplňující informace kontaktujte, prosím, organizátory.

Těšíme se na společnou diskusi.

S pozdravem,

**Vladimíra Drbalová**  
skupina „Zaměstnavatelé“

**Lucie Studničná**  
skupina „Zaměstnanci“

**Roman Haken**  
skupina „Různé zájmy“

**DENMARK**

**Debate on the White Paper – Denmark**

The basis for discussion was the list of seven questions that had been sent out, although in actual fact the debate focused on a number of themes that were not directly linked either to the seven questions or to the five scenarios set out in the White Paper.

The Chairman of the Danish Folketing's European Affairs Committee, Erik Christensen, opened the meeting, and all participants subsequently took part in the debate. Representatives from all three EESC groups attended (see attached attendance list).

**Theme 1: What brings Europe together?**

The focus was very frequently on elements that were divisive, because the EU was not in a position to deliver solutions (financial crisis, refugees, tax evasion and Brexit), whereas it should be on those components that actually kept the Union together. What was also needed here was political support for the community and the elements we shared, primarily trade, growth, the economy and security. It was not until much later in the discussion that the issues of the social pillar and fundamental rights came up for discussion. There was potential for tangible success stories in these areas, which was essential for building more public support for the project; in fact, the subsidiarity principle should perhaps even take a back seat in order to maximise the impact of this. Common external opponents (Trump and Putin, for example) could perhaps build common EU ground in areas such as defence and climate, but genuine cohesion arose mainly from shared grass roots values and projects, and not from the EU's leadership. There was a balance to be struck between efficiency and social security, which should be kept in mind and which, if handled correctly, could give the EU a boost.

**Theme 2: The Brexit effect**

The "Brexit effect" was a peculiarly Danish phenomenon. The UK leaving meant that the EU had lost its centre of gravity outside the eurozone; given the closer Paris-Berlin axis, it was now more than ever necessary for Denmark to keep abreast of the negotiations going on at the heart of the EU. Without the UK in the Union, it had become more difficult for countries like Denmark to let the core group of eurozone countries work towards even closer integration, without attempting to jump on board the process. Brexit also made the case for closer Nordic cooperation within the EU.

**Theme 3: the gap between the EU and the people**

If the EU was not thoroughly overhauled, it would lose public support. For a country like Denmark, it was a special trait that the elite were more pro-EU than the rest of the population, which meant that if the country joined forces with the core, decision-making group of EU countries, it would lose the support of its heartlands<sup>1</sup>. The enlargements of the EU in 2004 and 2007 had posed challenges due to lack of culture and common values, resulting in a political desire to return more competences to national parliaments.

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<sup>1</sup> One example of this was the 2015 vote on lifting the reservation on judicial cooperation (a condition for incorporating the existing Europol cooperation into the Treaty). People had voted against, and all observers agreed that the reason for this was general scepticism regarding more integration, rather than scepticism with respect to improved and more effective police cooperation, the fight against terrorism, etc.

#### **Theme 4: The process**

The challenge was to build an EU that was democratic and at the same time able to take decisions and address some of the negative effects of globalisation, such as security and uneven distribution of the benefits. The accusation that there was too much talk and too little action suggested a degree of disempowerment in the EU system. Denmark's future external strategy was likely to become one of shifting alliances, contingent on current policy focus. Maybe this should be conditional on geographical area, focusing on the Baltic Sea, the North or a similar region. Internally, debates should be opened up and conducted in public spaces earlier in the process than was currently the case, and EU issues should be moved downwards in the system and discussed at municipal and regional level, where there was closer contact with the public. It was crucial for the future success of the process for policy makers to give people the necessary time to adjust. Respect for national competences and subsidiarity were important elements in the ongoing process of building the EU.

#### **Theme 5: The five scenarios**

It was argued, firstly, that not a single one of the five scenarios could be selected, as each of them had its pros and cons, strongly linked to the specific features of each individual policy area. Second, any change had to be seen in its historical context in order to be carried through, with respect for the time and adaptation needed in order to bring about an overhaul. In any event, consensus and clear action were called for regarding what Europe should or should not be. A number of observations were then made regarding the individual scenarios. Scenario 4 should have been more concrete and detailed. It was interesting, but too lightweight in addition to being non-binding. Scenario 3 was also positive, with extended powers for the EU in areas such as defence, refugees and pollution, and a lower profile in the field of economic policy and youth unemployment.

### **Conclusions**

The White Paper was a qualitatively new approach to relations between the EU, Member States and the public, and this was to be welcomed. But precisely for this reason, it was very important that it be followed up by feasible action so that it did not end up as a new initiative that had no meaningful results.

None of the five proposed scenarios was comprehensive, meaning that a new scenario would probably be needed, amalgamating the present five; this would probably end up a combination of carrying on in the same way and allowing those that were willing and able to do so to press ahead.

Brexit had changed Denmark's position in the EU in a fundamental way.

Whatever form future EU cooperation took, issues such as social protection, security and the negative effects of globalisation would have to be discussed. At the same time, there had to be room for the Danish model in the EU, and application of the subsidiarity principle and division of powers should be upheld.

Cultural diversity and differences in attitude between Member States could be underestimated.

## Participants

Surname	First name	Organisation	Title
Nielsen	Martin	Confederation of Professionals in Denmark (FTF)	Consultant
Gibson	David	United Federation of Danish Workers (3F)	
Kurowska Larsen	Anita	Danish construction firm (Dansk Byggeri)	Head of EU and International Relations
Bang	Thorkild	Danish Installation Industry (Tekniq)	Deputy director
Milbeck-Winberg	Christiane	Danish Employers' Confederation (DA)	
Munk Ryom	Käthe	Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (AC)	Chief international consultant
Lyk-Jensen	Ulla	Confederation of Danish Industry (DI)	Senior consultant
Gregersen	Christian Vitting	Danish Union for Salaried Employees (HK)	Policy adviser
Frost	Anne-Mette	Local Government Denmark (KL)	Head of EU Team
Andersen	Dorthe	EESC	Member
Christensen	Erik	MF	Member of Parliament
Soewarta	Stina	EU Representation	Head of Representation
Fallenkamp	Bernt	EESC	Member
Andersen	Jakob	EESC	Secretariat
Kindberg	Mette	EESC	Member
<b>Unable to attend</b>			
Moser-Johansen	René	Central Organisation of Industrial Employees in Denmark (CO Industri)	International secretary
Larsen	Per K	European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)	National secretary

## **Programme**

### **Invitation to a debate on the European Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe**

Dear ....,

On 1 March 2017, the Commission published its White Paper on The future of Europe. The EU 27 in 2025 - Reflections and scenarios [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white\\_paper\\_on\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_europe\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf).

The Commission has stressed the important role which the European Economic and Social Committee – because of its role as the representative of organised civil society – can play in the discussion on the White Paper, and has consequently asked the Committee to draw up an opinion to be adopted early in July.

The EESC is therefore organising national debates in the 27 Member States to consult organised civil society on the White Paper and its various reflections and scenarios.

On behalf of the Committee, it is my pleasure to invite your organisation to take part in the Danish debate on the White Paper, which will take place on 7 June 2017 from 10 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. at the European Commission Representation at Gothersgade 115, Copenhagen. Coffee will be served from 9.30 a.m., and it would be a good idea to be there on time as security checks in the building will take some time<sup>2</sup>.

Erik Christensen, Chair of the Danish Parliament's European Affairs Committee, has been invited to come and deliver a paper, to be followed by a round table where all can participate actively.

The EESC's Brussels is in charge of enrolments, so please inform [jakob.andersen@eesc.europa.eu](mailto:jakob.andersen@eesc.europa.eu) by 1 June whether or not you can attend. If you yourself are unable to attend, you may designate another representative to attend on behalf of your organisation.

As in the other Member States, the debate on 7 June will be based on a set of questions (appended).

*Name of the Danish member of the EESC*

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<sup>2</sup>

There was subsequently a change in plans and the meeting was held at HK, Weidekampsgade 8, DK – 0900 Copenhagen C.

**ESTONIA**

## **Report**

### **Summary of the public hearing on the "White Paper on the Future of Europe – the position of Estonian civil society", held on 30 May 2017**

Members of the EESC delegation

Eve Päärendson, Group I

Liina Carr, Group II

Meelis Joost, Group III

## **Introduction**

The public hearing held by the European Economic and Social Committee in collaboration with the European Commission was attended by 35 representatives of organised civil society (see Appendix 1). It took place at the Representation of the European Commission in Estonia and the representation's head, Keit Kasemets, contributed to all the discussions (see Appendix 2).

He began with a run-down of the White Paper and its main scenarios and time scales.

The European Commission had drawn up five scenarios for how Europe might be taken forward.

1. No major changes: carrying on as before.
2. Back to the position in earlier years when the focus was on the internal market.
3. This is known in Estonia as "multi-speed Europe", which involves closer cooperation between certain countries, i.e.: those who want more do more.
4. Doing less, but more efficiently: in other words, concentrating efforts in particular areas. This approach has broad support in Estonia,
5. Doing much more together: there is a lot of discussion on this in Estonia. If we work together, the benefits are far greater – in areas such as defence, social policy (not much discussed in Estonia), the budget, the economy and future financial policy.

The Commission has set the end of August 2017 as the deadline for submission of proposals.

The first session addressed the following

- It was very important to involve the public. For example, if we do not take part in cooperation we shall be squeezed to the margins as a country. Schengen, in which not all Member States participate, is a case in point. The parties' positions are highly dependent on decisions taken by others.
- As things stand, no enlargement is in the offing, but the EU is ready to bring in other countries if they meet all the necessary criteria. For many countries, this means having to undertake radical reforms. There are countries that meet the accession criteria, but have not expressed any desire to join. Much depends on the countries themselves.
- The general perception is that Estonia currently favours the third scenario. Those who do not want to do not join in. If everyone got involved, the EU would be more coordinated, but there

are areas in which not all can act collectively. How could things go forward? The fourth scenario also seems very appealing. For example, the brochure put together in Germany to mark the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome: "60 Good Reasons for the EU". It became clear in the course of the discussions that different countries have different motivations. Scenario 4 – The European Commission is already compiling the proposals and has whittled hundreds down to a few dozen. What legislation should be scrapped? Giving something up is always costly for someone.

- The weakness of the third scenario is how it can actually be managed. It is also hard for citizens to understand what our country is taking part in and what not. The dynamics of negotiations has also changed. For example, anyone who wants to do something simply goes ahead and does it, so the others then have to decide whether they join in or not. There is no one-size-fits-all approach: it is difficult to be involved in one thing while not in another. The social dimension is one area in which not all participate. Not everyone has the same opportunities.
- When it comes to the idea of groups emerging that progress at different speeds, the fact is that this is not actually possible in the EU. The Commission drafts an initiative and seeks the support of each country. At least twenty countries have to be involved or it makes no sense. And then 27 countries still have to support what twenty countries, for example, are doing. There can be no closed groups.

**Eve Päärendson** of the **Confederation of Estonian Employers** and a **member of the EESC Employers' Group** set out the view of employers. The EU should only act in those areas where it can provide added value at European level – in other words, where the goal can be achieved more easily than at national level. The EU should therefore not try at all costs to act, for example, in the social sector (Pillar of Social Rights). Similarly, labour market reforms can best be carried out by the Member States themselves. They and the social partners are far better informed and experienced in these areas than the European Commission.

Some issues, such as job creation and the promotion of well-being through progress in innovation, entrepreneurship and digitalisation are poorly addressed in the White Paper. As we know, the prerequisites for increasing people's well-being are economic growth and employment, which in turn hinge on entrepreneurship, investment and our competitiveness. Only in a parallel universe do current EU measures in the social field (Pillar of Social Rights) strengthen its ability to operate: they boost the global competitiveness neither of the public nor of businesses (with the exception of the areas of education, retraining, digital skills, and so on.).

The EU's internal market is one of its main achievements and it has to work better (including the Digital Single Market with free movement of data). It is important to steer clear of overregulation and taxation must make sense and stimulate innovation. An innovation- and business-friendly environment (quick and simple company start-ups, for example). The EU needs to wrest back its global leadership in innovation.

Progress should be made on free-trade agreements, since this could provide extra growth opportunities for EU companies. (Free trade agreement with Japan, TTIP, EU-Mercosur Association Agreement, and strengthening economic ties with African countries and China.)

- Deepening the EMU.
- Reforms need to be continued (greater efforts to implement country-specific recommendations).
- Developing industry policy: digitalisation of industry. Digitalising of SMEs should also be encouraged.
- Promoting public and private investment (making the EU more attractive as an investment destination).
- Modernising the EU budget
- The social dimension of the EU can only be advanced through employment (jobs).
- Public safety and migration management.
- The EU must speak with one voice internationally and globally.

The future of the European Union is not decided in Brussels, but by voters in the Member States. The document is directed at the target group in Brussels, but addresses few people in the Member States. Significantly more work on presentation and tangible communication strategies are needed to get these messages across in the Member States and give them traction. Work to promote the White Paper is taking place in a very short period of time and in haste.

**Ago Tuuling, TALO confederation of employees' unions**, set out the position of Estonia's workers. Europe is a democratic and social society of citizens. This determines shared courses of direction and goals.

There are three key concepts: efficient, innovative and politically stable.

The EU has to speak up. Social dialogue should be used if the EU is to work. If we look at the EU 27, the European Economic Area, the European Free Trade Association, the customs union, the euro area, Schengen, etc., do these terms cover all countries? The answer is "no". Should we be aiming to create a European federation with its own parliament? For the moment, we do not need such a federation. However, what if we want to be able to uphold shared positions and establish who is doing what and what happens? What things should we be looking at? Economic development: without this a better Europe cannot be achieved. Secondly, education. We need to find out what the labour market really needs. Employers should also say what their requirements are. If not, HEIs will again produce ranks of young people who cannot find jobs in the labour market. If young people are not there to take over in an ageing Europe, there are many ideas it will be impossible to put into practice.

What do we expect from Europe? Which scenario? We have to make it clear how we influence others and how others exercise an influence on us. With a strong economy the EU can be a reliable partner for the USA and China. Sound fiscal policy offers a guarantee of this. However, scarce resources are not to be wasted.

Scenario 5 gets the most support, followed by Scenario 3. There is little support for the others.

**Maris Jõgeva, Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations**, presented the views of the various non-profit organisations.

Three main issues. Regardless of which scenario is chosen, it is important that the EU is open and we can have our say. We can see that the EU has brought benefits precisely because it was open.

Secondly, new ideas have been put forward and discussed because we want innovations: in order for people to understand what the EU does and what decisions it takes. And so people can play an active part. How can we get real benefit from EU action? Thirdly, the social model is probably crucially important. The social dimension is important, but the point is not prioritisation but how these problems can be overcome.

If we look at the scenarios, the fact is we would prefer not to choose any of them. Scenario 1: it looks as if things cannot go on as they are or we would not be having this discussion. Scenario 2: the labour market is not working either. This scenario leaves out the social dimension. Scenario 3: this could work, but it is not without risks, especially with regard to the common European decision-making mechanism. We should be careful about where ideas come from. Scenario 4 could work. Member States decide in which areas and on which subjects they wish to do more. Unfortunately, civil society was not involved in this debate. Nor would this scenario be the fairest. The debate is likely to continue on these last three scenarios – on their pros and cons, their risks and benefits.

**Vahur Tõnisoo** of the **Central Union of Estonian Farmers** pointed out that, as far as farmers were concerned, there had been a common policy for a long time. Neither Scenario 3 nor Scenario 4 would work well. Agricultural policy needs to be strengthened and collaboration in this area improved to take the European Union forward.

The second session addressed the following issues:

- additional presentation needs;
- increased cooperation on defence;
- cutting red tape;
- a flexible Europe;
- the problems of the young (unemployment, better education, etc.);
- the posting of workers directive;
- the future of the European Economic and Monetary Union.

Closing remarks by **Meelis Joost** from the **Estonian Chamber of People with Disabilities** and **member of the EESC's Various Interests Group**

From the point of view of our organisation, it should be pointed out that the issue of people with disabilities has only been part of the European Union's remit since the Treaty of Amsterdam. This is related to developments in the area of human rights within the EU remit. The last three scenarios were the ones raised most often. This has been a very good consultation on ways to raise awareness of civil society's views. In the opinion of the Estonian Chamber of People with Disabilities, everyone is equal and equal opportunities have to be ensured. The Chamber itself has not discussed the future of Europe in its network as a distinct issue. However, representatives are present here today and certainly would not want to see any going back on the promising path we are on now. We have experience of how things could be improved. Estonia is, for example, one of the eight European countries working on the initiative for a European Disability Card. This would enable someone who travels to another country,

for example, to go to a museum on the same terms as back home. The EU should also look into how to reduce red tape. Unfortunately, changes to the Treaties are very onerous. Nevertheless, Member States should find the courage to make the necessary changes.

The consultation was a success, despite the short notice and the fact that all organisations were busy with preparations for the Estonian presidency of the EU Council and that there are always a lot of other events taking place in May. Participants were well prepared and interest in the future of the European Union and the future of Estonia within it is great, even if the subject is rather remote from the average citizen. A number of similar hearings were being held in Estonia at the same time as contributions to the debate on the future of Europe and more would soon follow.

## Participants

	Name	Organisation
1	Eve Päärendson	Eesti Tööandjate Keskliit
2	Meelis Joost	Eesti Puuetega Inimeste Koda
3	Jüri Soosaar	Euroopa Majandus-ja Sotsiaalkomitee
4	Jekaterina Kelk	Euroopa Majandus-ja Sotsiaalkomitee
5	Keit Kasemets	EK esindus
6	Andreas Sepp	EK esindus
7	Aet Wingborg	
8	Ago Tuuling	TALO
9	Aino Kiiver	
10	Andrei Liimets	EMSL vabaühenduste liit
11	Maris Jõgeva	EMSL
12	Anne Heidmets	
13	Anniki Hannilo	
14	Artjom Arhangelski	EAKL-i organisatsionisekretär
15	E. Pruun	
16	Endel Oja	Juhtimisteaduste dotsent, ettevõtja
17	Eve Otsa	
18	Evelyn Sepp	Teenusemajanduse Koda
19	Helen Kask	Eesti Puuetega Inimeste Koda
20	Helle Vahenõmm	
21	Jaan Luks	
22	Jaanika Klopets	Eesti Liikumispuudega Inimeste Liit
23	Kaido Vaatemäe	Eesti Hemofiliaühing
24	Kaire Kopli	
25	Kärt Mere	EAPN Eesti MTÜ
26	Katrina Koppel	
27	Krista Mulenok	EATA juhatuse esimees
28	Krista Paal	Eesti Juristide Liit
29	Krista Täht-Kok	Eesti Geoloogiatöötajate AÜ

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
30	Maret Tamra	Eesti Naisjuristide Liit
31	Marica Lillemets	Eesti NATO Ühing
32	Marko Udras	Eesti Kaubandus-Tööstuskoda
33	Mati Kampus	
34	Meelis Piller	Päästeameti nõunik
35	Mikk Paris	
36	Piret Urb	POL2 Välisministeerium
37	Reet Laja	Eesti Naisuurimus- ja Teabekeskus
38	Tamara Suits	
39	Tea Tassa	SA Archimedes
40	Vahur Tõnissoo	EPK juhatuse esimees
41	Victoria Mets	Eesti Rahvusvaheliste Autovedajate Assotsiatsioon
42	Kalju Mätik	Eesti Mereakadeemia
43	Aet Kukk	Inimõiguste Instituut
44	Jevgeni Rjazin	Hereditas
45	Jüri Kukk	

## Programme

**Representation of the European Commission in Estonia, Rävala 2, 10143 Tallinn**

<b>9.30 a.m.</b>	<b>Arrival and registration</b>
<b>10 a.m.</b>	<b>Presentation of the White Paper and of the main scenarios for the future</b>  <b>Keit Kasemets</b> <b>Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Estonia</b>
<b>10.30 a.m.</b>	<b>Positions of civil society organisations</b>  <b>Members of the three groups of the European Economic and Social Committee and representatives of Estonian organisations</b>
<b>11 a.m.</b>	<b>Public consultation based on the following questions:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. From your perspective, which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?</li> <li>2. Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why? How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?</li> <li>3. Is more visibility of, and better communication on, the European Union required, and how?</li> <li>4. Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?</li> <li>5. Regarding "the way ahead", how should debates on the future of Europe across national Parliaments, cities and regions be structured? What role should organised civil society play in "the way ahead" and how?</li> <li>6. What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?</li> <li>7. How can the role of citizens be more empowered in shaping the future of Europe?</li> </ol>
<b>12.45 p.m.</b>	<b>Brief summary: Meelis Joost</b>
<b>1 p.m.</b>	<b>End of the event</b>

**FINLAND**

## **Report**

### **EESC National Debates on the White Paper on the Future of Europe**

19.05.2017 at the European Commission Representation in Helsinki

#### **1. Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets, from your perspective, the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

Scenarios 3-5 received the most support among Finnish civil society organisations (CSOs). The fifth scenario ("Doing much more together") would be positive for Finland which is a small Member State and needs to be a part of a greater union<sup>3</sup>. However the third scenario ("Those who want more do more") is more realistic and likely to happen as signs of the two-track EU are already visible<sup>4</sup>. In the event of the third scenario, Finland should stay in the fast-track Europe<sup>5</sup>. The fourth scenario (Doing less more efficiently) was preferable for several organisations<sup>6</sup>, in so far that it means a leaner Europe with fewer regulations, with exclusive competence for trade and the implementation of the social pillar. Perhaps at the end of the day a mix of scenarios would be the most feasible. Finnish social partners and CSOs have recently released position papers on the White Paper.

#### **2. Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why? How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

Even though scenarios 3-5 received the most support, some unexpected nuances to the scenarios were noted. One risk in the third scenario could be disintegration in the long term as the Member States left behind on the "slow track" might eventually opt out as the UK did<sup>7</sup>. A potential problem with the fifth scenario could come about if attempts for integration are too ambitious and not matched by the political will of the Member States: the opposite of the fifth scenario result may happen i.e. stagnation and political deadlock.

#### **3. Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how?**

The need for better communication on the part of the EU was mentioned by nearly all participants. What the EU does in practice for people needs to become clear to citizens<sup>8</sup>. Citizens should be informed better about the positive outcomes of EU action, such as lower interest rates<sup>9</sup> or cheaper food<sup>10</sup> in Finland since joining the EU.

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<sup>3</sup> Allianssi - the Finnish Youth Cooperation.

<sup>4</sup> TELA - the Finnish Pension Alliance; SOSTE – European Anti-Poverty Network Finland.

<sup>5</sup> MTK - the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners.

<sup>6</sup> Kuluttajaliitto - the Consumers' Union of Finland.

<sup>7</sup> SAK - The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions.

<sup>8</sup> Maria Blassar - European Commission.

<sup>9</sup> Kuluttajaliitto - the Consumers' Union of Finland.

Both the CSOs and Member States have an important part to play in communication about EU affairs. One issue with communication conducted by CSOs is that the aim of their communication activities is to influence EU decision-making, while the EU decision-making process can take up years. In particular in the early stages of decision-making, communication efforts focus on creating political pressure and influencing the end result. As regards Member States, one key problem is that policymakers at national level tend to blame-shift responsibility to the EU, even when the real issue has to do with the implementation gap at Member State level. Their communication efforts should state more clearly when there is a common EU interest in question, rather than letting Finland's national interest perpetually dominate the discourse.

**4. Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

The main policy areas that came up during the debate were European Monetary Union (EMU) and the European social pillar. The participants are looking forward to seeing the specific form that the deepening of EMU takes. Balancing of Member States' budgets is needed and the EMU system must be ironed out<sup>11</sup>. A remark was made to the effect that not only should the EU focus on quantitative targets but also on qualitative ones. The EU should set tighter public financial management criteria, which will also translate into more social protection in practice<sup>12</sup>. Meanwhile the Social Pillar was repeatedly noted as an important opportunity to strengthen EU competence in social issues<sup>13</sup> and solve the most pressing challenge for the EU: high structural unemployment<sup>14</sup>. The EU's role in international trade is highly valued. The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and consumer policy were also singled out as important policy areas that have brought about tangible positive impacts<sup>15</sup>.

Sustainable development was insufficiently highlighted in the White Paper. It is mentioned at the beginning of the paper, but it is not a central theme in the analysis of the five scenarios. Sustainable development can be achieved with a combination of EU tools, such as a well-regulated internal market and strong support for Research and Development (R&D)<sup>16</sup>. It was also noted that the White Paper focuses only on 2025, thus sidelining other future strategies such as Europe 2020 and the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> MTK - the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners.

<sup>11</sup> SAK - The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions.

<sup>12</sup> SOSTE - European Anti-Poverty Network Finland.

<sup>13</sup> SOSTE - European Anti-Poverty Network Finland.

<sup>14</sup> SAK - The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions.

<sup>15</sup> MTK - the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners.

<sup>16</sup> SAK - The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions.

<sup>17</sup> SOSTE - European Anti-Poverty Network Finland.

**5. Regarding "the way ahead", how should the "Future of Europe Debates across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organised civil society play in the "way ahead" and how?**

Currently, the Future of Europe debates and related events take place in clusters of the likeminded. There are not enough events where all parts of society are represented. For instance, elected officials and government may have their own event, without the presence of civil society beyond 'the usual suspects'. A Parliament Day on the Future of Europe, with efforts to invite a diverse range of organisations, would be welcome<sup>18</sup>. There is a strong sentiment among the participants that instead of following political developments of the EU passively, Finland, including its organised civil society, should take a more proactive role in the "way ahead"<sup>19</sup>, following the logic of supranationalism rather than intergovernmentalism<sup>20</sup> (recognising Finland as a part of the EU rather than a peripheral actor). On the other hand, some sort of a "vision fatigue" can also be noted in the Finnish debate.

It was widely recognised that Finland should be at the centre of the EU's further development efforts, yet too few concrete proposals from the Finnish side are visible. CSOs are more focused on calling for their inclusion in policy-making processes, rather than focusing on the substance of said policies.

**6. What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

The European Commission informed the participants at the beginning of the debate that the outcomes of the national Future of Europe debates will feed directly into President Juncker's 2017 State of the Union address (mid-September)<sup>21</sup>. This debate will enrich the Finnish national debate on the future of Europe and will launch a process which will lead to concrete proposals with regards to the development of the EU.

**7. How can the citizen be more empowered in the shaping of the future of Europe?**

Every citizen can communicate the positive impact of the EU to those around them, to the media and on their social networks. It is also a duty of the EU experts present in the debate to counteract false information, and to communicate positive messages to the media about what the EU has done well<sup>22</sup>.

Citizen empowerment should start early on and under 18-year-olds should have the right to vote across the EU. This would also improve the democratic engagement of citizens in the long run<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> SOSTE - European Anti-Poverty Network Finland.

<sup>19</sup> Suomen Yrittajat - the Federation of Finnish Enterprises.

<sup>20</sup> TELA - the Finnish Pension Alliance; the European Commission.

<sup>21</sup> Aura Salla - European Commission.

<sup>22</sup> Kuluttajaliitto - the Consumers' Union of Finland.

<sup>23</sup> Allianssi - the Finnish Youth Cooperation.

## **Participants**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Ahtela Jukka	EESC Member, Group I - Employers
Alahuhta Veera	SYL - National Union of University Students
Aura Salla	European Commission - Adviser on Communication and Outreach
Beurling Juha	Kuluttajaliitto - the Consumers' Union of Finland
Bjerstedt Katja	Varma – Mutual Pension Insurance Company
Björkbacka Pia	SAK - The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions
Blassar Maria	European Commission - Deputy Head of Representation
Diarra Fatim	National Union of University Students
Kallio Seppo	MTK - the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners
Laina Patrizio	SAK - The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions
Löfström Noora	Allianssi – the Finnish Youth Cooperation
Neimala Antti	Suomen Yrittäjät – the Federation of Finnish Enterprises
Pelkonen Janne	TELA - the Finnish Pension Alliance
Penttinen Markus	EESC Member, Group II – Employees
Poutanen Vesa-Pekka	European Commission – Economic Adviser
Raunema Pirkko	EESC Member, Group III – Various Interests
Reo Furu	European Commission - Trainee
Sironen Jiri	SOSTE – European Anti-Poverty Network Finland
Tiainen Simo	EESC Member, Group III – Various Interests
Titievskaia Jana	EESC Secretariat - PAS

## **Programme**

### **The Commission's White Paper on the future of Europe - discussion event organised by the European Economic and Social Committee**

**19 May 2017**

**Representation of the European Commission to Finland, Malminkatu 16, 00100 Helsinki**

#### **PROGRAMME**

<b>8.30-9.00</b>	Registration and coffee
<b>9.00-9.10</b>	Welcome - Jukka Ahtela, member of the EESC
<b>9.00-10.30</b>	<b>Introductory statements and discussion</b> - Markus Penttinen, member of the EESC <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• European Commission - Aura Salla - 5-10 min</li><li>• EK (Confederation of Finnish Industries) - Janica Ylikarjula- 5-10 min</li><li>• SAK (Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions) - Pia Björkbacka – 5-10 min</li><li>• Kuluttajaliitto (Consumers' Union of Finland) - Juha Beurling - 5-10 min</li></ul>
<b>10.30-10.45</b>	Coffee break
<b>10.45-12.30</b>	<b>Prepared statements and discussion</b> - Simo Tiainen, member of the EESC <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MTK (Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners) - Seppo Kallio - 5-10 min</li><li>• TELA (Finnish Pension Alliance) - Suvi-Anne Siimes - 5-10 min</li><li>• Social NGOs - Timo Lehtinen - 5-10 min</li><li>• Allianssi (Finnish Youth Cooperation) - Noora Löfström - 5-10 min</li></ul>

**FRANCE**

## **Report**

### **Task Force report - consultation on the White Paper on the future of Europe (FR - 18/05/2017)** **Introduction**

Consultation of French civil society organisations on the White Paper on the future of Europe took place at the French Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC) headquarters on the morning of 18 May.

Mr Jean-Marie Cambacérès, president of ESEC's Section for European and International Affairs, gave a welcome address to the French members of the (EU's) EESC and underlined the value and good timing of the EESC's referral in relation to the (French) ESEC's resolution on the Future of Europe.

Mr Butaud-Stubbs summed up the contents of the White Paper; Ms Laure Batut detailed the European timetable for the different stages of the consultation; and Mr Roirant set out the methodology adopted for the work.

The consultation was open to French civil society organisations and brought together 49 parties registered from amongst the many players from employers' groups and various interests, nearly all the trade union movements, five EESC members, six ESEC members, a political analyst from France's representation to the European Commission, and Ms Catherine Lalumière (former minister, former secretary-general of the Council of Europe, chair of the Maison de l'Europe de Paris).

The format adopted for consultation encouraged numerous contributions. In fact, three simultaneous workshops led by the EESC members prompted discussion amongst participants on the basis of a questionnaire prepared by the EESC. Three rapporteurs presented the contributions in a plenary meeting. The method further proved its worth in the way participants expressed their views: they did not speak on the basis of an institution or group they belonged to, but on behalf of their organisation. This document summarises that consultation for the work of the EESC's ad hoc group meetings on 1 and 20 June 2017 in preparation for the latter's exploratory opinion on the Future of Europe. To each question, we will first reply with the information on which there is unanimity or consensus amongst French civil society organisations.

#### **Question 1**

Civil society representatives unanimously reject scenarios 1 and 2. They are opposed to the "carrying on" scenario and do not display much appetite for the scenario proposing to progressively re-centre the European Union on the single market, for this seems to them to be too limited a perspective.

Scenario 3 gave rise to opinions shared between employers, who favour greater cooperation in key areas: integration of the euro area, defence and security, the fight against climate change, digital matters and the energy union, on the one hand, and members of the group representing various interests, which deem any "coalition of the willing"<sup>24</sup> to be a factor for weakening the European Union.

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A As defined in the White Paper.

Scenario 4 receives support from employers, while the trade unions lack conviction as to a European Union focusing efforts on a reduced number of policy areas.

Conversely, scenario 5 does not seem credible to employers, given current public opinion, while to the trade unions and "various activities" representatives, it seems like the right path to follow.

### **Question 2**

Only members of the group representing various interests propose an alternative scenario, based on the values underlying the European venture (humanism, social justice, cultural diversity) and the addition of social and environmental pillars to the general vision proposed by the European Commission.

For their part, employers propose setting 2025 as the time horizon and adopting a resolutely forward-looking approach. What is at stake is building Europe for our children.

### **Question 3**

Civil society feels that there is considerable scope for progress in raising the EU's profile and improving communication, also by passing on the message with stories about tangible successes (e.g. Erasmus, Airbus, mobility and consumer protection). This does not exclude an emphasis on "being" rather than "doing"; and why not stimulate a genuinely "imaginary Europe" from fiction (television series, films, etc.)?

Employers and various activities representatives note that current communication is geared to a public already persuaded of the advantages of Europe and easily accessible; it does not reach out to people who are indifferent to or rebel against the European venture.

Employers comment that Euroscepticism is more based on "that which Europe has not done": employment, growth, security - remarks illustrated by the trade unions in the domain of social issues - rather than on what Europe has actually done.

There is an abundance of proposals on the means to secure a higher profile and more targeted communication: support for the European press, training for French journalists, launch of a European chat show, more space for European affairs in school curricula, stepping up teaching of European languages, mandatory communication by national elected representatives on what has been achieved through the structural funds, the development of mechanisms for consulting the public in the regions.

### **Question 4**

The policy areas referred to in the White Paper are not exhaustive enough. In the three workshops, there was unanimity on the need to mention investment.

More specifically, employers would have wanted to include industry, the digital economy, regional policy and the development of cultural heritage.

For their part, trade union representatives propose adding two policy areas, on social and environmental matters. Moreover, trade unions draw attention to the importance of not including

certain policies (for example education) in the deficits declared by the Member States and to developing the values of social dialogue at European and national level.

Lastly, the representatives of the various interests group emphasised the importance of reflecting the concerns of young people in all EU policy areas.

#### **Question 5**

There is consensus on the importance of civil society participating at local, national and European level.

The trade unions propose structuring the debates on the future of Europe around subjects tackled as part of social dialogue, such as the social acquis and Union policies on workers.

For their part, employers are proposing that debates be launched on subjects of everyday interest, such as opportunities provided by the digital world or the common agricultural policy acquis.

For representatives of the various activities group, it is essential for the pool of players from civil society to rally to the debates on the "way ahead" and the "future of Europe".

#### **Question 6**

Generally speaking, French civil society is hoping that the consultation leads to concrete decisions taking on board the recommendations put together by civil society. The proposals presented by the European Commission to the European Parliament in September (State of the Union speech) and the European Council decisions of December 2017 will be subject to particular scrutiny.

More specifically, trade unions and various interests representatives express the need to return to the fundamental values of the European venture, a more democratic way of operating and more systematic usage of the EU's symbols (e.g. European added value, the date of 9 May).

For their part, employers underline that the successes of the EU also include symbols such as the GALILEO programme.

#### **Question 7**

There is general consensus that the public needs to be more involved in shaping the future of Europe. In France, civil dialogue could be decentralised, for example through the regional economic, social and environmental committees (RESECs) established in the 13 metropolitan regions and 5 overseas regions. The "Maisons de l'Europe" also have a role to play.

Employers and various interests representatives propose that the public be involved in debating specific issues (common agricultural policy, digital agenda, etc.).

The trade unions, for their part, stress that the method of consultation selected by the EESC is a way of involving people which is likely to be pursued, particularly as regards the 5 discussion papers in the process of being published (social dimension of Europe, harnessing globalisation) as part of discussions on the White Paper.

## **Recommendations**

- Focus on a small number of areas to respond to the public's most urgent expectations: security (foreign, security and defence policy), employment (investment, digital agenda, research and development, and industrial policy) and the euro (new stage of integration in the euro area).
- Add "social" and "environmental" policy spheres to the scenario which is adopted in the end; this will be in keeping with Article 3 of the Treaty on the European Union: promoting sustainable development for Europe, based on balanced economic growth, a highly competitive social market economy aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection for and improvement in the quality of the environment.
- Balance the economic, social and democratic dimensions of the European venture in order to meet the expectations of the public and recognise players from the social, solidarity-based economy in European rules and legislation.

## Participants

<b>Names</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Albouy	Directeur des affaires européennes INRA
Beall	Surfrider, Membre du Conseil économique, social et environnemental / Member of the Economic , Social and Environmental Council
Berree	Groupe 1
Bertholon	CFE-CGC
Bennahmias	Union des démocrates et écologistes, Membre du Conseil économique, social et environnemental
Besnard	MRJC
Blondelon	CFTC
Buffetaut	Membre CESE
Butaud-Stubbs	Membre du CESE
Brisson	CPME
Carriou Scheriber	Chef du conseiller en affaires sociales – Ingénieur social Direction générale des ressources humaines, Société générale
Cartiaux	CRAJEP
Charles	Président de l'I.R.C.E., Institut de recherche et de Communication sur l'Europe
Cottin	Responsableger - Affaires européennes/EU Coordinator, Direction Générale Adjointe "Vie Institutionnelle & Etudes" (VIE) Deputy DG "Corporate Activities, Studies, Surveys & Reports", Chambre de commerce et d'industrie Paris Ile-de-France
Danjou	Délégué général du Cercle de l'Industrie
Debrauer	
De Robert	Membre du groupe Force-Ouvrière et de la section des Activités Economiques du CESE
Desiano	Secrétaire fédérale / Federal Secretary FGTA
Dubois-Monfort	MEDEF, Analyste Affaires françaises et européennes
Dupuch	Secteur Europe & International de Force Ouvrière
Fandos	Service International et Europe de la CFDT International Service and Europe of the CFDT
Fournier	CGT
Frugier	Directeur Exécutif Direction du Développement des entreprises et des Projets Fédération des Industries Mécaniques
Genty	Vice-président du CESE, France Nature et Environnement (FNE)
Hoffenberg	Présidente du Connecting Leaders Club
Houlmann	CFG
Lanculescu	CCFA - Comité des Constructeurs Français d'Automobiles Direction des Affaires internationales
Quarez	FCE-CFDT, Membre du Comité économique et social européen
Lalumière	Maison de l'Europe
Landas	CFDT
Lasserre	Secteur Europe & International, Force Ouvrière
Lasry	La ligue de l'enseignement

<b>Names</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Lefranc	France bénévolat
Mader	CLCV, Membre du Comité économique et social européen
Menard	UNAF, Membre du Conseil économique, social et environnemental français
Molinier	Directeur Europe au MEDEF
Morvan	Président de la Fédération Nationale de l'Habillement -(FNH)-
Najmowicz	Représentante du Civic forum
Perrochon	
Podevin	Analyste politique à la représentation française de la Commission Européenne
Renard	Institut de recherche et de Communication sur l'Europe
Renard A.	UNAF
Seateun	CPME
Sahed	Personnalité qualifiée associée section des affaires européennes et internationales du Conseil économique, social et environnemental
Saint-Aubin	CFDT
Sueur	Air Liquide
Stubbs	La voie des Hommes – Consultant
Tekaya	Service International et Europe de la CFDT
Terral	La voie des Hommes
Touron	Délégué général du Cercle de l'Industrie
Vever	Ancien membre du CESE, délégué général de l'association Europe et Entreprises, SG de l'Association Jean Monnet
Viard	UNAPL
Yaiche	CRAJEP
Ysebaert	fédération de Paris de la Ligue de l'Enseignement

## **Programme**

### **Consultation de la société civile organisée- Livre Blanc sur l'avenir de l'Europe**

**18 mai 2017 - 09h-13h30**

Conseil économique, social et environnemental

9, place d'Iéna 75016 – station de métro Iéna

**Salle 301**

#### **09h-09h30 Présentation de la démarche engagée par le Comité économique et social européen**

- Allocution de bienvenue, M Jean-Marie Cambacérès, Président de la section des affaires européennes et internationales du Conseil économique, social et environnemental
- Présentation du Livre blanc, Mme Emmanuelle Butaud-Stubbs, Membre du Comité économique et social européen (groupe des employeurs)
- Le calendrier européen, Mme Laure Batut, Membre du Comité économique et social européen (groupe des travailleurs)
- La méthode de consultation de la société civile organisée, M Roirant, Membre du Comité économique et social européen (groupe activités diverses)

#### **09h30-11h30 Ateliers réunissant par groupes employeurs/chambres de commerce, représentants des employés/syndicats, représentants du groupe activités diverses**

##### Déroulement des ateliers:

- Désignation d'un animateur et d'un rapporteur
- Diagnostic sur l'état de l'Union
- Faiblesses identifiées
- Pistes identifiées pour l'avenir de l'Europe

#### **11h30-11h50 Pause**

#### **11h50-12h50 Plénière**

Mme Laure Batut, Madame Butaud-Stubbs, Monsieur Roirant,  
Membres du Comité économique et social européen

- Restitution de la part des représentants des employeurs et chambres de commerce, Rapporteur
- Restitution de la part des représentants des syndicats/employés, Rapporteur
- Restitution de la part des représentants du groupe des activités diverses, Rapporteur
- Échanges

#### **12h50-13h30 Conclusions, Mme Batut, Mme Butaud-Stubbs, M Roirant**

- Synthèse à partir des contributions de chaque groupe
- Prochaines étapes

**GERMANY**

## **Report**

### **How does the future of Europe affect me? Friday 2 June 2017, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

In the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) building, Henriette-Herz-Platz 2, 10178 Berlin

#### **A categorisation of the viewpoints expressed in the debate in response to the EESC's questions**

##### **1. Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

- Various preferences and viewpoints were expressed during the debate.
- The five proposed scenarios serve as a useful basis to explore what direction we want to move in. However, it is difficult to limit discussion to these five scenarios alone. None of the scenarios is optimal.
- The Commission analyses and describes the problem well in the White Paper's introduction. However, none of the scenarios provides a solution to the problems.
- The next step is not taken. The Commission is held back before even getting to this stage. This alone shows how critical the EU's situation is.
- It is important to identify areas where we can continue to work together.
- Constant doubts about the ground rules get us nowhere; we have to accept the framework and identify where we can reach an agreement.
  
- Important areas for strengthened EU measures are:
  - Social affairs
  - Young people
    - i. A budget to support young people is necessary.
    - ii. Many young people feel very isolated from the political system.
  - Regional policy
  - Solving the problems of the euro area
  - Security and defence policy
    - i. Different national approaches to defence and security, depending on the Member States' geopolitical situation and history.
    - ii. There should be joint projects when procuring materiel.

Individual assessments of the five scenarios:

- Scenario 1:
  - Title is wrong. "Continuing the reform process" would be better.
  - Scenario 1 must continue, but more needs to happen. This scenario alone is not enough.
  
- Scenario 2:
  - Only the single market: unacceptable for workers, and does not tackle the challenges.
  - The single market is not an end in itself; it must serve citizens.

- Scenario 3:
  - Some argue that Scenario 3 would not be positive and would widen the gap in the EU still further. The EU treaties would also not be equipped for Scenario 3.
  - Nobody should be excluded under Scenario 3, and Member States in eastern Europe should be involved too. (This scenario causes some alarm.)
  - Democratic legitimacy of the path chosen is important.
  - Avenues for the democratic legitimisation of Scenario 3 (e.g. in the European Parliament) are conceivable. All MEPs can discuss, but only some can then vote. (A past example is the German Bundestag and the role of members from Berlin.)
  - Neither the euro area nor Schengen are examples of Scenario 3/"enhanced cooperation".
- Scenario 4:
  - Whether willingly or unwillingly, the Commission is already implementing Scenario 4.
  - "Less" is already a reality. The result is uncompleted tasks.
  - The main question is: what should be done "less" and what should be done "more efficiently"?
- Scenario 5:
  - The acceptance of Scenario 5 depends on the policy adopted. More austerity, for example, would not be acceptable.
  - Some prefer Scenario 5; however, the general mood in Europe is not in favour.

**2. Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why? How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

- Current developments mean that the EU could conceivably fall apart. The situation is very serious.
- Openness to any revision of the EU treaty and to contributions higher than 1% of GDP are, as a rule, to be welcomed.
- **Further deepening of the euro area:**
  - The problems in the architecture of the euro must be quickly rectified.
  - The proposal made by French President Macron for a euro area parliament is intriguing.
- **Criticism of bureaucracy/levels of administration:**
  - The system of multi-level governance is an insoluble problem when it comes to criticism of bureaucracy.
  - Fundamental question: what direction should a reform go in? Do we want a federal or centralised system?
  - Some argue that more decentralised administration reaches more people.
  - Each political level must have set competences.
  - EU measures need to emphasise cooperation with Member States and regions.
  - The experience gained from regional funding should be used for this purpose.

**3. Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how?**

- There is a need for better communication about the EU. There is a wide divergence between what is set down in policy and what is experienced in practice.
- Citizens' well-being must be at the heart of the project.
- There is also the question of who is doing the communication, and how.
- Communication via the internet is a one-way street. New communication channels are necessary.
- It is often not stated that the EU provides financing for individual projects in the Member States.
- Good regulations and increased transparency are necessary; otherwise, citizens feel that decisions are being made over their heads.

**4. Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

- Migration and unemployment are among the most pressing issues.
- Imbalances in the EU have grown. Economies are not converging.

**Employment and social affairs, education:**

- Why is the emphasis placed on the single market rather than on a social Europe?
- Europe is judged according to whether living and working conditions have improved.
- The Pillar of Social Rights does not propose any new competences either.
- The future of work is crucial. People need safeguards amidst processes of change.
- Some job-related problems can only be solved at European level.
- Many workers in eastern Europe work in poor conditions.
- There is brain drain and de-industrialisation.
- If the Structural Funds are used to invest in people, then people will stay where they are.
- Investment in education and vocational training. Training systems are very much academically orientated.
- There are some discrepancies in the action taken by the EU, e.g. the proposal for a Pillar of Social Rights while simultaneously intervening in free collective bargaining in Greece. This kind of action does not inspire trust.

**Regional policy:**

- Regional development is important.
- Some regions' policies are very positive, e.g. success in the greater Trier/Wallonia/Saar region.

**Trade policy:**

- The profits achieved via international trade must be shared more fairly.

- During the TTIP and CETA negotiations, there was a wide gap between the public's and governments' positions.
- Protectionism is not the answer; the fundamental freedoms should not be called into question.

**5. Regarding "the way ahead", how should the "Future of Europe Debates across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organised civil society play in "the way ahead" and how?**

- There should be debates with civil society, and not only among governments!
- EESC debates have already taken place in many Member States. They proceed in very different ways; there are very different approaches in the different Member States.
- Create more pressure from the social partners.
- The social partners are involved in the Structural Funds, which is positive.

**6. What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

- The EU must continue to be able to act, even with 27 Member States.
- European solutions are the better option for the way ahead!
- No relapse into parochialism.
- There is a great deal of political pressure to act (especially Brexit).
- We do not have long for discussions (the next European elections are in 2019).

**7. How can the citizen be more empowered in shaping the future of Europe?**

- Europe works, but not as a project of the elites.
- The EU's decision-making structures can be opaque.
- Well-functioning decision-making processes and efficient structures are important so as to inspire more trust.
- People/citizens need to be involved to a greater extent.
- The Council of the EU has an obligation to make decisions and the decision-making process transparent. The Council's working groups are not transparent. It is impossible to tell how a country has acted in the course of negotiations.
- The trilogue is also problematic, as it is not transparent.
- Civil society needs to be involved at an early stage in consultation processes.

This summary of viewpoints provides a snapshot of the views expressed during the debate on the Future of Europe at the EESC at the event in Berlin on 2 June 2017.

## Participants

Full Name	Organisation	Job Title
Arany, Olga		
Baumann, Mechthild	Europäische Akademie Berlin	Programme director
Berger, Dorian		Trainee
Bischoff, Gabriele	EESC	
Chiachowski, Erich Heinz		
Coudray, Sterenn	Internationaler Bund e.V.	Department of international labour
Degen, Christel		
Ehleringer, Timo		
Eisenbarth, Johannes M.	GKV-Spitzenverband	
Erkan, Ertan		Officer for EU affairs
Gath, Manuel		Federal chair
Gresch, Friederike		
Heinz, Sophia		
Hemmerling, Udo	EESC	Member
Hesseken, Gabriele		
Hirt, Ilka		Head of EU unit
Höffer, Eva-Marie		Head of unit
Jentsch, Ferdinand		
Jüngling, Thomas		
Kalmar, Silvie		
Klec, Gerald	EESC	Administrator
Liewald, Tilo		
Markowski, Cornelia		Head
Moos, Christian	EESC	Member
Nußberger, Malte		
Paulun, Eike		
Pohl, Jonas		
Prouvost, Timothée		Legal trainee
Reichelt, Jeanette		
Sartorius, Wolfgang	Erlacher Höhe	Chairman
Schiller, Simone		Managing director
Schmuck, Otto		Board member
Schnittger, Bernhard	European Commission Representation in Germany	
Schönmeyer, Hartmut	BundeswehrVerband	Staff captain (ret.)
Spiller, Robert		Head of EU labour market and social policy unit
Stowasser, Rolf		
Szabadi, Dieter		Local chairman Marzahn-Hellersdorf
Tauss, Julia		
von Massenbach, Udo		President

## **Programme**

The EESC would like to discuss the future of Europe with you.

**Friday 2 June 2017**  
**10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

**DGB-Bundesvorstand**  
**Henriette-Herz-Platz 2**  
**10178 Berlin**  
**Room 4**

After opening remarks by **Bernhard Schnittger**, from the Representation of the European Commission in Germany, EESC member **Christian Moos** will deliver a keynote speech on the substance of the issue.

Then you can have your say! Discuss issues relating to the future of Europe with experts in a fishbowl format.

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**GREECE**

## **Report**

### **European Commission White Paper on the Future of Europe: Meeting of the EESC and the Greek ESC with organised civil society in Greece**

*Friday 2 June 2017  
Senate Hall of the Greek Parliament*

#### **FINAL REPORT**

- 1. Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets, from your perspective, the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why? Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why?**

There was a convergence of views among participants, representatives of the social partners and other civil society organisations in Greece, in relation to the starting point: the structure of Europe is currently experiencing strong shock waves and the progress of European unification is at a critical crossroads. The challenges, both internal and external, which the EU faces, are numerous, significant and known to many. Some of the issues mentioned were the economic crisis, which is leaving in its wake an increase in economic and social inequalities and a widening of the north-south gulf, doubts on the part of a large section of the European population - including the Greek people - regarding the democratic and popular legitimacy, as well as the administrative effectiveness and ability to solve problems of the European institutions, the refugee/immigration issue, regional conflicts, terrorism and political extremism. Among the scenarios put forward by the White Paper, Greek civil society is almost entirely in favour of scenario 5: "Doing much more together". This seems to be the only scenario which creates the pre-conditions for tackling the above challenges and gets the plan of European integration moving forward again. Europe and Greece, within a globalised environment, can only benefit from the further completion of the single market, greater coordination on economic, social and taxation issues, enhanced cooperation on issues of foreign policy, defence, security, management of borders and political asylum, and the fastest and most efficient decision-making and implementation possible, with a thorough examination of the institutional framework. It was pointed out, however, that the answer to the question cannot be a response with just one meaning, or just one word. Scenario 5 constitutes a sufficient basis and starting point for speculation about how to shape the Europe we want to see in the future. However, it should, de facto, be added to, perhaps with details from Scenario 3, "Those who want more do more", since Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) is a sufficient example of differentiated integration within the EU. The prospect of a multi-speed Europe in the imminent future prompts concern among the majority of the participants. A large number of speakers also emphasised the need for greater reference to the development of Europe's social dimension, a clearer inclusion of the environmental pillar and further work on the governance model, in the direction of greater participation, representativeness, transparency and accountability, in the spirit of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, there were many references to a sixth scenario, based on the fifth, but bolder, sensitively enhanced and enriched so as to contain all the above elements, and others too.

## **2. How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

There was a consensus among participants regarding an admission that the EU is undergoing a serious crisis of confidence. A large number of citizens throughout Europe, and a particularly high number in Greece, which has been hit very hard by the economic crisis and the way it has been handled, has ceased to see the EU as an opportunity for improving their standards of living. On the contrary, they perceive it as a threat to their prosperity, both individually and collectively. European citizens have seen their expectations about the benefits from European unification being frustrated and there is a widespread impression that it is only the political and financial elite among the Member States who benefit, or, again, that it is the centre of the EU which is strong, at the expense of the regions. The increasing inequalities, as well as the inability of the EU to manage crises promptly and efficiently, have undermined citizens' faith in a united Europe. They have seen it retreat from the fundamental European values of solidarity, understanding, cooperation, social justice, cohesion and respect for human rights. The results of the above have been euro-scepticism, xenophobia, the calling into question of Europe's future and common journey, and the return of nationalism and populism. In order for the EU to once again become attractive to its citizens, there must now be, finally, an exit from the prolonged economic and social crisis and Europe, together with its Member States, must embark on the path to growth and prosperity once again. The EU must demonstrate in practice its dedication to its founding principles and values, and must stop blaming or isolating some of its Member States or treating them as pariahs. Emphasis must also be placed on developing European awareness and identity, going beyond national defences, interests and self-interests, and education could and should play an important role in this respect. Finally, it is necessary for political leaders in the Member States to stop ascribing all the difficult decisions, with political costs, to "Brussels", while at the same time taking the political credit for major European achievements.

## **3. Is more visibility of, and better communication on, the European Union required, and how?**

All the views which were heard on this subject confirm that, without a doubt, there is a lack of information and communication in relation to the role which a united Europe has played over the last 60 years in maintaining peace, in the individual and collective prosperity and in the development of its Member States, and in relation to the specific, numerous and multi-levelled benefits which individuals and groups have received and continue to receive within the European area from the European unification project. These issues had not been sufficiently emphasised, and had not been collectively understood, with Greece being no exception to the rule. The result, today, in the midst of the crisis, can be seen in the older generations' "historical amnesia", and the younger generations turning their backs on Europe, ignorant, to a great extent, of its history. It was proposed that more successful provision of information to the public could be attempted using comparisons of what the levels of prosperity and enjoyment of citizens' rights would be without the EU, and what are they today, thanks to the EU. The institutional bodies within each Member State, such as the social partners and local administrations, have a key role to play in publicising the benefits which each nation, including Greece, has derived from membership of Europe. The European bodies too must, as they are doing with this current initiative, seek in a systematic and organised manner to work together with Member States' civil societies, so that citizens can feel themselves to be participating in the decision-making process on matters that affect them. Several of those present mentioned the European Parliament

within this context. It does not seem, to date, to have fully carried out its institutional mission, which consists in bringing the EU genuinely closer to its citizens. This still remains a proposal for the future.

**4. Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

In ranking the policy areas, only one employers' organisation took action (in order of priority: EMU-foreign policy and defence-Schengen, immigration and security-single market and trade-EU budgetability to meet obligations), indicating, however, that the differences between the level of their importance were small. Moreover, there was a consensus that missing from these policy areas, or at least not given the importance required, was the most important area in times of crisis, namely employment, workers' relations and social issues. The initiative for the creation of a European Social Rights Pillar was welcomed as significant. However, this needs to be further strengthened, taking into account the particular features of each Member State, and in light of demographic and technological developments. It was pointed out that, in their current form, the Treaties provide many opportunities for the development of the social policy sector, such as through the use of the social clause, referred to in Article 9 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. These opportunities have not, however, been made use of, because of the political trade-offs in Europe.

**5. Regarding the way ahead, how should the "Future of Europe Debates across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organised civil society play in the "way ahead" and how?**

A suggestion which was put forward consists of the simultaneous conduct of dialogue at four levels: national, regional, sectoral and professional, with genuine involvement from the social partners and increasing and promoting social dialogue. Civil society should closely monitor the agenda as it is being shaped at European level, and can and should play a significant role in addressing the lack of information and confidence referred to above, as a channel for communication between the EU and its citizens.

**6. What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

An expectation was expressed that there will be an imminent assurance that Europe, recognising the mistakes of the past, will continue confidently and dynamically to move forward, creating a new dynamic and writing a new page on the improvement of the prosperity of its peoples. Along the same lines, many expressed the hope that the current political situation, with the election of Mr Trump to the Presidency of the United States, Brexit approaching and the worsening of relations with Russia, among other issues, will serve to rally and unify the EU, and that pro-EU political powers, spearheaded by France's new leadership, will together fight to re-establish the foundations of the European project and to deepen it, giving a vision and a future to European citizens for more and better Europe. On the other hand, there were negative comments about the fact that this consultation is being conducted in a fragmented and isolated manner, since the European Commission's working documents on the main issues were not available at the outset, but were only made public in stages. Others did not hide their scepticism or pessimism regarding whether the results of the consultation

will have any real impact in the decision-making centres of Brussels, and whether it will be possible to avoid another gulf being created between the results of this EU initiative and the expectations of its citizens and societies and, more generally, whether an about-turn and a change of course are really possible for Europe.

## **7. How can the citizen be more empowered in shaping the future of Europe?**

Undoubtedly, the participation of citizens is required in shaping Europe's future and, as stated above, civil society must play a significant role in achieving this. More generally, more participative forms of decision-making are required, but without placing upon citizens divisive dilemmas which divide societies and turn them away from politics. What is needed is a more genuine form of dialogue and more systematic contact by the EU, through its bodies and its institutional representatives, with Member State citizens, through the various structures in which these are organised.

## Participants

	Mr/ Ms	SURNAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	ORGANISATION
1.	Ms	Angelidaki Georgia	Legal section	HCCE - Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship
2.	Mr	Agniadis Panayotis	Member of the European Union's ESC	CUCG - Central Union of Chambers of Greece
3.	Mr	Agorastos Konstantinos	President	UGR - Union of Greek Regions
4.	Mr	Alexandris Panos	Lawyer	ABA - Athens Bar Association
5.	Mr	Alexopoulos Nikolaos	Office of the President	EESC - European Economic and Social Committee
6.	Ms	Alepi Lida	Expert	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece
7.	Mr	Alepis Michalis	Member of the European Union's ESC	AGCC - Association of Greek Contracting Companies
8.	Mr	Amvrazis Georgios	Member of the European Union's ESC	GTC - Greek Tourism Confederation
9.	Ms	Antoniou Stavroula	Director of Administrative Organisation and Development	Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks
10.	Mr	Apostolakis Nikolaos	Treasurer	CPC - Consumer Protection Centre
11.	Mr	Vardakastanis Ioannis	President of NCPD - National Confederation of People with Disabilities, Member of the Various Interests Group, EESC	EESC - European Economic and Social Committee
12.	Mr	<b>Vernikos Georgios (speaker)</b>	President	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece
13.	Ms	Vlami Alexia	Office of the President	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece
14.	Mr	<b>Voutsis Nikolaos (speaker)</b>	President	Greek Parliament
15.	Mr	Gardikiotis Menelaos	Secretary-General	ACG - Agronomist Chamber of Greece

	Mr/ Ms	SURNAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	ORGANISATION
16.	Mr	<b>Yataganas Xenofon</b> <i>(interventions)</i>	Lawyer former Legal Advisor to the European Commission	
17.	Mr	Gionis Dimitris	Democratic Coalition	Parliament
18.	Ms	Grammatikoyanni Vasiliki	Journalist	Athens voice & Efimerida ton Sintakton (Editors' Newspaper)
19.	Mr	Dalianis Vasileios	Journalist	'Proto Thema' newspaper
20.	Mr	Delias Pavlos	Member of the General Council	NCPD - National Confederation of People with Disabilities
21.	Mr	Dimitriadis Dimitrios	Member, Employers' Group 1	EESC - European Economic and Social Committee
22.	Mr	Doumanoglou Antonis	Journalist	REPORTER.GR
23.	Mr	Zormpas Spiros	Representing:	"Epioni" - Greek Network of Tutors
24.	Mr	Zoitos Nikos	Scientific associate	SETE (Member of ESC)
25.	Mr	Iliopoulos Ilias	former Vice-President of the ESC	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece
26.	Ms	Theleriti Maria	Issues relating to the Ministry of Public Administration	Member of Parliament, Greek Parliament
27.	Mr	Theodoropoulos Nikos	Journalist	Banking News
28.	Dr	Theodorou Martha	Director of Public and International Relations	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece
29.	Ms	Thomopoulou Vasiliki	companion of Mr Panayotis Markostamos (NCPD)	NCPD - National Confederation of People with Disabilities
30.	Mr	<b>Ioakeimidis Panayotis</b> <i>(interventions)</i>	Emeritus Professor of International and European Studies	
31.	Ms	Ioannidou Maria	Scientific associate	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece
32.	Mr	Iosif Argyris	Usher - Driver	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece

	Mr/ Ms	SURNAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	ORGANISATION
33.	Mr	Kavvathas Georgios	President	HCPCM - the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants
34.	Mr	Kailis Alexandros	Office of International and European Affairs	Greek Parliament
35.	Mr	Kakkos Ioannis	Member	CPS - Confederation of Public Servants
36.	Mr	Karampatzakis Nikolaos	Individual	
37.	Mr	Karanikas Georgios	Vice-President of the ESC, Secretary-General of the HCCE (representing the President of the HCCE)	HCCE - Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship
38.	Mr	Karzis Nikos	Member	GGCL - Greek General Confederation of Labour
39.	Mr	Katsampis Konstantinos	Member	EESC
40.	Ms	Katsina Sofia	Lawyer, Member of the European Union's ESC	ABA - Athens Bar Association
41.	Mr	Katsifaras Apostolos	Governor of the Region of West Greece, Member of the Governing Board	UGR - Union of Greek Regions
42.	Mr	Kikiliias Ilias	Executive	GTC - Greek Tourism Confederation
43.	Mr	Koleventis Fotis	Vice-President of the ESC	GGCL - Greek General Confederation of Labour
44.	Ms	Kolyva Margarita	Individual (participating through the speaker Mr G. Kolyvas)	
45.	Mr	<b>Kolyvas Giorgos (speaker)</b>	Political analyst	European Commission, DG Regional and Urban Policy
46.	Ms	Kontoyanni Maria	accompanying the second Vice-President of the NCPD, Mr Gr. Leontopoulou	NCPD - National Confederation of People with Disabilities
47.	Mr	Koronaios Michalis	Member of the General Council	NCPD - National Confederation of People with Disabilities

	Mr/ Ms	SURNAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	ORGANISATION
48.	Mr	<b>Kourakis (speaker)</b> Anastasios	Chairman of the Special Standing Parliament Committee on European Affairs	Greek Parliament
49.	Mr	Kourasis Georgios	Secretary-General	HCPCM - the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants
50.	Mr	Koutsoumpelis Stavros	Member of the European Union's ESC	CPS - Confederation of Public Servants
51.	Mr	Kponis K.	Directorate of Economic Affairs	Ministry of Finance
52.	Mr	Kyriazis Charis	Director of HFE, President of the Home of Greek Industry Ltd (HGI), Member of the European Union's ESC (representing the President of the HFE)	HFE - Hellenic Federation of Enterprises
56.	Ms	Konstantinidou Eleni	European Union Section	Greek Parliament
54.	Ms	Kostoula Marianna	Secretariat-General of the Government	
55.	Ms	Lampropoulou Dimitra	Office of the Secretary-General	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece
56.	Mr	Leontopoulos Grigoris	Second Vice-President	NCPD - National Confederation of People with Disabilities
57.	Mr	Lytras Periklis	Professor, Deputy President	Athens University of Applied Sciences
58.	Mr	Magalios Antonios	Office of the President	EESC - European Economic and Social Committee
59.	Ms	Makantasi Evmorfia	Executive, Research analyst	DiNEOsis, research and analysis organisation
60.	Mr	<b>Maniatis Ioannis</b> ( <i>welcome address</i> )	Representative of the Democratic Coalition, Member of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs	Greek Parliament

	Mr/ Ms	SURNAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	ORGANISATION
61.	Mr	Marinakis Antonis	Member	GGCL - Greek General Confederation of Labour
62.	Mr	Markostamos Panayotis	Executive	NCPD - National Confederation of People with Disabilities
63.	Mr	Mengoulis Antonis	Director	HCCE - Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship
64.	Ms	Melisova Nina	Journalist	Athens News Agency
65.	Mr	Bonis Christos	Photo-reporter	
66.	Mr	Nikolaou Dionysios	Director-General	DiaNEOsis, research and analysis organisation
67.	Mr	<b>Dassis Georgios (speaker)</b>	President	EESC - European Economic and Social Committee
68.	Mr	Xyrafis Apostolos	Secretary-General	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece
69.	Ms	Pagoni Pinelopi	Director of Economic Affairs	Ministry of Finance
70.	Ms	Pantzartzzi Simela	Journalist	VPC
71.	Mr	Papageorgiou Pafsanias	Secretary-General	Ministry of Education
72.	Mr	Papadopoulos, Georgios	Lawyer	ABA - Athens Bar Association
73.	Ms	Papaioannou Sofia	Office of the President	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece
74.	Mr	Papanastasiou Panayotis	Office of the Vice-President of the Government	
75.	Mr	Papargyris Ioannis	Member of the European Union's ESC	HCPCM - the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants
76.	Ms	Petaliou Stavroula	Journalist	Zougla.gr
77.	Mr	Petrovannis Georgios	Director, Finance and administration	Greenpeace Hellas

	Mr/ Ms	SURNAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	ORGANISATION
78.	Mr	Petropoulos, Georgios	Member, Workers' Group 2	EESC - European Economic and Social Committee
79.	Ms	Petrocheilou Anna	Head of public relations	HCCE - Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship
80.	Mr	Pliakos Kostas	Journalist	CNN
81.	Mr	Polyzogopoulos, Christos	former President of the ESC	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece
82.	Mr	Poupkos Ioannis	Representative of the GGCL, Member of the European Union's ESC (representing the President of the GGCL)	GGCL - Greek General Confederation of Labour
83.	Mr	Retsos Ioannis	President	GTC - Greek Tourism Confederation
84.	Mr	Rizeakos Yannis	Member	GGCL - Greek General Confederation of Labour
85.	Ms	Samara Christina	accompanying the President of the NCPD, Mr I. Vardakastanis	NCPD - National Confederation of People with Disabilities
86.	Mr	<b>Saridis Ioannis (welcome address)</b>	Representative of the Union of Centrists, Member of the Standing Committee on European Affairs	Greek Parliament
87.	Ms	Simatou Anastasia	Secretary-General	Eastern Mediterranean Foundation
88.	Mr	Sofianopoulos Manolis	Member	GGCL - Greek General Confederation of Labour
89.	Mr	Syriopoulos Panayotis	Member of the European Union's ESC	GGCL - Greek General Confederation of Labour
90.	Mr	Tasiopoulos Giorgos	Member	GGCL - Greek General Confederation of Labour
91.	Mr	Tenekoudis Alexandros	Individual	
92.	Mr	Tenekoudis Anastasios	Individual	

	Mr/ Ms	SURNAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	ORGANISATION
93.	Mr	Trantzas Nikos	Head of the Office of Coordination, Institutional, International and European Affairs	Secretariat-General of the Government
94.	Ms	Travlou Viktoria	International and European Affairs Section	Greek Parliament
95.	Mr	Triantafyllidis Alexandros	Member (Syriza)	Economic Affairs Committee, Parliament
96.	Mr	Tsakiroglou Vasilis	Journalist	"Proto Thema" newspaper
97.	Mr	Tsatiris Georgios	Member of the European Union's ESC	HBA - Hellenic Bank Association
98.	Mr	Tsemperlidis Nikolaos	President	CPC - Consumer Protection Centre
99.	Mr	Tsiamis Ioannis	Member of the European Union's ESC	CUMG - Central Union of Municipalities of Greece
100.	Mr	Tsouvalas Michalis	Executive Secretary:	South Aegean Region
101.	Ms	Tsoukatou Aspasia-Aikaterini	Secretariat	ESC - Economic and Social Committee of Greece
102.	Mr	Yfantopoulos Ioannis	Professor of Social Policy and Administration	University of Athens
103.	Mr	Filippou Petros	Deputy Regional Governor of Eastern Attica	
104.	Ms	Frankouli Athina	Deputy Chairman of the Board of Governors	Social, Psychiatric and Psychological Health Firm
105.	Ms	Chamodraka Xeni	Member, Legal Affairs Section	EESC - European Economic and Social Committee
106.	Mr	Chantzaras Vangelis	Member	GGCL - Greek General Confederation of Labour
107.	Mr	Charalampidis Nikolaos	Director-General	Greenpeace Hellas
108.	Mr	Chortis Konstantinos	Secretary-General	NCPD - National Confederation of People with Disabilities

## Programme

<b>9.30-10.00</b>	<b>Arrival - registration</b>
<b>10.00-11.00</b>	<p><b>Start of proceedings:</b> <i>coordinator: Giorgos Dassis, President of the EESC</i></p> <p><b>Welcome addresses</b></p> <p><i>Nikos Voutsis, President of the Greek Parliament</i></p> <p><i>Anastasios Kourakis, chairman of the Greek Parliament's Special Standing Committee on European Affairs</i></p> <p><i>Giorgos Vernikos, President of the Greek ESC</i></p> <p><i>Giorgos Dassis, President of the EESC</i></p> <p><b>Representatives of the following parties:</b></p> <p><i>Syriza, N.D. DE.SYM. Communist Party of Greece, Potami, ANEL. Union of Centrists</i></p>
<b>11.00-11.15</b>	<p><b>Presentation of the White Paper</b></p> <p><i>Giorgos Kolyvas, European Commission, DG Regional and Urban Policy</i></p>
<b>11.15-11.50</b>	<b>Additional comments by the chairs of social bodies</b>
<b>11.50-12.00</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>12.00-12.45</b>	<p><b>Debate on questions 1 and 2 - White Paper and the challenges of the EU</b></p> <p><b>1.</b> Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meet, from your perspective, the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?</p> <p><b>2.</b> Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why? How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?</p> <p><i>Introduction and chairing of debate: Dimitris Dimitriadis, Member of the EESC, Employers' Group</i></p>
<b>12.45-13.30</b>	<p><b>Debate on questions 3 and 4 - Communication and policy areas</b></p> <p><b>3.</b> Is more visibility of, and better communication on, the European Union required, and how?</p> <p><b>4.</b> Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?</p> <p><i>Introduction and chairing of debate: Giorgos Petropoulos, Member of the EESC, Employees' Group</i></p> <p><i>Speeches by: Panayotis Ioakeimidis, Emeritus Professor of International and European Studies, specialising in European policy and European unification</i></p>

13.30-14.15	<p><b>Debate on questions 5 to 7 - Civil society and the way ahead for the EU</b></p> <p><b>5.</b> Regarding the way ahead, how should the "Future of Europe Debates across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organised civil society play in the "way ahead" and how?</p> <p><b>6.</b> What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?</p> <p><b>7. How can the citizen be more empowered in shaping the future of Europe?</b></p> <p><i>Introduction and chairing of the debate: Ioannis Vardakastanis, Member of the EESC, Various Activities Group</i></p> <p><i>Speeches by: Xenofon Yataganas, lawyer, former legal adviser to the European Commission,</i></p>
14.15-14.30	<p><b>Summary, conclusions and close</b></p> <p><i>Giorgos Vernikos, President of the Greek ESC</i></p> <p><i>Giorgos Dassis, President of the EESC</i></p>

**HUNGARY**

## **Report**

On 4 May 2017 three Hungarian members of the EESC (István Komoróczki, Piroska Kállay and Etele Baráth, representing the employers' group, the workers' group and civil society organisations respectively) took part in a debate in Budapest on the European Commission's proposal on the "**White Paper on the Future of Europe**". You will find the list of participants and the day's programme as an appendix to the summary of the outcomes of the consultation.

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### **The employers' view**

Unfortunately, Brexit has exposed the various tensions that characterise the Brussels decision-making process. The Members of the Commission are unable to present and properly represent their national interests. Centralised decisions are hampered by too many consultations and visible competition between the centres of power (the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council) and between their leaders, which weakens the EU's ability to adapt. The role of the EESC, which represents civil society, should also be strengthened, as its members are in daily contact with European citizens. In addition, it would be appropriate to involve as many Member States as possible in the euro area, as the skills and strength of the peripheral countries would significantly increase competitiveness. More extensive use of the single currency would give the EU an added advantage at global level. It is important to preserve the single market and the four fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Treaties. More social dialogue should take place at local level as this will strengthen the peripheral countries and their opportunity to convey views to Brussels.

The 13 years that have elapsed since Hungary's accession to the EU have also shown that the new Member States have not only brought new markets, an abundant, well-educated workforce and great potential in the area of defence to the EU; they have also given it strength in economic and social terms. It is natural in a democratic system for there to be differences in views expressed by leaders of countries that do not share the same culture or the same history. That is why it will not be possible to talk about a federal Europe over the next twenty years. However, the acquis established to date (e.g. the CAP, Schengen, the four freedoms or again the euro) must, in any event, be preserved. The reason that the White Paper calls for changes within the EU in 2019 is not clear. Apart from Brexit, the EU is not currently facing any other crises that would justify making changes in the near future.

It is essential to maintain the current system on taxation policy. Increased European funds are needed to ensure continuous training and retraining of the skilled workforce and to encourage the widest possible digitalisation of education and the economy in Member States. Information on the use of EU funding allocated to Member States and its precise purpose should be made publicly available and accountability for the resources used should be increased. Although the EU enjoys very strong support in Hungary (63% of Hungarians feel a sense of belonging to the EU, an increase of 5% compared to 2016), communication on the EU in the country certainly needs to be improved. The Hungarian government and the European Commission have a significant responsibility in this regard.

### **The workers' view**

During its consultation on the "White Paper on the Future of Europe", the interests of Hungarian workers were represented through the active involvement of the trade union confederations.

Firstly, it was noted that the preparation time for the consultation was rather short and that it would have been better – with a view to developing a joint opinion – to formulate more specific questions during the course of the discussions and to allow the different parties present to interact rather than organising discussions in separate groups. Several participants suggested organising further meetings, depending on the results of the consultation and the solutions put forward and with the aim of ensuring follow-up, so as to be able to discuss each measure in greater detail and to better compare different opinions. There is no shortage of official forums that could accommodate such exchanges (national economic and social council). The White Paper under consideration is an initiative and can under no circumstances be regarded as a finished product. During the course of such a consultation, national specificities should not be forgotten. The question of a cyclical approach to the system (programming periods) was also raised. In order to obtain a quality analysis of the White Paper it is essential to take into account the time that has elapsed since accession in 2004.

In terms of content, the five scenarios developed by the Commission express very general truths and do not address – or only in very little detail – the current problems raised by workers' representatives. It would perhaps be appropriate to begin a policy reflection process. Social and employment policies are barely addressed by the areas covered. The document leaves out extremely important questions such as job creation, remuneration systems, minimum wage, pension schemes, education, research, culture, sustainable development and health policy. In the view of workers' representatives this is unacceptable. It is clear that the European Union's activities are carried out too far away from the people. It therefore remains incomprehensible and opaque to them and has little influence on workers and trade unions. EU legislation is difficult to interpret and the courts are not able to apply it effectively. Transposition and cooperation between the different institutions should be improved.

It is important that the EU focuses on its achievements and its positive outcomes, and that workers understand the benefits deriving from EU citizenship. The concept of EU citizenship must be conceived as an objective.

The document contains an economic component, but the respective roles of the European Union and the Member States are not reflected in it. It is important that everyone understands who is responsible for what.

While education is to be an appropriate tool in strengthening the role of the EU, the role of the media is no less important in this regard. Establishing a media outlet in the Member States that is specifically designed for this purpose and broadcasts news in the national language could be a step forward in promoting the European Union.

### **The view of non-governmental organisations**

Despite the invitation addressed to civil society being sent to a wide range of recipients prior to this consultation, only delegates/guests from four NGOs were present, although it is worth noting that they represent very different values (a Europe-oriented academic institution, a leading economic research

and analysis institution, the Hungarian sustainable development coordination body and the best-known "green" NGO in the country, which is active in the field of research).

The agreement reached at the end of the brief discussions can be summarised as follows:

Out of the five scenarios, none can be approved without amendment, or even deemed likely or realistic as they stand. However, by reworking scenarios 3, 4 and 5 a strategy that is likely to provide the most appropriate guidelines for the future of a Europe characterised by great diversity could be drawn up.

A two-speed Europe is not desirable, even if it is very likely that it will become a reality and could be justified temporarily in the face of global competition. Openness is required. The establishment of a multi-speed Europe institutional model, the guarantee of its flexibility and the group of participants participating in "enhanced" cooperation – who are in favour of European integration – could be new resources and at the same time bring about stability. The risk of one Member State dominating the others must be avoided.

Reforms should be accelerated and based on fewer but more decisive new principles. Even an evolving system cannot withstand lasting, uncoordinated change. Central development-oriented governance needs to be consolidated at the same time as enhancing cooperation between Member States or between regions.

The requirement to comply with sustainability goals should be generalised.

By 2025 alone, changes are expected to be as diverse as they are influential both on the global economy and at societal level. This means that institutional stability is a fundamental requirement. "The crisis of the European elite worsens as its complacency grows!"

Today, the European authorities are not in a position to take decisions. They must clarify the European concept of "supranationality" so as to legitimise means of cooperation, synergies and joint decisions and they must highlight the benefits of this to counter the rise in nationalist movements.

Establishing institutional policies for the euro area is vital, but this should not be at the expense of its future openness. It is necessary to begin to consider the direction and effectiveness of budget transfers, while addressing real needs. More funds should be invested in improving education and health, and strengthening local governance. Environmental policy also requires a review of the system of financial regulation. Europe 2020 and other strategies are missing their targets due to the lack of financial and legal instruments, a process for monitoring implementation and appropriate indicators.

In conclusion, it is once again important to underline the need to combat corruption, improve transparency and ensure that the accountability of leaders becomes self-evident. The CAP needs to be modernised considerably, and there must be progress made in relation to the "green budget" and in promoting the philosophy and values underpinning the Connecting Europe Facility and the instruments used by this initiative.

We can support a multi-speed Europe, so long as it is open, well-coordinated, accessible and comprehensible for citizens.

## **The government's view**

The fact that in spring 2017 the Commission presented five new scenarios and proposed to European citizens that changes be implemented from 2019 onwards came as a surprise. The European Commission is the guardian of the Treaties and only the Council or the Member States are entitled to put forward this type of proposal. After the financial, economic and migratory crises experienced since 2008, Europe is not facing any new crises today, although of course there are still problems to be addressed.

Improving the competitiveness of European economies and job creation require sound economic cooperation between Member States. Unfortunately, today Eastern Europe faces the serious problem of a growing exodus of highly-skilled workers who have graduated from secondary and higher education towards more developed Western European countries, leading to a serious skills shortage, particularly in Hungary. The Hungarian government has made considerable progress in reducing contributions from salaries and in continuing to increase the value of real wages and pensions. In order to ensure the sustainable development of Hungarian businesses, it is important to ensure that national professionals do not leave the country and to increase the number of R&D projects supported by the EU. Unfortunately, it seems that the European body responsible for promoting research, development and innovation (European Institute of Innovation and Technology – EIT), which is based in Budapest, is not effective enough. It does not play the leading role in this area at European level that its initial objectives were supposed to have granted it, nor does it fundamentally encourage the rise of research, development and innovation in Hungary.

As from 2019, Hungary should fulfil the conditions for joining the euro area.

In contrast to some Member States, Hungarian society does not accept the migrants arriving in Europe. Given the negative experiences endured during the course of our history (150 years of Turkish occupation), we do not want to host them, despite the fact that they could contribute to solving the problems in our labour market. We are not able integrate them effectively, culturally or socially, nor involve them in activities likely to increase our competitiveness.

We welcome the EU Energy Package and the measures on implementing the circular economy linked to proper waste management. It is essential that the European Commission shows empathy towards us in its approach, taking account of the specific constraints faced by peripheral countries and, in some cases, their more limited opportunities.

While maintaining a strong competitive European Union that works well is of great importance to us, we reject the fifth scenario that paves the way for a Federal Europe. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the signing of Treaty of Rome, each group of countries – the Benelux countries, central European countries, Southern European countries and the Visegrad Group – presented their vision of the future of the European Union. Hungary, which is a member of the Visegrad Group, called for the four fundamental freedoms of the Union to be upheld and for the well-being of citizens to be ensured. Countries that are not members of the euro should not have to solve problems within the single currency. Compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, strengthening Schengen and drafting a common defence policy are extremely important to us. Several elements of scenarios 3 and 4 could

receive our support, on the condition that their implementation takes place in accordance with the Treaties. We oppose any plan to reduce regional policies.

Visibility and communication on the EU should be markedly increased in all Member States and, in this regard, Hungary of course has a role to play. The European aid granted to us and its impact on our lives and on the Hungarian economy should be more widely publicised. Although the Euronews website is available in our country, it is important to make sure that the television channel is able to broadcast its programmes in all Member States. The encryption must be removed from television broadcasts and programmes should be available in the language of the Member State concerned.

## Participants

<b>Names</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Rohály Vanda	Projekt asszisztens, ÁFEOSZ-COOP Szövetség
Borosné Bartha Terézia	nemzetközi igazgató, MGYOSZ
Magyari Gergő	STRATOSZ
Bánhidi-Nagy Attila	főtitkár, STRATOSZ
Papp Gergely	szakmai főigazgató-helyettes, Nemzeti Agrárkamara
Dr. Urbán Ágnes	Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara
Dr. Cser Ágnes	elnök, Hetedik Szövetség
Doszpolyné dr. Mészáros Melinda	elnök, Független Szakszervezetek Demokratikus Ligája
Dr. Kuti László	elnök, Értelmiégi Szakszervezeti Tömörülés (ÉSZT)
dr. Pásztor Miklós	szakértő, Munkástanácsok Országos Szövetsége (MOSZ)
Zentai Sára	Nemzeti Fenntartható Fejlődési Tanács
Vértes András	elnök, GKI Gazdaságkutató Zrt.
Prof. Kroó Róbert,	elnök, Európai Mozgalom Magyar Tanácsa
dr. Molnár Balázs	Európai Uniós Ügyekért Felelős Helyettes Államtitkár

## **Programme**

### Consultation

#### **White Paper on the future of Europe**

4 May 2017, 9 a.m. – 6.15 p.m.

Representation of the European Commission in Hungary  
1024 Budapest, Lövöház u. 35.

<b>9 – 11 a.m.</b>	<b>CONSULTATION WITH EMPLOYERS</b>  <b>Vanda Rohály</b> , project assistant at the National Federation of Consumer Cooperative Societies and Trade Associations (ÁFEOSZ-COOP) <b>Terézia Bartha Borosné</b> , international director of the Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists (MGYOSZ) <b>Gergő Magyari</b> , Hungarian Association of Strategic and Public Utility Companies (STRATOSZ) <b>Attila Bánhidi-Nagy</b> , secretary-general of STRATOSZ <b>Gergely Papp</b> , deputy director-general of the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture <b>Ágnes Urbán</b> , Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
<b>11 a.m. – 1 p.m.</b>	<b>CONSULTATION WITH WORKERS</b>  <b>Ágnes Cser</b> , president of the trade union Hetedik Szövetség <b>Melinda Mészáros Doszpolyné</b> , president of the Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions (LIGA) <b>László Kuti</b> , president of the Confederation of Unions of Professionals (ÉSZT) <b>Miklós Pásztor</b> , expert at the National Federation of Workers' Councils (MOSz)
<b>2 – 4 p.m.</b>	<b>CONSULTATION WITH VARIOUS CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS</b>  <b>Sára Zentai</b> , National Sustainable Development Council <b>András Vértes</b> , president of the Economic Research Institute GKI <b>Róbert Kroó</b> , president of the Hungarian Council of the European Movement
<b>4.15 – 6.15 p.m.</b>	<b>CONSULTATION WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES</b>  <b>Balázs Molnár</b> , deputy secretary of state responsible for European issues

The consultation will be facilitated by the following members of the European Economic and Social Committee:

Piroska Kállay, for the Workers' Group  
István Komoróczki, for the Employers' Group  
Etele Baráth, for the other members of civil society

**IRELAND**

## **Report**

### **The future of Europe Debate with representatives of civil society organisations in Ireland**

**The Oak Room, Mansion House, Dublin**

**7 June 2017**

The following groupings of social partners and various interest groups took part in the debate.

Ibec (Irish Business and Employers Confederation)

ICTU (Irish Congress of Trade Unions)

Social Justice Ireland

IFA (Irish Farmers' Association)

ICMSA (Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association)

Environmental Pillar

CIF (Construction Industry Federation)

Chambers Ireland

## **Introduction**

The **first session** of the debate consisted of one representative from each of the eight groups outlining their views and priorities on the Future of Europe. A summary of their statements is given in **Appendix 1**. The **second session** was given over to a debate of the EESC White Paper Questionnaire.

## **General Summary**

The EESC was the only Institution that had organized a structured debate between the social partners and civil society.

There was unanimous support for the EU project and its continued development.

The EU had to be seen to be delivering for the citizens' well being and a positive narrative had to be **communicated** in all Member States to support the EU project.

Member State governments had to stop blaming the EU for policies to which they had been a party.

We had to develop a better way of explaining the symbiotic relationship between sustainable economic, social and environmental pillars.

There was agreement that the departure of the UK from the EU was a serious blow to the Union, the enormity of which did not appear to be recognized in the UK and indeed in parts of the EU.

Concern was expressed at the seeming indifference in the EU to the loss of 65 million people or 13%. This, together with growing alienation in other countries suggested the EU project is not working.

The Reflection papers (so far), especially, Deepening EMU, are better than the White Paper which perhaps was constrained by what was perceived as politically "acceptable".

Some of the vaunted "solidarity" during the crisis was self-serving on the part of creditor countries, which needs to be addressed if we are to avert the turmoil of another EU crisis.

There was general agreement that the fiscal rules were flawed in concept, based as they are on non-observable variables such as "potential output" and this measure was influencing the fiscal rules.

In particular, this was inhibiting essential investment in some countries.

There was a need to better differentiate policy prescriptions by recognizing the differing needs of economies that were in different phases of the economic cycle or at a different stage of economic development.

There was a notion that there needed to be a larger budget, or some method of EU funding (bond, new expanded ESM) though there was no coherent suggested approach.

There was surprise that the demographics of ageing were not a part of the Future of Europe.

### **Debate on White Paper Questionnaire**

#### **Question 1**

None of the five scenarios captured in full the way the EU should develop.

A significant concern highlighted by the trade union, social justice and environmental pillars was the absence, in any of the six tabular headings in the scenarios, of any reference to the social or environmental dimension. In their view the social and environmental dimension was subordinate to the economic dimension.

The business pillar took the view that competitiveness, growth, investment and training were fundamental to generating the conditions to advance social conditions.

The social and environmental pillars were more strongly of the view that none of the scenarios sufficiently reflected their issues and suggested a sixth scenario with legislative measures to back it up.

#### **Question 2**

The "sixth" scenario talked of a "caring" union.

There was unanimity that any scenario in reality had to take on board the implications of Brexit.

The 65 million people who are about to leave the Union represent a cultural and historical loss to the Union, and the Union cannot proceed as if it has not happened.

This diminution of the Union is profound; the EU should undertake an examination of why this happened and what lessons could be learnt that might enhance a "sixth" scenario approach.

In the enlightened self-interest of the EU, the strategy should focus on minimizing the adverse implications of British withdrawal, and thus minimizing the adverse impact on important trading and social links. The focus should not be on discouraging others from leaving, but rather on bettering the EU and all its facets to ensure that no other country wishes to leave.

### **Question 3**

There was unanimity that across the EU, there was, to greater or lesser degree, a tendency to scapegoat the EU for any harsh or unpopular policies that Member States had freely signed up to.

There was a need to develop a **positive narrative** about the EU and all the benefits it actually brings from easier trading conditions, lower inflation and interest rates, large internal market with no exchange risk, promotion of cohesion through the structural funds and investment through the EFS funds.

All projects funded or co-funded by the EU should **be positively communicated** to citizens and the benefits not claimed by national politicians for their own advancement.

There should be a trans European syllabus running in all schools about the EU from the earliest years of school life. It should inform on the history of the EU; its various functions; the European Parliament; the democratic imperative of a genuine solidarity of nations.

Again and again "Communication, Communication, Communication" was mentioned.

### **Question 4**

There was widespread amazement, especially from the trade union social and environmental groupings, that the various scenarios had almost no focus on social and environmental pillars. There is a "sinister" misreading of the data: a housing crisis is answered by fiscal rules and debate about on/off balance sheet funding; following a high level of unemployment, rising employment is countered by EU fears of overheating.

There was some skepticism about the consultations under way. What was the purpose of this consultation? Some believed that the Commission's mind was already made up and this was more of a PR/sales exercise.

### **Question 5**

The EESC has a significant role to play here, as in this debate.

The political will does not match that of the citizens. There must be real dialogue at local and regional level.

There was some discussion about whether it was the role of the Commission to communicate directly with citizens.

All projects funded or co-funded by the EU should **be positively communicated** to citizens and the benefits not claimed by national politicians for their own advancement.

#### **Question 6**

It was suggested that there should be some multi participatory fora to engage citizens on key European issues. There should be digital platforms developed for communications with citizens.

The Commission needed to spell out what it will do with the outcomes of this consultation.

#### **Question 7**

It was imperative that if the Union really had the will to act more with the solidarity of a nation state, we had to develop a governance system, outlined to a large degree in the Reflection paper on Deepening EMU, where the creditor/debtor divide never arose again. Structures had to be put in place to prevent Member States dictating self-serving rules on other Member States. At the same time sufficient trust had to be built up through the operation of rules, acceptable to all Member States, that dispelled moral hazard. Any funds given over by the European Union to assist a Member State overcome a shock or to catch-up would have to be conditional on the recipient state submitting to European Commission oversight that such funds are being well spent.

## **Summary of Group Positions**

### **Ibec (Irish Business and Employers Confederation)**

The Future of Europe debate is an **opportune time** for civil society to get their voices heard. Many of the voices shouting loudest at this time are calling for **protectionism, those fearful of international trade and investment, those supporting populist politics and Eurosceptic politicians rallying against globalisation.**

It is important that all sides of the debate make their voices heard, and provide not a counter-narrative to the negativity, but a **real narrative for the EU**. Voices in the **regions** must also be heard, and Ibec is keen that policy-makers at national and EU level recognise the need for **meaningful investment and proper infrastructure** in more rural areas.

The future of the EU must not be thought of as simply that of 27 Member States. **Future EU prosperity will be impacted by our future relationship with the UK.** The UK is leaving the EU but it cannot leave Europe. The EU approach to Brexit negotiations should aim at **achieving the closest possible trading relationship with the UK**, while fully respecting the integrity of the single market.

We must **focus** on those things that Europe does well - the **Single Market, the Eurozone and international trade**. Certain policy areas need a **more bespoke** approach, tailored at national level to individual Member States, such as labour market regulations and social affairs matters to allow the EU focus on areas which can have tangible rewards.

**Deepening EMU** is a means to create a **better life** for citizens, prepare for **global challenges and shocks** and enable each and every Member State, large and small, to **prosper**. Ireland understands better than most the significant changes that the EU made to the instruments and architecture of the euro area – and has responded well with the strongest growth and jobs performance in the EU. For Ireland and its thriving investment to prosper, it is important that EU membership continues to be seen as a comparative advantage along with our common law legal system, voluntarist industrial relations environment and English speaking population, as these factors are central to decisions to locate in Ireland.

There are specific areas where the EU can **add value**, particularly in completing the **Capital Markets Union (CMU)**. Completing CMU will clearly benefit the EU economy through greater access to **diverse business finance** and also has the capacity to support **job creation in the SME sector**. The opportunity to channel finance more widely across EU countries is more than ever necessary as this can make an important contribution to the **EU's ability to distribute risk and deal with future economic shocks**.

However, "one size" does **not fit all** and the EU must be **flexible** to the needs of Member States to allow them to remain competitive both in the Single Market and globally. The benefits of other European initiatives are far less certain, for example the proposed Common Consolidated Corporation Tax Base. Consolidation runs contra to the spirit and wording of the BEPS process, which, if pursued at EU level, could see Ireland lose up to 50% of its corporate tax base or up to 4 billion euros per annum. For **small peripheral countries** especially, competitiveness, flexibility on issues like EU

**fiscal rules and State Aids** are essential. Member States should be in a position to take decisions they know will be of value to their current situation. The endorsement of the use of "**coalitions of the willing**" in the Rome Declaration is a positive step in this direction. However, initiatives supported by **large EU Member States** in terms of power, resource and decision-making sharing could pose real challenges for **small countries** and should be **protected** by the Commission.

Irish business continues to view a **deepening of the single market** as a key priority. We believe that once the single market is strengthened, including harnessing the potential of the services sector, that it will have positive knock-on effects into other policy areas also. A completed single market would significantly **bolster** the European economy creating **employment opportunities**, allowing for **more generous EU budgets**, encouraging **sustainable growth** and **reducing** social **inequalities** within Member States. **Completing the Digital Single Market (DSM)** should continue to be a top priority for the future, offering potential for future business and export growth, particularly for SMEs.

Another area where the EU can continue to add value is through an effective **common trade policy**. Given the current challenges to the global trading system from populism and anti-globalisation sentiment, and indeed the current approach of President Trump and his new administration, it is important that the EU remains a strong promoter of an open markets approach. We need to **better communicate the positive impact of international trade and investment** more effectively to citizens. The EU began as a trading block and this remains the binding principle at the EU's core. It is important to focus on the value of this, and not to get side-tracked with policies which will have little impact.

#### **ICTU (Irish Congress of Trade Unions)**

The Trade Union Movement strongly supported the European Project, but only on the basis of a "Social Europe". Lofty principles must translate into upward convergence in terms of living and working conditions between countries and within countries, less inequality and more economic and social cohesion.

They called on EU leaders to discard their main tools of adjustment to date, such as wage depression, the dismantlement of Collective Bargaining systems, the generation of precarious work models, cuts in public spending and unacceptable levels of unemployment and social exclusion. Instead they called for investment for growth and sustainable jobs through reform of the Growth and Stability Pact and a "just transition" environmental strategy.

Reiterating the call by the ETUC they urged the utilisation of the Brexit impasse to set up a new Convention with the involvement of the Social Partners and Civil Society to profoundly change the Fiscal Compact into a tool for renewal. This would entail reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, the introduction of a Social Progress Protocol and a Social Semester to ensure the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

#### **Social Justice Ireland**

Social Justice Ireland argued that confidence in the EU is being eroded steadily because of failures in two key areas:

1. Failure of the European Commission to protect small countries against its larger, stronger members.
2. Failure to address the ongoing vulnerability of EU citizens

According to the approach they outlined the EU needs to become and be seen to become, "*A Caring Union*". They advanced the concept of "An Alternative Option" that will protect the vulnerable and move towards a future that effectively addresses poverty, unemployment, inequality and exclusion. This would involve a number of initiatives. One of these would be to set up a scheme of "*Transnational and Interpersonal Redistribution*";

- To provide a macro -economic stabiliser essential to the survival of the euro.
- To provide a demographic stabiliser essential to the political survival of Schengen.
- To provide a firm common floor essential to protect the generosity and diversity of our national welfare states against tax and social competition.
- To make it crystal clear to the vulnerable that the EU cares for them too and not just for the wealthy and powerful.

They went on to reiterate that "An Alternative Option" for the future of the EU should also ensure that the European Commission protects small countries against their larger, stronger members. Specifically they contended that a new option is required which recognises that the social dimension is of equal importance to the economic in the development of the EU and contended that the sustainable development goals enshrined in Agenda 2030 should provide a good guide to identifying the priorities and processes such an alternative should follow.

In their view none of the five scenarios outlined in the White Paper could be deemed adequate and they argued for a 6th Scenario enshrining the approach outlined above.

Finally they emphasised the critical importance of ensuring that these principles inform the approach to the Brexit process and that they are enshrined in any agreements to be concluded.

### **Environmental Pillar**

The Environmental Pillar advanced a proposal for a "6th Scenario", supported by European Organisations and Networks from across the Environment, Social Exclusion, Development and Trade Union Sectors. This envisages the European Union becoming a driver for sustainability in Europe and beyond. It defined "Sustainability" in terms of a synthesis across the Economic, Environmental and Social, in accordance with the overall thrust of the UN Sustainable Development goals as outlined in the 2030 Agenda, "*this would entail a move away from the current focus where commercial and corporate interests are all too often prioritised over the public interest*".

It went on to call for full implementation of the Paris Agreement, better regulation and policy coherence and an end to negative externalities of domestic policies for the global south as well as the phasing out of perverse public subsidies, especially for unsustainable food production and fossil fuels. The Pillar emphasised the concept of the Economy as an instrument of society rather than the other

way around. This calls for International Trade Agreements to serve as a tool for the attainment of social, environmental and economic objectives rather than ends in themselves. Europe should observe the highest standards in a developing dynamic and actively discourage a race to the bottom. The "6th Scenario" envisaged the development of representative and participatory democracy beyond elections and lifelong learning as key to sustainability and progress. It also called for a new definition for economic progress which would go beyond reliance on GDP and a fund to make 50 million houses in Europe energy neutral.

### **IFA (Irish Farmers Association)**

For farmers, EU membership has meant access to a market of 500 million consumers, the stability provided by CAP payments and the ability to grow and diversify our export markets.

Exports of agri-food products exceeded EUR 11b last year, and, after a difficult end to 2016, are growing again, with 7% growth to the EU and UK markets in early 2017, and major growth into the US and Chinese markets.

The IFA reminded the audience of the treaty of Rome and its objectives in terms of agriculture, which include:

- to increase agricultural productivity,
- to ensure a fair standard of living for farmers,
- to stabilise markets,
- to ensure the availability of supplies, and
- to ensure that supplies reach consumers at reasonable prices.

In the Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe the IFA's position is that continuing the completion of the Single Market remains very important. Equally the seamless access to and regulatory coherence within the EU market should be maintained.

The IFA is clear that strengthening existing common policies, such as the CAP, is critical to securing a strong future for the EU and in demonstrating to citizens the positives of EU membership.

### **ICMSA (Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association)**

The ICMSA gave an overview on the importance of CAP in any discussion on Europe's Future. It underlined the fact that subsidies paid to farmers were in effect subsidies to consumers because of the cheaper food. ICMSA is of the opinion that any discussion of the future of Europe cannot ignore farming, its role in food security and in preserving the environment.

Like the IFA, the ICMSA outlined the complexities of EU bureaucratic systems, which continue to alienate farmers and small businesses.

The association also underlined the role of the EU in progressing policies designed to deal with social inclusion, particularly rural isolation. However, it also warned that there is a growing disconnect

between citizens and the powers in Brussels. There was a need for Ireland to play a full part with the other 27 partners, reminding the meeting that Britain was as of now still a member.

There should have been more emphasis in the scenarios on the importance of agriculture, the environment as a partner in farming practice and the viability of rural communities.

### **CIF (Construction Industry Federation)**

The CIF drew attention to the fact that the foundations for the current accelerated rate of growth in Ireland were laid a decade ago. They warned that the lack of infrastructure building is too low at 2% of GDP and this chronic lack of infrastructure had the potential of being worse than the property crash.

It took 13 years to build a road to cities such as Cork because of the long lead-in times; the longer such infrastructure was delayed the more that the costs in the capital city would rise causing a seriously adverse impact on Foreign Direct Investment. The ECB and the Juncker Investment Plan provided cheap investment finance and this was the right time to invest in infrastructure, especially at a time when the UK's decision to leave the Union offered investment opportunities. But the EU prevented this investment because of the rules regarding the fiscal space.

The stricture of the fiscal rules had to be freed up. There was a problem that the UK was ramping up investment and there was a drain on construction capacity as more construction workers would head to the UK because there was no pipeline of projects. It was not possible to wait until the end of 2018 until there was enough fiscal space. There was a huge opportunity cost in not building infrastructure now.

### **Chambers Ireland**

There is significant pressure on political leaders to confront the challenges on the Future of Europe, following several years of crisis, the British vote to leave the EU, an international environment more actively hostile to European integration and anti-EU sentiment across the continent. The scenarios describe different levels of integration and cooperation among countries as well as different areas in which Member States would be willing to work together.

The Chambers network in Ireland believes the first option has some merit, as it proposes some degree of progress; however, on balance it believes that it would not be of benefit to the EU-27 to limit the work of the EU to just the Single Market. The second preference would be to do less more efficiently and think strategically about choosing a narrower portfolio of measures but do them forcefully.

At the core there was a need to move forward but with flexibility. The wider European Chamber Network suggests a further scenario that shares some options put forward in a number of scenarios: countries that want to do more together should be enabled to do so, such as in trade; energy; and socioeconomic challenges that require complete co-operation of Member States to avoid distortions. Institutions should focus time and energy on core issues to the EU such as strengthening the Single Market and must continue to pursue a progressive and ambitious trade policy. Favourable conditions for trade inside and outside the Union are key for the success of European business.

## Participants

The Future of Europe – An economic and social dialogue  
 The Mansion House, Dublin

List of participants

Name	First name	Organisation
Wright	David	Protestant Aid
Ginnell	Paul	Community Platform
Stanley	Wayne	Community Platform
Klein	Pierre	Community Platform
Healy	Joe	Irish Farmers' Association
Dwyer	Rowena	Irish Farmers' Association
Comer	John	Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association
Enright	John	Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association
Ewing	Michael	Environmental Pillar
Duggan	Oonagh	Environmental Pillar
St Ledger	Andrew	Environmental Pillar
Lohan	Cillian	Environmental Pillar
Sargent	Niall	Environmental Pillar
King	Patricia	ICTU
Corey	John	ICTU
Rigney	Peter	ICTU
O'Connor	Jack	European Economic and Social Committee
Croughan	David	European Economic and Social Committee
Boland	Seamus	European Economic and Social Committee
McCoy	Danny	Ibec
Ivory	Pat	Ibec
Dillon	Arnold	Ibec
O'Neill	Sue	Ibec
McElwee	Maeve	Ibec
Parlon	Tom	Construction Industry Federation
Talbot	Ian	Chambers Ireland
Mills	Rickard	Chambers Ireland
Carroll	Andrea	Chambers Ireland
Foley	Sarah	Chambers Ireland
O'Connell	Noelle	European Movement
D'Arcy	Michael	Ibec
Healy	Sean	Social Justice Ireland
Gibbons	Ger	SIPTU
Teveres	Diana	EP Office Dublin
Borg	Janine	European Economic and Social Committee

## **Programme**

### **The Future of Europe – An economic and social dialogue**

**7 June 2017**

### **The Oak Room, Mansion House,, Dawson Street, Dublin 2 Programme**

**8. 15 a.m.      Registration**

**8.50 a.m.      Introduction followed by statements from invited sectors**

**Chair: David Croughan**, European Economic and Social Committee

Ibec (Danny McCoy)

ICTU (Patricia King)

Social Justice Ireland (Sean Healy)

Irish Farmers Association (Joe Healy)

Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (John Comer)

Environmental Groups (Michael Ewing)

Construction Industry Federation (Tom Parlon)

Chambers Ireland (Ian Talbot)

**11 a.m.      Coffee Break**

**11.15 a.m.      Questionnaire debate**

**Chair: Seamus Boland**, European Economic and Social Committee

**1.15 p.m.      Concluding remarks by Jack O'Connor, European Economic and Social Committee**

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**ITALY**

## **Report**

Meeting held on 24 May 2017, in Rome, at the Spazio Europa Hall, managed by the European Parliament Information Office in Italy and by the European Commission Representation in Italy.

Participating organisations:

Former Members' Association (EESC); Italian Banking Association; Associazione Konsumer Italia (Italian Consumer Association); Italian Foreign Trade Association (AICE); Italian Confederation of Managers (CIDA); C.C.I.A.A. Napoli (The Naples Chamber of Commerce); Italian General Federation of Labour (CGIL); Italian Confederation of Workers' Unions (CISL); European Economic and Social Committee (EESC); Coldiretti; Municipality of Bologna; Confcooperative; Italian Confederation Union of Intellectual Professions (CIU); Consiglio Nazionale Consulenti del Lavoro (National Council of Labour Consultants); Cilap Eapn Italia; Ferrovie dello Stato (State Railways); Consorzio tutela aceto balsamico di Modena (Consortium for the Protection of the Balsamic Vinegar of Modena); Fondazione Consumo sostenibile (Sustainable Consumption Foundation); Fondazione Di Vittorio (Di Vittorio Foundation); Forum Nazionale Terzo Settore (Third Sector National Forum); Institute of International Affairs (IAI); Ministry of Health; Movimento Difesa del Cittadino (Citizens' Defence Movement); Nidil Cgil (Nuove Identità di Lavoro) (New Work Identities); European Commission Representation in Italy; UIL - Eurispes, UIL; University of Teramo; University of Rome Tor Vergata and the University of Pisa.

The meeting's programme and the full list of participants are attached.

EESC Delegation: Maurizio Reale (Group I), Giulia Barbucci (Group II) and Antonio Longo (Group III) with the support of the Secretariat, represented by Luca Venerando Giuffrida and Carlotta Isabella Iapichino.

### **RESULTS OF THE DEBATE – QUESTIONS DISCUSSED**

The issues discussed during the consultation on the future of Europe, concerning five possible scenarios, are focused on the following questions:

- 1. Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper is best suited to meet the EU's internal and external challenges? Why?**

The feedback obtained from representatives of the participating organisations was very varied. However, the prevalence was to exclude all five scenarios outlined in the White Paper which are not capable of restoring citizens' confidence in the European Union. These scenarios, in fact, do not provide concrete policy proposals or a more integrated institutional framework towards a stronger and more united Union.

Alternatively, in the opinion of certain social partners, Scenario No 5 'To do much more together' seemed best suited to address future challenges because it is appropriate to strengthen the European decision-making process, by ensuring that the necessary steps forward can be made in economic governance, fiscal policies, migration, common defence and the fight against international terrorism.

**2. Would another scenario, different to those referred to in the White Paper, be possible and preferable? If yes, why? How do you see trust being fostered within the Union?**

It would have been possible and desirable to have a scenario for the further development of European integration aimed at a change in economic policies, a modification of the Stability and Growth Pact criteria and the resulting austerity policies that have led to the worsening of European citizens' living and working conditions, with their consequent distancing from the European project and a return to the national sphere. In this context, the social dimension and the social model should be resumed, ending social and wage *dumping* between countries, including through greater coordination of wage policies, while respecting national practices.

**3. Is greater visibility of the EU and improved communication in this regard required? How?**

It is certainly necessary to ensure greater visibility of European communication, together with improving EU policy content. More specifically, alongside the EU's path of institutional reform and a necessary change in the relevant policies that aim to enhance the real economy, aggregate demand and citizens' needs, it is necessary to have a communication strategy that ensures its dissemination, emphasising the role of social partners as an element for competitiveness and cohesion.

**4. Are the thematic areas referred to in the White Paper sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How should they be ranked by order of importance? Is there an important sector not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which sector and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

The thematic areas specified in the White Paper fail to give any attention to the 'social' aspect: work, welfare, youth, migration and the refugee crisis, just to name a few. The association of migration policies with those of defence and security are to be avoided in the synoptic table. Any scenario must take the social dimension into account, by proposing concrete solutions for European workers and citizens which have a positive impact on their living and working conditions: consider, for example, coordinated wage policies, social protection mechanisms for dependent persons, an extraordinary plan for public investment, the creation of quality jobs with complementary schemes against unemployment and minimum income, as well as measures to promote education and training. The growth of economic and social inequalities should also be prevented. Finally, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) could be enhanced further in the budget area.

**5. What role should organised civil society play in the 'way ahead' and how?**

The role of organised civil society is one of the basic problems of the future of European policies. Comparison methods based primarily on online consultation, where the recognition of the representation's different organisational and social weight does not exist, certainly do not help the comparison. In this sense, it is not only the role of social forces that must be re-evaluated, but it is also necessary to attribute additional tasks to the European Economic and Social Committee and that its opinions have an even greater impact in the European legislation formalisation process.

## **6. What are your specific expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

The White Paper's merit is the reopening of the debate on the future of Europe yet, once again leaving the choice on the way forward to Member States. It is expected that the voice of citizens and the different social partners will be taken into consideration and that the debates underway in the various countries can have a positive impact on the change of pace needed towards the integration process and a more inclusive society. Moreover, the Treaty of Lisbon and the recent Rome Declaration confirm the social partners' prominent role in the Union's consultation on legislation.

## **7. How can citizens be more empowered in shaping the future of Europe?**

In addition to what has been said for the European Economic and Social Committee, it is necessary to enhance the European Parliament's role at the institutional level. Certain key positions, such as that of the President of the Commission, should have a more direct form of legitimisation. An IT platform should also be set up to allow citizens to express themselves freely, in all the languages of the EU Member States. Sometimes, language limitations diminish direct participation and therefore limit involvement: more informed, responsible, involved and attentive citizens can make all the difference.

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS**

These recommendations follow as a result of the consultation:

- Civil society remains a key pillar of the European Union's political and legislative institutions. However, in order to regain citizen consensus, it is necessary to focus on policies that reintroduce investment, innovation, inclusion, employment and social protection, and pay greater attention to consumers. Measures to promote education and training are also indispensable to boost economic growth.
- A strong demand for greater European policy integration that enhances the social dimension emerged from the speeches of the organised civil society's representatives and the social partners. In particular, it has been noted that this dimension, which should be inextricably linked to the economic and political dimension, is absent in the scenarios proposed in the White Paper.
- The White Paper does not present a strategic vision on the Future of Europe: it is almost as though it supports the political and institutional paralysis triggered by the financial and economic crisis, accentuated by phenomena such as the refugee emergency and migration policies, and the theme of terrorism and Brexit. Instead, a political union is needed with the themes of equitable growth, job quality and welfare inclusion at its centre.
- Confidence within the EU is achieved by showing citizens what a true Union could do. Therefore, communication at European level should provide simple and immediate campaigns that present the tangible results obtained by the EU in the citizens' interests.

## Participants

Name	Surname	Organisation
Giorgio	Ambrogioni	CIDA
Jacopo	Arrigoni	University of Rome Tor Vergata
Giulia	Barbucci	European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
Stefania	Bello	Ferrovie dello Stato
Marina	Calderone	Consiglio Nazionale Consulenti del Lavoro
Carmelo	Cedrone	UIL - Eurispes
Letizia	Cesarini Sforza	EAPN ITALIA
Beatrice	Covassi	European Commission Representation in Italy
Danila	Curcio	Confcooperative
Cinzia	Del Rio	UIL
Tommaso	di Fazio	CIU
Annalisa	Giffi	University of Teramo
Luca Venerando	Giuffrida	European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
Carlotta Isabella	Iapichino	European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
Alexandru Denis	Iosub	University of Teramo
Tomasz	Koguc	European Commission Representation in Italy
Sara	Jeribi	European Commission Representation in Italy
Paolo	Landi	Fondazione Consumo sostenibile
Teresa	Lavanga	CIDA
Marco	Lombardo	Municipality of Bologna
Antonio	Longo	European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
Serena	Marini	University of Rome Tor Vergata
Salvatore	Marra	CGIL
Arianna	Martini	University of Teramo
Andrea	Mone	CISL
Emanuela	Pistoia	University of Teramo
Maurizio	Reale	European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
Francesco	Riccitelli	University of Teramo
Chiara	Sessa	Ministry of Health
Nicoletta	Teodosi	Cilap Eapn Italia
Maura Clotilde	Viezzoli	Forum Nazionale Terzo Settore

## **Programme**

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**9:15 - 9:30 | Registration of participants**

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**9:30 – 9:45 | Welcome address and introduction to the White Paper on the future of Europe**

 *Beatrice Covassi, Head of the European Commission Representation in Italy*

**9:45 - 11:15 | The future of Europe between opportunities and challenges and the involvement and role of civil society**

Speeches by the social partners and civil society

*Moderators:*

 *Maurizio Reale, EESC, Employers' Group*  
 *Giulia Barbucci, EESC, Workers' Group*  
 *Antonio Longo, EESC, Different Activities Group*

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**11:15 – 11:30 | Coffee break**

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**11:30 – 13:00 | Session resumes**

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**13:00 | Conclusion of the session**

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**LATVIA**

## **Report**

The meeting took place from 10.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on 2 June 2017 at the European Union House in Riga.

Participating organisations: trade union from the *Rīgas Siltums* company; European Economic and Social Committee (EESC); the European Commission representation in Latvia; the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS); the Employers' Confederation of Latvia; the Latvian Railway and Transport Sector Workers' Union; the Latvian Industrial Sector Union; the Latvian Education and Science Workers' Union; the Latvian College of Culture; the Latvian Forestry Sector Union; the Association of Latvian Local and Regional Authorities; the Latvian National Association for Consumer Protection (LPIAA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Latvian Republic; the Latvian Students' Association; the University of Latvia; the Latvian Academy of Sciences; Rīga TV24 television station and Latvian radio.

EESC delegation: Vitālijs Gavrilovs (Group I), Pēteris Krīgers (Group II) and Baiba Miltoviča (Group III) supported by EESC Secretariat.

### **RESULTS OF THE DEBATE – QUESTIONS DISCUSSED**

#### **Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

Scenario 4 "Doing less more efficiently" garnered most support from the representatives of Latvian organised civil society. It was closely followed by scenario 3 "Those who want more do more" and scenario 5 "Doing much more together". A new scenario 6, "Carrying on what has been started more efficiently and at different speeds" was proposed. It combines a number of positive elements taken from the five scenarios put forward.

Business circles consider that the scenarios best suited to resolving the Union's internal and external problems are scenarios 4 "Doing less more efficiently" and 5 "Doing much more together", as they provide opportunities for faster development, especially if a combination of the two is envisaged. A rational, results-based approach of this kind could be applied successfully in certain policy fields, such as fiscal policy and external trade, when seeking to achieve both national and international objectives.

Trade unions see the scenarios for the future of Europe as a sound basis for further debates. Their members consider that scenario 1 "Carrying on" could be used as a reference point, but following it would mean getting bogged down in routine. As a result, scenarios 3 "Those who want more do more" and 4 "Doing less more efficiently" are best suited in their view, without ultimately ruling out the emergence of a new scenario drawing on all the development models currently proposed.

From the viewpoint of the Latvian National Consumer Protection Association (LPIAA), certain aspects of scenarios 4 "Doing less more efficiently" and 5 "Doing much more together", are the most appropriate, especially with regard to the internal market and trade. Markets and market conditions are becoming increasingly complex and uncertain for consumers. Although the measures under the

European Commission's initiatives are ambitious and propose forward-looking solutions, the LPIAA doubts the Member States' ability to absorb these initiatives and adapt them to their development capacities.

For their part, Latvian students mainly support scenario 5 "Doing much more together".

**Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why? How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

A new scenario could certainly be created on the basis of those put forward in the white paper. Confidence largely depends on whether European citizens feel that the EU institutions act in their interests and that decisions taken by the institutions are lawful. The European Union, governed by the principle of the rule of law, must ensure a high level, stable legal system, consistency between legal provisions, the primacy of law over the good intentions of the authorities and officials, and respect for human rights.

A scenario 6, "Carrying on what has been started more efficiently and at different speeds" was proposed during the course of the debates in Latvia.

Confidence in the Union could be encouraged by ensuring:

- transparency and access to information,
- keeping to commitments made,
- citizen involvement,
- keeping to existing agreements between Member States.

**Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how?**

Clearly yes.

How to achieve this:

- inform the Member States more regularly about projects and achievements;
- involve society/forge closer links with the public;
- gain greater influence on the international stage;
- conduct information campaigns on projects in the Member States funded by the EU;
- work together with the national or local level;
- focus greater attention on middle-aged people (much investment goes towards young people);
- continue to inform pupils and students about European issues;
- give more information to business (where the media are concerned, information is sufficient);
- boost consumer safety and awareness of rights;
- continue to organise school trips to the European Parliament;
- put more emphasis on the common EU position on international questions;
- keep the public informed about the decision-making process in the EU institutions;
- the Latvian government must also give people more information about EU current affairs.

**Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

The white paper mentions the main policy areas, but it is difficult to pick out a specific field of greater importance than the others. Foreign policy is as important as the single market and sustainable development - similarly, defence is both crucial and topical. However, the white paper's weak point is the lack of information on matters more directly affecting people and the shared setting, such as health, the environment, education, agriculture, etc., which are important insofar as they affect not only the image and future of the Union as a whole but also each individual citizen. Here, scenario 5 is most relevant, as it involves development in all policy areas.

**Regarding "the way ahead", how should the "Future of Europe Debates" across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions be structured? What role should organised civil society play in the "way ahead" and how?**

Civil society plays an essential role in taking decisions of societal importance, particularly in the future of Europe debates in the national parliaments, towns and regions of the Union. The following aspects should be taken into account when organising the debates:

- organised civil society must be seen to be active and play a leading role;
- citizens' confidence in the European Union must be won back through practical measures that foster activity;
- account must be taken of the differences between Member States and their differing interests;
- greater use should be made of the media, especially internet, to inform the public;
- discussions should be held at different levels - first of all at the local, then national and finally Member State level.

**What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

- Consolidation of Europe as a truly united political and monetary union;
- A guarantee, for ordinary workers, of a job within the Union, a living wage, stability and certainty of a positive future for Europe;
- Civil society suggestions and recommendations to be taken into account, to help increase the sense of ownership of the project by civil society;
- Specific proposals for the development, cohesion and improvement of the European Union to be compiled;
- That solutions tailored to the local level be sought;
- EU citizens to be made aware of European issues;
- An assurance that governments deal honestly with citizens;
- Greater use should be made of positive examples in the different EU Member States;
- It is possible that this will not produce concrete results.

**How can the citizen be more empowered in the shaping of the future of Europe?**

- By enabling citizens to express their point of view;
- By ensuring access to information;

- By ensuring active participation in the European Parliament electoral process;
- By fostering hope and confidence in the prospect of a better future by means of practical measures;
- By promoting entrepreneurship, combating unfair competition at Union level and between its businesses;
- By involving NGOs more closely in public management, promoting the "good governance" principle;
- By facilitating renewal of the European social model - guaranteeing robust labour rights and stronger social protection, boosting the role of trade unions;
- By strengthening the right of free movement, preventing forced economic migration;
- By supporting and reinforcing dialogue between the social partners, ensuring that workers are involved and can influence company policies;
- By planning EU funding for shared development (similar to the Structural Funds, the Juncker fund, the European Social Fund, etc.).
- But perhaps ordinary people do not want to be more involved?\_-

### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS**

1. Tomorrow's Europe is a workers' Europe and so solutions should be proposed to their problems: quality jobs, full employment, equal economic and social advantages, social protection, personal security and well-being - in other words, sustainable growth.
2. Domestic demand should be boosted with a view to a fairer economic recovery. It is time that European workers as a whole were granted a pay rise. Upward pay convergence between countries (East and West) and between sectors is an important aspect. Distortions of competition within the single market should be prevented.
3. The main achievements of the European integration process (peace and democracy, the single market and economic cooperation, high levels of education, innovation, technological development, the protection of human rights and a properly-functioning social model, free movement of people) have made Europe an attractive place to live, and this achievement must not be under-estimated.

#### **Additional remarks:**

Cut European red tape, revoke decisions by European institutions that could much better be taken at Member State level, while ensuring follow-up.

## Participants

Surname, First name	Position	Organisation
Ābeltiņa, Ariadna	Member	European Economic and Social Committee
Bajanova, Jekaterina	Coordinator of trade unions	Latvian Industrial Sector Union
Belova, Maira	President	Latvian Students' Association
Bogustovs, Ansis	Journalist	Rīga TV24 television station and Latvian radio
Buraka, Viktorija	Head of Communication	Employers' Confederation of Latvia
Celmiņa, Laura	Senior Communication Officer	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Latvian Republic
Gavrilovs, Vitālijs	Member	European Economic and Social Committee
Grīñfelde, Anda	Trade Union Expert on socio-economic issues	Latvian Education and Science Workers' Union
Groza, Signe	Policy Officer	Representation of the European Commission in Latvia
Jaunsleinis, Andris	Chairman	Association of Latvian Local and Regional Authorities
Kalniņa-Lukaševica, Zanda	Parliamentary Secretary	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Latvian Republic
Kalniņš, Kalvis	Specialist	Trade union from the <i>Rīgas Siltums</i> company
Karnīte, Raita	Academician	Latvian Academy of Sciences
Ķīse, Irita	Deputy Head of Baltic and Nordic Division	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Latvian Republic
Kiukucāne, Ilona	Alternate	European Economic and Social Committee
Krīgers, Pēteris	Member	European Economic and Social Committee
Lepiksone, Violeta	Head of International Division	Latvian Railway and Transport Sector Workers' Union
Miltoviča, Baiba	Member	European Economic and Social Committee
Paula, Līga	Expert on Higher Education, Science and Adult Education	Latvian Education and Science Workers' Union
Pfeifers, Guntis	Labour Protection Expert	Latvian Industrial Sector Union
Pīlēģe, Evita	Head of Development Division	Latvian College of Culture
Plota, Sandra	Director	Latvian College of Culture
Poika, Aleksandrs	Lawyer	Latvian National Association for Consumer Protection
Savickis, Mareks	LBAS Representative of the Youth Council	Trade union from the <i>Rīgas Siltums</i> company
Smildziņš, Āris	Labour Protection Expert	Latvian Forestry Sector Union
Spunde, Baiba	Assistant	European Economic and Social Committee
Šteinbuka, Inna	Head	Representation of the European Commission in Latvia
Strautmanis, Gundars	Member	European Economic and Social Committee
Stūre, Sana	Communication assistant	Employers' Confederation of Latvia

<b>Surname, First name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Ūdris, Reinis	Professor	University of Latvia
Vīksna, Guntra	Lawyer	Latvian National Association for Consumer Protection

## **Programme**

### **White Paper on the Future of Europe - debates with Latvian organised civil society**

2 June 2017

European Union House, Aspazijas bulvāris 28, Riga

### **AGENDA**

*Moderator: Ansis Bogustovs, journalist*

- 10 – 10.30 a.m.: Welcoming coffee and registration
- 10.30 – 10.40 a.m.: Welcome address  
**Inna Šteinbuka**, Head of the representation of the European Commission in Latvia
- 10.40 – 10.50 a.m.: White Paper on the Future of Europe - Latvia's position  
**Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica**, Parliamentary Secretary of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 10.50 – 11 a.m.: White Paper on the Future of Europe - Point of view of different interest groups  
**Vitālijs Gavrilovs**, President of the Employers' Confederation of Latvia, EESC member (Group I)  
**Pēteris Krīgers**, President of the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia, EESC member of (Group II)  
**Baiba Miltoviča**, international and European affairs adviser of the Latvian National Association for Consumer Protection, EESC member (Group III)
- 11.10 a.m. – 1.30 p.m.: Debate with representatives of various civil society organisations
- 1.30 – 2 p.m.: Summary and conclusions  
**Ansis Bogustovs**, moderator

**LITHUANIA**

## **Report**

### **Debate on the Future of Europe organised by the European Economic and Social Committee Members and Social Partners**

**9 June 2017**

**Historical Presidential Palace of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilniaus g. 33, Kaunas**

#### **Conclusions**

- 1. Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

#### **Lithuania is in favour of the fifth scenario with a strong social dimension**

Most of the participants of the discussion chose the fifth scenario as the most acceptable to Lithuania but were unanimous in emphasising that the scenario must be implemented in parallel with the European Pillar of Social Rights. They stressed that in order to achieve success with the fifth scenario, it was important to clearly define and implement the intermediate steps leading towards the final goal. Participants called for more Europe with less red tape and for simple and efficient governance.

A recent survey on the possible scenarios for the future of the EU, carried out by the Vilnius Institute for Political Research, revealed that 78 per cent of those surveyed were in favour of the fifth option, meaning that EU Member States should cooperate much more closely when it comes to common defence, security, internal and external political and economic challenges.

#### **The advantages of EU membership**

Opinion surveys show that Lithuanians strongly approve of Lithuania's membership of the EU. It is therefore obvious that preserving and consolidating the achievements made to date is what matters most to Lithuanians today. Some speakers emphasised that Lithuania had never been in such good political, economic and cultural shape and that the country had never had so many opportunities to promote its national identity. They also underlined that Lithuania belonged to a community of the countries that were most advanced in terms of civilisation, democracy, economy and defence. The country benefits from financial support from the EU that enables it to overcome its delayed development, a consequence of the wars and occupations that have scarred its modern history.

#### **Challenges and opportunities**

The current political, economic and social challenges that the EU faces internally and globally, as well as growing differences in the interests of individual Member States and social groups point to the need for reform. In addition, Lithuania suffers from a big income gap and huge social exclusion and many people still live below the poverty line. The changing demographics (the mass exodus of citizens and a rapidly ageing society) are another major challenge for Lithuania. Therefore, it is no longer possible to carry on in "business as usual" mode. It is time to consider new instruments and

business models and the social economy. Participants also voiced their concern that Euroscepticism might rise in Lithuania after 2020, the year when financing from the EU structural funds dries up, and said that the country should already start preparing for the change now.

It is important that Lithuania works with other EU countries to achieve well-being, its own stability and security and jointly faces today's challenges. Lithuania needs a European energy market and a common energy strategy, a European industrial policy for both manufacturing and services, which would make it possible to take advantage of the opportunities offered by Industry 4.0.

### **Opinions on the other scenarios**

Some speakers said the fourth scenario was one of the most acceptable choices. In their view, it was one of the most realistic directions to take in order to safeguard the essential interests of Lithuania and strengthen its participation in the EU decision-making process. In this scenario, the EU would be responsible for the most important policies, while others would remain within the remit of its Member States.

Were the EU to choose the first scenario, it would have to follow the familiar path, which is no longer sufficient today, as evidenced by Brexit and other challenges.

Commenting on the second scenario the participants said that the single market should function more efficiently and should not entail protectionism. The EU needs a mechanism allowing it to efficiently overcome obstacles preventing a fully-functioning single market.

To some extent, the third scenario has already been put into action and is somehow inevitable due to the very architecture of the EU, a heterogeneous entity that unites countries of different size, capabilities and traditions, governed by politicians with divergent beliefs. Were only this scenario to be followed, however, there would be a danger that some countries would continue building up their strength while others would be left on the sidelines of the EU, with the gap between them widening, which would then lead to discontent and loss of confidence in Europe. Lithuania finds this scenario unacceptable.

### **2. Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why? How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

The participants stated that the process of construction of Europe is only half-complete, with the single market and other important elements already in place but many others, notably, the social dimension, still missing. Therefore, they insisted that **the fifth scenario must be complemented by the social dimension:**

- The EU and its Member States should immediately tackle the problem of deep social exclusion that is especially relevant to Lithuania, as it contributes substantially to the very painful process of emigration that Lithuania is currently experiencing.
- A common European social policy should reinforce high social standards that are as uniform as possible in all EU countries, leading to the eradication of phenomena such as social dumping, emigration, brain drain, etc., that still occur in the "old" or "new" EU members respectively.

- As long as societies suffer from deep social exclusion, the sentiments of discontent with the EU will prevail or continue cropping up.
- Greater social inclusion is needed and the weakest members of society, the disabled, long-term unemployed, persons at social risk, families lacking social skills and people living below poverty levels must not be overlooked.
- It is particularly important to take care of the children of individuals who find themselves in the above situations, as it is the birth right of every child to grow and to become a full-fledged citizen and his/her fundamental rights must be respected,
- Children should not experience hunger, they should have access to education and live free from bullying. Social dialogue involving business, employees and authorities needs to be improved in Lithuania and place itself in the context of EU-related developments.

**3. *Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how?***

The participants unanimously agreed that it is **necessary to increase the visibility of and improve communication on the EU:**

- EU-related topics should be discussed in primary school already, while secondary school curricula should include mandatory EU history and structure lessons, teachers should be familiar with the EU history and the way its institutions operate, they should foster positive attitude towards the EU.
- Exchanges of school students, students, teachers and professors provide an excellent opportunity for learning about culture and customs of other countries.
- Communication should be easy to understand for ordinary citizens.
- Using its media, every country should explain the specific benefits brought to it by the EU: how much money has been allocated to a given project, etc., and how a project can be used in order for people to understand the real value of the EU.
- Representatives of the EU institutions should speak realistically and manage citizens' expectations: people should clearly understand what the EU is and is not capable of achieving and why (usually, because the matter does not fall within its competence).

**4. *Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?***

The discussions emphasised that the European Union was primarily founded to promote peace and that this should always be kept in mind. Defence, a dimension that is of the utmost importance to Lithuania, is also relevant here. The experts who participated in the discussion said that defence policy was one of the few policies that could be rather rapidly implemented at the EU level. This should be one of the policies selected if the EU decides to follow the fourth scenario.

**We would place the policies listed in the White Paper in the following order:**

- Single Market and trade
- Defence

- Economic and Monetary Union
- Schengen, migration & security
- EU budget.

Participants **regretted that the European Commission failed to include social policy in its White Paper.** In their view, this policy and the social pillar warranted considerable attention.

**Energy policy** was also omitted, despite the fact that this is an extremely sensitive issue for Lithuania, which is almost exclusively dependent on Russia as its sole energy supplier. Only in conjunction with other Member States, will Lithuania be able to defend its national interests.

The White Paper could have said more about **the environment, climate change and sustainable development.**

Participants repeatedly mentioned the need for a special focus on **education** (to face current challenges such as global competition or Industry 4.0, we need highly educated people and, respectively, modern education systems that cater to modern needs).

The **common agricultural policy** should not be left out and farmers in all countries should be guaranteed a level playing-field.

***5. Regarding "the way ahead", how should the "Future of Europe Debates across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organised civil society play in the "way ahead" and how?***

The debates should not be organised as special events, but rather should become an integral part of formal and informal education. They should be more closely linked to the EU and national policies. National political parties should be more vocal about the agenda of the EU institutions, while government authorities should implement the country-specific recommendations made by the Council (failure to do so shows disrespect towards the Community, where a country holds membership, and undermines its credibility).

Representatives of teacher organizations admitted that the EU related topics are not sufficiently discussed with school students. The citizens and students in smaller towns are less well-informed about the EU than their counterparts in bigger towns and cities. Information on the EU is presented in a very superficial way and from a narrow perspective. It is also almost absent from the primary education curriculum.

***6. What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?***

The participants, who were very active in the discussion, gave positive evaluation of the initiative. The speakers noted that the involvement of civil society and broad swathes of society in the debate on Europe's future was all the more significant against the backdrop of current events.

The participants were promised that the EESC would draft an opinion on the topic, in which the conclusions of the discussion would be included and that the opinion was to be widely distributed.

The participants voiced the hope that the White Paper scenarios would not be left to gather dust in a drawer and that they would be informed about which specific scenario had been chosen and the way it was being implemented. The participants also wanted to learn more about the steps the Commission would take following the consultations regarding the European Pillar of Social Rights.

#### ***7. How can the citizen be more empowered in the shaping of the future of Europe?***

Consultations on EU-related issues, such as the current one, are very welcome, as they provide an opportunity for information exchange and debate, which eventually leads to the right choices. We need more similar discussions with EU and national policy-makers participating alongside civil society. The media should give adequate coverage to the views of civil society in order for it to be heard in both national and EU institutions.

The path Europe is going to take in the future depends on the involvement of a wide range of actors: from EU political institutions to local communities, as every local community is capable of solving on its own some of its specific challenges. The role of NGOs is also very important, as they can deal with most issues much more efficiently than central authorities.

Better communication on the EU projects in the areas of education, improving skills for workers and exchanges that provide opportunities to share information, learn about the culture of other countries and experience the actual benefits delivered by the EU may be used to inspire citizens to contribute actively to building Europe's future. Information on such projects should be easily accessible.

## Participants

Names	Organisations
Bertulytė-Žikevičienė Aistė	Užsienio reikalų ministerija
Birbilas Mindaugas	Lietuvos švietimo istorijos muziejaus direktoriaus pavaduotojas
Burokienė Guoda	Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo narė
Černiauskas Artūras	Lietuvos profesinių sąjungų konfederacijos pirmininkas
Čiurinskienė Julija	Kauno santakos romuva "Vaidilė"
Garuolis Ričardas	LPS "Solidarumas" valdybos narys
Grigelis Mindaugas	UAB "Kauno autobusai" gen. direktorius
Gudžinskas Liutauras	Vilniaus Universiteto Tarptautinių santykių ir politikos mokslų instituto docentas
Guzavičius Jonas	Lietuvos pramonininkų konfederacijos viceprezidentas
Jančauskas Zigmantas	
Jonaitienė Vaida	KTU Medžiagų inžinerijos katedros vedėja
Jurevičiūtė Audronė	Lietuvos moterų asociacijos Kauno skyriaus pirmininkė
Jurkynas Mindaugas	Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto profesorius
Kilpys Valdas	EP nares dr. L. Andrikienės biuras
Klimantavičius	Lietuvos aprangos ir tekstilės įmonių asociacija
Klioklys Šarūnas	Lietuvos pramonės, prekybos ir amatų rūmų asociacijos prezidentas
Koliataitė Edita	Vaikų ir moterų dienos centro „Nendrė“ darbuotoja
Kropas Stasys	Lietuvos bankų asociacijos prezidentas
Kvedaraitytė Daiva	EESRK narė, LPS "Solidarumas" tarptautinė sekretorė
Labunskaitė Virginija	LPS "Solidarumas" vyr. finansininkė
Langaitis Zenonas	LŠS Lietuvos šaulių sąjungos inžinierius
Lapajeva Rūta	UAB "Mondelez" profesinės sąjungos pirmininkė
Lašas Ainius	Kauno technologijos universiteto Socialinių, humanitarinių mokslų ir menų fakulteto dekanas
Lasiauskas Domantas	Science Po Paris studentas
Lasiauskas Linas	EESRK narys
Laurinaitis Arūnas	Lietuvos pramonininkų konfederacijos viceprezidentas
Leščiauskaitė Vaida	LR ŽŪR Tarptautinio skyriaus vedėja
Lizūnas Julius	VŠĮ "Ekodraugai" direktorius
Maciulevičius Mindaugas	EESRK narys
Malaukytė Ieva	Kauno miesto švietimo profsajungos susivienijimų pirmininkė
Malinauskaitė Jolanta Marija	Lietuvos kaimo bendruomenių sąjungos pirmininkė
Maziliauskas Antanas	Antano Stulginskio universiteto rektorius
Michalauskienė Audronė	Kauno transporto įmonių darbuotojų profesinės sąjungos "Solidarumas" pirmininko pavaduotoja
Mikšys Eimantas	Vilniaus universiteto žurnalistikos absolventas
Morkis Gintaras	EESRK narys
Morkūnienė Edita	LPS "Solidarumas" valdybos narė
Motiejūnienė Jovita	Lietuvos ūkininkų sąjungos tarptautinių ryšių koordinatorė
Murauskienė Diana	Mokytoja
Narakaitė Rita	Vyr. Vadybininkė
Narbutas Ramūnas	Vairuotojų profsajungos pirmininkas
Narkevičiūtė Vilgailė	
Olendraitė Aurelijā	NVO teisės instituto direktorė
Paliūnienė Danutė	Pensininkė, signataro našlė

<b>Names</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Paluckas Gintautas	Lietuvos socialdemokratų partijos pirmininkas, Vilniaus miesto vicemeras
Pauga Audrius	Užsienio reikalų ministerijos skyriaus vedėjas
Petraitienė Irena	EESRK narė
Pilka	Teisininkas
Poškienė Dalia	Lietuvos universitetų moterų asociacijos prezidentė
Pranckevičius Arnoldas	Europos Komisijos atstovybės Lietuvoje vadovas
Puslys Donatas	Bernardinai.lt vyr. redaktorius
Ramanauskas Rimtautas	LPS "Solidarumas" pirmininko pavaduotojas
Sinkutė Birutė	Šv. Ignaco Lojolos kolegijos dėstytoja
Skriptienė Lena	Radviliškio regiono profesinių sąjungų centro pirmininkė
Soščekienė Loreta	Lietuvos teisėsaugos pareigūnų federacijos pirmininkė
Šerkšnienė Nijolė	
Šešelgytė Margarita	Vilniaus Universiteto Tarptautinių santykių ir politikos mokslų instituto direktoriaus pavaduotoja
Švedienė Giedrė	Lietuvos pramonininkų konfederacijos vykdomoji direktorė
Tamašauskienė Julija	EESRK
Tovtkevičienė Diana	Čekiškės gimnazijos mokytoja
Vareikytė Indrė	EESRK narė
Ževžikovienė Regina	Kauno transporto įmonių darbuotojų profesinės sąjungos "Solidarumas" pirmininko pavaduotoja
Žilinskas Rimvydas	Senojo Kauno draugijos pirmininkas
Žindžius Viktoras	UAB "Edmundas ir partneriai" vadybininkas
Žindžiuviene Aldona	UAB "Edmundas ir partneriai" direktorė

### Debate in Lithuania

<b>Names</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Bertulytė-Žikevičienė Aistė	Užsienio reikalų ministerija
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Kilpys Valdas	EP nares dr. L. Andrikienės biuras
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Lasiauskas Linas	EESRK narys
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Lizūnas Julius	VŠĮ "Ekodraugai" direktorius
Maciulevičius Mindaugas	EESRK narys
Malaukytė Ieva	Kauno miesto švietimo profsajungos susivienijimų pirmininkė
Malinauskaitė Jolanta Marija	Lietuvos kaimo bendruomenių sąjungos pirminink
Maziliauskas Antanas	Antano Stulginskio universiteto rektorius
Michalauskienė Audronė	Kauno transporto įmonių darbuotojų profesinės sąjungos "Solidarumas" pirmininko pavaduotoja
Miksys Eimantas	Vilniaus universiteto žurnalistikos absolventas
Morkis Gintaras	EESRK narys
Morkūnienė Edita	LPS "Solidarumas" valdybos narė
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Pranckevičius Arnoldas	Europos Komisijos atstovybės Lietuvoje vadovas
Puslys Donatas	Bernardinai.lt vyr. redaktorius
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Švedienė Giedrė	Lietuvos pramonininkų konfederacijos vykdomoji direktoriė
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Tovtkevičienė Diana	Čekiškės gimnazijos mokytoja
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Žilinskas Rimvydas	Senojo Kauno draugijos pirmininkas
Žindžius Viktoras	UAB "Edmundas ir partneriai" vadybininkas
Žindžiuvienė Aldona	UAB "Edmundas ir partneriai" direktoriė

## **Programme**

**9 June 2017**

**Historical Presidential Palace of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilniaus g. 33, Kaunas (Lithuania)**

In 2017, the European Union celebrates its 60th anniversary. At the same time, it faces the immensely important question of Europe's future. The EU has faced a range of challenges in recent years and finds itself forced to review the course already taken and make decisions on the way forward.

On 1 March 2017, the Commission published its White Paper on the Future of Europe. The white paper provides an overview of the changes predicted for the decade to come and possible scenarios on the issue of how to develop and strengthen the EU, taking into account the interests of individual Member States, and how these interests can be successfully reconciled.

The president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, has asked the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), as the voice of European civil society, to hold a citizens' debate in all Member States on the future of Europe. Based on the results of these debates the EESC will produce a detailed exploratory opinion, which shall be useful to the EU institutions when deciding on a scenario for the future of the EU.

The members of the Lithuanian civil society organisations represented in the EESC have taken the initiative and invited representatives of the social partners to the debate in Lithuania: businesses, representatives of industry, employers and trade unions, students, scientists, farmers and politicians, who can contribute to Europe's future through their knowledge, experience and insight.

**8.30 a.m.      Registration**

**9 a.m.            Welcome**

Simonas Kairys, deputy mayor of Kaunas

**9.05 a.m.**

**Five scenarios for the future of the European Union:**

**Presentation of the European Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe**

Arnoldas Pranckevičius, head of the European Commission representation in Lithuania

**9.15 a.m.**

**60 years: the political, economic and social successes of the European Union, as well as negative developments**

Prof. Mindaugas Jurkynas, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas

**9.45 a.m.**

**What is happening with the EU? Should it stay the way it is or should it be reformed? What is the way forward?**

Arūnas Laurinaitis, vice-president of the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists

**10 a.m.**

**More or less Europe?**

Artūras Černiauskas, president of the Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation

Moderator: Gintaras Morkis, EESC member

**Questions and answers**

**10.15-11.30 a.m.**

**First round table on:**

**Different countries – different interests. Is it possible to move Europe forward?**

The single market is an important EU tool for creating economic growth and jobs and ensuring the common good. However, the single market is still yet to be completed. In recent years the Commission's proposals to revise the rules on some of the core elements of the single market such as free movement of labour and cross-border provision of services (particularly in the transport and construction sectors) have triggered very different reactions among EU Member States (as well as among the social partners, i.e. employers and trade unions). Tackling social dumping featured high on the agenda. The social dimension, procurement and trade policy were also issues that yielded no consensus. How can diverging standpoints and different interests be combined in order to move Europe forward? Which scenario(s) for Europe's future would be most suited to reconciling these interests and solving the European Union's domestic challenges?

Panellists:

**Šarūnas Klioklys**, president of the Lithuanian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts

**Diana Tovtkevičienė**, teacher of Čekiškės Gymnasium

**Ričardas Garuolis**, economist, board member of the Lithuanian Professional Union "Solidarumas"

**Edita Koliataitė**, deputy director of the Children and Women Centre "Nendrė"

**Linas Lasiauskas**, EESC member

**Questions and answers**

Moderator: **Liutauras Gudžinskas**, lecturer at the Institute for International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University

**11.15-11.30 a.m.**

**Coffee break**

**11.30 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**Second round table on:**

**How much Europe and what sort of Europe do Lithuania and its citizens need?**

Opinion polls clearly show that the approval rating on EU membership in Lithuania is among the highest in the EU. There is little doubt in Lithuania about the geopolitical, economic, social and

financial benefits of EU membership. At most, acceptance of the single currency has fallen in recent years due to the starkly increasing prices of consumer goods. However, recent events in Europe and beyond have sparked considerable fears in Lithuania. Key policy areas such as security and defence policy, migration and the Schengen area, budget, structural aid and budgetary discipline, as well as deepening the economic and monetary union, are particularly emphasised in Lithuania, not to mention the economic advantages of the single market. None of this is called into question; however, it is clear that it is not enough and that the EU needs a new model enabling it to reconcile the individual interests of the Member States (including Lithuania) and their citizens.

Panellists:

**Prof. Margarita Šešelgytė**, deputy director at the Institute for International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University

**Prof. Antanas Maziliauskas**, rector of Aleksandras Stulginskis University, Kaunas

**Guoda Burokienė**, Member of the Lithuanian Parliament

**Stasys Kropas**, president of the Association of Lithuanian Banks

**Ainius Lašas**, dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities at the Kaunas University of Technology

**Eimantas Mikšys**, journalism graduate from Vilnius University

### **Questions and answers**

Moderator: **Donatas Puslys**, editor-in-chief of the online newspaper *Bernardinai.lt*

**1-1.30 p.m.**

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

**Gintaras Morkis**, EESC member

**Daiva Kvedaraite**, EESC member

**Mindaugas Maciulevičius**, EESC member

**LUXEMBOURG**

## **Report**

Conclusions of the debate between the social partners and representatives of Luxembourg civil society on the

White Paper on Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025.

(Debate held on 19 May 2017 at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Council of Luxembourg)

\* \* \*

The participants in the debate took due note of the European Commission's intention to hold an honest and wide-ranging debate with civil society on how the EU27 should evolve between now and 2025, in order to restore people's trust [and] deliver according to expectations.

The European Commission had stated that we "need to recognise what is important to our fellow citizens, in order not to lose their support". Indeed, it was undeniable that the European project would be destined to fail if those to whom it was directed did not identify with the process.

The participants nevertheless observed that the White Paper on the Future of Europe did not reflect upon citizens' expectations; nor did it list the fears and complaints that formed the basis of scepticism about the European Union.

The participants felt that the White Paper offered an opportunity to reflect on the future of the EU based on the ideas and values on which the EU was built, the Treaty of Rome and the subsequent treaties.

For decades, European social policy had encouraged convergence between Member States and had been crucial for economic and social progress as well as in terms of cohesion. Nevertheless, the participants noted that, more recently, this social element, as well as social dialogue, had not been sufficiently taken into account. There was therefore a need to relaunch social dialogue in accordance with Title X (Social Policy) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

In general, the need to deepen the internal market, which would benefit businesses, on the one hand, and employees and consumers on the other, was unanimously acknowledged.

Security was another serious concern for members of the public, who complained about the lack of cooperation and exchange of information between Member States. One of the fundamental missions of political leaders was to strike a balance between different rights, for example between security and the fight against terrorism on the one hand, and the rights of privacy and data protection on the other.

With regard to the conclusion of trade agreements by the EU, the participants felt that it was important to draft and negotiate these agreements transparently with the participation of democratically elected European representatives, and respecting European values.

Moreover, the Commission's proposals needed to be realistic and coherent, notably with regard to economic developments, social progress and the environment.

#### Responses to the EESC's questions

The participants in the debate at the Luxembourg ESC did not conceal their disappointment regarding the questionnaire drafted by the EESC, which limited the discussion to a rather superficial Commission document.

The participants were certainly aware of the fact that the five scenarios were merely illustrative and did not amount to either detailed blueprints or policy prescriptions. They nevertheless hoped that the ensuing debates would enable the EU in future to provide a concrete response to citizens' complaints and expectations.

**1. Which of the five scenarios best reflects your point of view on the internal and external challenges that the EU is facing, and why?**

None of the proposed scenarios seemed capable of responding to people's expectations and addressing their concerns on its own.

**2. Is there another potential scenario that has not been mentioned and which may be preferable? If so, why would this scenario be better? How can confidence in the EU be restored?**

The future of Europe needed to be based rather on a hybrid model of different scenarios. Scenarios three and four appeared best-suited to addressing the challenges facing the EU and its citizens, notwithstanding deeper reflections and dialogue on the issues that needed to be dealt with in addition to those set out in the White Paper.

Scenario four was fairly realistic. The public wanted to see more concrete progress. For example, better consumer protection, harmonised at EU level, could lead to a win-win situation for both consumers and businesses.

In the case of scenario three, a multi-speed Europe, it was important to ensure that in any particular domain there was a single common "fast lane" rather than several "à la carte" options going in different directions. There also needed to be a guarantee that all Member States would have the opportunity to join those states that had chosen to move more quickly.

**3. Are visibility and better communication on the part of the EU necessary and if so why?**

Communication at EU level was vast and multifarious and the general public found it difficult to identify with messages that often seemed far removed from their concerns. Communication of European policies and values at national level needed to be improved.

In order for European communication to be successful, national political authorities needed to stop blaming Europe for the unpopular measures that they themselves had negotiated in Brussels as well as

talking about the EU as if it were a foreign power that was beyond their control. On the contrary, they needed to explain the added value expected by the EU and draw attention to the concrete measures that benefited the public.

**4. Are policy areas sufficiently comprehensible and illustrative? How would you rank them on a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area that hasn't been mentioned or sufficiently highlighted? If so which is it, and which of the five scenarios would be best suited to developing it further?**

According to a recent survey, 44% of citizens did not understand how the EU worked. It would therefore be very useful to include the European project and the way it operated as part of national education programmes.

On this note, participants also called for the mobility of students and employees to become a priority for the European Commission as currently there were too many barriers in this regard, for example in the form of issues regarding recognition and acceptance of diplomas.

**5. How should we structure the debates on the future of the EU in the national parliaments, cities and regions of Europe? What should be the role of organised civil society in this regard and how can it take on this role?**

In light of the above, national authorities needed to start by putting together an inventory of citizens' complaints and expectations and setting out specific proposals, in dialogue with civil society.

**6. What are your specific expectations with regard to the result of the consultation?**

The participants hoped that the reflections would quickly lead to concrete results and action, given the economic and social situation in Europe and the expectations of its citizens.

**7. How can the general public be more involved in building the future of Europe?**

As the future of Europe directly concerned all citizens, public debates needed to be organised at national, regional and local levels.

There was also a need to relaunch social dialogue in accordance with Title X (Social Policy) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

## **Participants**

Mr HANSEN (GRI)  
Mr HENCKS (GRII)  
Mme WILLEMS (GRIII)

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**MALTA**

## **Report**

### **Debates with organised civil society – Report from Malta**

**Online consultation:** 4 May – 2 June 2017

#### **Lead EESC members:**

**Stefano Mallia** (Gr. I)

**Philip von Brockdorff** (Gr. II)

**Ben Rizzo** (Gr. III)

#### **EESC administrators:**

Janine Borg

John Power

#### **Method:**

An online survey was conducted among interested stakeholders on the basis of the agreed questionnaire. Responses were received from the following organisations:

- Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry
- UHM – Voice of the Workers
- GWU – General Workers' Union
- GRTU – Malta Chamber of SMEs
- Federation of Professional Associations of Malta

The results are summarised below.

## **WHITE PAPER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**1. Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry: The EU would be served better with a hybrid of scenarios rather than one, carefully blending doing more in certain policy areas, less in others, and elements of two-speed Europe.

UHM + GWU: None of the five scenarios properly address the need for Europe to move towards more social and economic convergence.

GRTU: Scenario one best reflects internal and external challenges, taking due account of national circumstances and demographics. The single market needs to boost investment in digital, transport and energy infrastructure and state aid law needs to be decentralised.

Federation of Professional Associations of Malta: Scenario 5 would be the first choice, followed by scenario 4.

**2. Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why? How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry: EU institutional reform would enable citizens move forward with a bolder European project that creates prosperity, dignity and peace for all.  
UHM +GWU: More convergence, especially in the social sphere, is needed but this must respect diversity and national circumstances. This requires a proactive Europe and EU institutional reform.

GRTU: Action is needed to boost citizens' trust in the EU decision-making process and, although harmonised polices may be beneficial, specific national needs must still be respected.  
GWU: A more united Europe cannot become a reality without EU institutional reform.

Federation of Professional Associations of Malta: Scenario 5 should make it possible to take account of the conditions of each Member State, thereby also bringing the EU closer to grassroots concerns.

**3. Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how?**

UHM: The EU needs to be more visible, less bureaucratic and more open to grassroots needs. It must do more to understand the social problems of millions of workers and their families by developing a modern social policy relevant to current and future needs.

GRTU: Communication is vital, including public consultations.

GWU: Many European citizens simply do not know enough about the EU and this must be remedied.

Federation of Professional Associations of Malta: Better visibility is vital and would prevent the EU being used as a scapegoat for "unpopular" decisions in which the Member States did in fact have a say.

- 4. Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry: Less fragmentation, more technical harmonisation, and the removal of barriers are key. Any further EU social legislation should only be Member-State driven. EU taxation measures should not go beyond international agreements, particularly if they put EU competitiveness at risk. EU regional policy must acknowledge the peripheral nature of small Member States, not just outermost regions.

UHM: Economic policy and social policy are equally important for the future of Europe.

GRTU: The EU Digital Agenda must be given greater visibility, not least in the context of the single market. This would, for instance, help Malta overcome its geographical limitations.

GWU: The EU must seek to understand economic and social differences and not put everyone in the same boat.

Federation of Professional Associations of Malta: Policies should be explained in detail while these are under discussion so that decisions taken are known to individual citizens when they are adopted.

- 5. Regarding "the way ahead", how should the "Future of Europe Debates across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organised civil society play in the "way ahead" and how?**

UHM: The debate must absolutely involve organised civil society as the voice of the citizen.

GRTU: Debates needs to better reflect the different opinions across the Member States, not least through more decentralised institutions. Civil society shapes the EU's perspective, but social partners and other professional bodies are just as important for the ongoing debate.

GWU: Civil society must be involved and, more than national parliaments, cities and regions can also be useful as they are often the home of civil society.

Federation of Professional Associations of Malta: The way ahead should be based on the input from stakeholders, with complete transparency as to the position (or not) taken by each.

**6. What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry: We should not be afraid of change and of reforming the Union.

UHM: To overcome disillusionment, citizens expect a clear direction that is relevant to them.

GRTU: Realistic, achievable targets are needed that genuinely reflect current needs.

GWU: Disillusionment has resulted in populism and anti-EU feelings in many Member States. Citizens need clear direction. Consultation must not be an end in itself but must deliver tangible results.

Federation of Professional Associations of Malta: Enough time should have been given to this opinion. Already the consultation period was too short.

**7. How can the citizen be more empowered in the shaping of the future of Europe?**

UHM: Citizens must take centre stage in developing the future of Europe. The EU must listen to their concerns about the key issues, via the EESC and other organisations at national and European level.

GRTU: Local involvement is very important, including online polls, consultations and other tools.

GWU: The EU cannot afford to lose this opportunity to give a clear and fair direction to its future, a future built on peace and prosperity.

Federation of Professional Associations of Malta: Citizens through their various stakeholders should be involved in Commission decision-making especially in areas where such decisions would differently impact certain countries because of history, economics or ethical or religious background.

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**NETHERLANDS**

## Report

### Report on the Brainstorming Session on the Future of Europe

**Subject** Brainstorming Session on the Future of Europe, held in cooperation with the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER), The Hague, 1 June 2017

**To** Mr van Iersel, Ms Del Rio, Mr Moos, rapporteurs  
Members of the ad hoc group on the Future of Europe  
Mr Quaedvlieg, Ms Muller, Mr Osinga, members in charge of organisation  
Mr Hick, Director  
Ms Porres, Head of Unit



*Infographic showing participants' ideal scenarios (green dots), least preferred scenarios (red dots) and "most likely to happen" scenarios (blue dots).*

### Conclusions of the Brainstorming Session on the Future of Europe held in the Netherlands

#### What does Dutch civil society want from the European Union and how can it be achieved?

The participants in the Dutch discussion want first and foremost an EU that produces well-designed and workable policy proposals within clear frameworks, with the Member States having more say over their interpretation and implementation than is currently the case. Clear strategic choices need to

be made: what do we do together, what do we not do together, and in what areas can we reach an agreement?

Decision-making at European level should be carried out in a transparent manner, subject to clear ground rules. Well-informed and sound decisions – taken on the basis of input from knowledgeable individuals – should then be clearly communicated. Communication also means listening to people from the field. The input of civil society and other stakeholders should be taken on board. In addition, telling the whole story is a decisive factor in winning the support of people and organisations in the Member States. For example, wind and solar energy is a local effect of international agreements, such as the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Better coherence between the various policy areas was repeatedly mentioned. Too often, DGs produce policy proposals that are incompatible because they have been designed from different perspectives, pursue different aims, or have contradictory effects in practice. The system needs to be reorganised in order to tackle this problem. Setting clear, horizontal political priorities should serve as a guide in this respect.

An EU that builds prosperity and well-being for everyone in society should be firmly based on a social, economic and environmental component. Some of these components should be strengthened – efforts to create a single market have meant that the focus has so far been mainly on economic aspects. Attention should be paid to those who do not benefit sufficiently from globalisation.

Translating the guidelines described above into policy areas where, according to the participants, the EU brings clear added value produces the following list:

1. Migration;
2. Defence;
3. EMU governance;
4. A broad and robust economic agenda including agriculture and horticulture, energy, transport, services, etc.;
5. A clear social component, including an active employment policy, worker protection, working conditions and social security;
6. Outside its territory, the EU plays a role as a community of values (democracy, rule of law, human rights).

For example, a real opportunity exists for Europe in the area of digitalisation, in particular concerning accessibility of the countryside. This is an example of a policy area where a European approach has clear added value (and the cost comes before the benefits) since the issue of rural areas lagging behind in this area arises right across Europe, and Member States will therefore be able to find common ground in a joint approach. It is also a policy area where the outline may be set out at EU level, while the implementation will be left to the competent authorities in the Member States. It was established that the Juncker Plan (EFSI) is not yet functioning sufficiently in the Netherlands. The reasons for this should be examined.

## How does this translate into scenarios for the future of Europe?

The participants in the debate regarded the scenarios as a useful tool but preferred to keep an open mind rather than choose between them. Combinations of scenarios and intermediate forms are conceivable.

A clear majority of participants indicated support for the scenarios in which co-operation at European level is intensified in those policy areas where the EU brings clear added value, but with the clear condition that policy frameworks and proposals are developed in an efficient and targeted manner. Their implementation is of great importance. A multi-speed Europe should not lead to a fragmented single market. In order to optimise the single market, it is first necessary to take into account the views and position of the social partners, civil society and the public in a clear and consistent manner. Scope should also be incorporated in order to allow interpretation to develop from the bottom up.

Scenario 3: Logically speaking, this scenario will primarily occur in situations where Member States diverge greatly. The question arose as to what to do with those who are not initially among the leaders. The results achieved in the leading group cannot be imposed on those left behind. There is a real risk of opt-outs and falling below the standard. At the same time, achieving a kind of upward competition could be desirable in some cases. It must be ensured that the functioning of the single market is not overly hampered by a multi-speed Europe.

According to the participants, Scenario 4 was conceivable only if "less" meant that affairs at EU level were conducted in broad terms and were therefore less "nailed down". A survey carried out in 2015 by the UK House of Lords<sup>25</sup> showed that, in principle, nothing happens in Brussels that doesn't belong there. Moreover, everybody was in favour of greater efficiency. It is essential to involve people from the field in drawing up proposals. The REFIT platform could already provide an example.

With regard to scenario 5, the participants concluded that "doing much more together" does not necessarily mean a further transfer of sovereignty. A lot can be achieved through proper coordination, regular dialogue and agreeing on a common line. We also acknowledge that Europe often only takes decisions under intense pressure (crises). Things should be different, but that is how it works in practice.

As a possible sixth scenario, it was suggested to tread water in order to deal with the frayed edges of the EU in its current state. A review of the existing policies/the current rules could highlight which undesirable effects need to be corrected or revised, and whether there are gaps that need to be filled, in order to boost consistency in EU law. Attention can then once again be turned to the future.

Together with Scenario 1, Scenario 2 is, in the eyes of the participants, by far the least desirable, although it is striking that many participants nevertheless consider scenario 1 to be the most realistic.

Finally, this last observation shows that there is a clear gap between what people regard as the ideal future scenarios on the one hand and expectations of what will be done in practice on the other. In

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<sup>25</sup> The Review of the Balance of Competences,  
<https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/l201415/lselect/ldeucom/140/14002.htm>, 2015.

order to bridge this gap, public trust and support will need to be strengthened. To this end, we need an EU that sets out clear frameworks, that draws on board stakeholder input, that leaves room for interpretation from the bottom up, and that focuses on those areas where a common European approach brings clear added value.

## Participants

<b>Names</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Joris Baecke	LTO Nederland
Fenna Beekmans	Kenniscentrum Europa decentral
Peter Bekx	Europese Commissie vertegenwoordiging
Else Boonstra	Europees Economisch en Sociaal Comité
Marco Bos	SER
Semih Eski	CNV Jongeren
Jacobine Geel	GGZ Nederland
Mariette Hamer	Voorzitter SER
Dafna Holtzer	SER
Ellen Hoeijenbos	FNV Bouw
Albert van der Horst	CPB
Fried Kaanen	Koninklijke Metaalunie
Magriet Keijzer	Detallhandel Nederland
Saskia Klosse	Un
Serge Kornuyt	C.Kornuyt BV
Patrick Kosterink	DNB
Marnix Krop	Clingendael
Hans Mojet	Ministerie van Economische Zaken
Catelijne Muller	VCP
Klaas Johan Osinga	LTO Nederland
Winand Quaedviiege	VNO NCW en MKB Nederland
Marieke Ruijgrok	SER
Tessa Ruijgrok	Jong Management
Hans Schenk	Universiteit Utrecht/SER
Eduard Slootweg	Informatiebureau Europees Parlement
Nico Verduin	LTO Noord
Mirella Visser	AIV/Commissie Europese Integratie
Mester Houwing	CNV
Marjolijn Bulk	FNV/EECS
Serge Kornuit	Bouwbedrijf

## **Programme**

### **DE TOEKOMST VAN DE EUROPESE UNIE**

**Brainstorm | 1 juni 2017, 14.30-17.30 uur | Sociaal-Economische Raad, Bezuidenhoutseweg 60,  
Den Haag**

*Met de publicatie in maart 2017 van het "Witboek over de Toekomst van Europa" heeft de Europese Commissie het startschot gegeven voor een Europawijd debat over de toekomstige vorm en functies van de Europese Unie. Uiteraard is dit niet een zaak die uitsluitend de regeringen van de Lidstaten en de Commissie aangaat – het is van groot belang de visies en posities van het maatschappelijk middenveld in Nederland krachtig onder de aandacht te brengen.*

*Deze gedachtenwisseling geeft organisaties van het maatschappelijk middenveld de gelegenheid zich uit te spreken over hoe zij de toekomst van de Europese Unie zien. Wat willen we van de Unie? Wat is er nodig om dat te bereiken? De uitkomsten van de brainstorm worden meegenomen in een advies van het Europees Economisch en Sociaal Comité dat tegen de zomer van 2017 aan de Europese Commissie zal worden gepresenteerd.*

### **PROGRAMMA**

**14.15–14.30 Zaal open**

**14.30–14.35 Welkom**

- **Mevr. Mariëtte Hamer**, voorzitter Sociaal-Economische Raad

**14.35–15.15 Inleiding "De staat van de EU in het licht van het Witboek over de Toekomst van Europa"**

- **Dhr Marnix Krop**, oud-Ambassadeur voor Nederland in Polen en Duitsland, senior visiting research fellow bij Clingendael

Gevolgd door een Q&A

**15.15–15.30 Koffiepauze**

**15.30–16.00 Korte introductie: het advies van het EESC aan de Europese Commissie**

- **Dhr Winand Quaedvlieg**, Lid van het EESC namens VNO-NCW en MKB Nederland
- **Mevr. Catelijne Muller**, Lid van het EESC namens de Vakcentrale voor Professionals (VCP)
- **Dhr Klaas Johan Osinga**, Lid van het EESC namens LTO Nederland

Gevolgd door Q&A betreffende doel & opzet van het debat en het EESC-advies aan de Commissie

**16.00–17.15 Gestructureerde gedachtenwisseling**

Open brainstorm met vertegenwoordigers van de deelnemende organisaties

**Ronde 1:** Wat willen we als maatschappelijk middenveld met en van de Europese Unie? Hoe kunnen we dat bereiken? Welke rol kan het maatschappelijk middenveld daarbij zelf spelen?

**Ronde 2:** Hoe vertaalt zich dat naar mogelijke scenario's voor de toekomst?

**17.15–17.30      Conclusies**

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**POLAND**

## **Report**

### **EESC debate with organised civil society on the future of Europe Poland, Warsaw, 23 May 2017**

## **REPORT**

Moderators: Mr Pilawski (Gr. I), Mr Krzaklewski (Gr. II), Mr Balon (Gr. III)

Presentation of the White Paper on the future of Europe: Dr Marek Prawda, Director of the European Commission's Representation in Poland

Number of participants: 31

#### **Answers given during the debate**

##### **1. Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

- indicative vote:

Scenario 1:	1
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Scenario 2:	0
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Scenario 3:	1
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Scenario 4:	2
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Scenario 5:	17
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Another scenario or a mixed scenario (6): 10

- most participants were of the view that we must do more together (scenario 5), however, the correct identification of what needs to be done was given some consideration. Scenario 5 would seem the most forward-looking for Poland, but some participants expressed their doubts as to the feasibility of its implementation;
- some pointed out that Scenario 2 is the least desirable. While the single market is attractive, social standards must be developed. According to the participants, Scenario 2 was a good starting point but we should go further;
- some stated that the EU is de facto implementing Scenario 3 with a multispeed Europe. Others highlighted that a multispeed Europe had existed from the outset and that the same policies give different results in different Member States. The Schengen zone and the European social pillar were quoted as evidence of the principle "those who want more, do more";
- it was argued that it was unclear what priorities would be set in Scenario 4, and whether it would be favourable for Poland;
- a large number of votes cast in favour of Scenario 6 could mean that the right solution is yet to be found. This may be a sign that looking for a new direction has become very attractive.

##### **2. a) Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why?**

- the efficiency element from Scenario 4 was a recurrent motive in discussions on another potential scenario (a combination of existing ones);

- a number of participants claimed the best solution would be a combination of Scenarios 5 and 3, with the efficiency element from Scenario 4;
- Scenario 1 + 4 was another proposed solution: to continue common actions jointly, but more efficiently. The combination of continuation with a greater focus on areas that need attention is the key to this scenario;
- others opted for a combination of Scenario 5 with concepts of greater efficiency and persistence;
- Some argued for Scenario 5 combined with democratisation (increased participation of society), levelling out inequalities and environmental issues (climate);

**2. b) How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

- better involve civil society organisations and NGOs with large capacities to engage with the citizens. Their contacts with unorganised society should be facilitated, as they have more potential than politicians or institutions to communicate with the citizens;
- use means of communication that are sector-specific or that come from local and regional authorities rather than more political communication;
- it was noted that governments often use the EU as a scapegoat for various failures – the European institutions should properly inform the citizens about which decisions are taken by governments and which are taken by the EU;
- give more time for consultation – civil society organisations often do not have the opportunity to take part in a thorough debate;
- react to widespread anecdotes about alleged EU absurdities (such as the permitted curve of bananas) – better communicate to the citizens why certain decisions are taken and what are their implied benefits;
- bring back the concept of a European identity by reinforcing the presence of EU symbols in public life (the flag, the anthem), highlighting common values; the dynamic development of social media should be better used in this respect;

**4. Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

- lack of any clear mention of social policy in the White Paper was recurrently highlighted. Studies show that 25% of the EU population is still at risk of poverty – social protection must be given consideration;
- the social partners are not mentioned;
- the following issues have not been highlighted sufficiently: Strengthening social dialogue, enhancing cohesion policy, energy sector innovations, energy cohesion, democratising the EU and the rule of law, strengthening European identity;
- the White Paper fails to discuss controversial issues such as migration, women's rights or the LGBT community.

## **5. Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how?**

Since a lack of communication and dialogue leads to disinformation, information about the EU must be improved, through:

- better communication policy, and thus a greater engagement of the citizens. They should be involved at every stage, so that they have an impact on the EU's actions and are aware of this fact;
- better quality of communication - simple messages, clear documents. The aim is to reach the ordinary citizen, not an expert;
- the clear communication obligation should not fall on the EU institutions only - the Member States should have their own specialised agencies for communication on European topics;
- some participants also expressed a view that civil society organisations should have a more active attitude towards the EU and be more involved in communication on EU topics. They should inform and educate their members, actively involving them in various projects;
- it was also noted that the existing non-governmental structures in Brussels could be much better used to improve communication with citizens;
- many participants stressed the important role of education, starting at primary level, building the European identity at this stage. Insufficient presence of EU matters in school curricula was noted;
- An enhanced reflection on "what if the EU did not exist?" was suggested, as well as the better promotion of the greatest EU success: long-lasting peace.

## **6. Regarding "the way ahead", how should the "Future of Europe Debates across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organised civil society play in the "way ahead" and how?**

- some noted that support for European matters was uneven and quite shallow, and that there was a need to translate ideas into concrete actions;
- it was suggested that debates on the future of Europe be held in Economic and Social Councils and similar organisations and that these bodies communicate their positions;
- it was suggested that the Commission organise a debate at the regional organisation level (e.g. the Visegrad Group);

## **7. How can the citizen be more empowered in the shaping of the future of Europe?**

- it was noted that there are mechanisms to involve society but they are not sufficiently used;
- there is a need for better use of the social partners (43 Social Dialogue Committees in the EU);
- it was suggested that the use of referendums and other commitment instruments be increased in order to empower citizens;
- attention was drawn to the need for closer examination of political innovations, such as new approaches, innovative formats, improvements in public initiatives;
- it was suggested that the Citizens' Initiative be used more efficiently;
- once again, the need for an EU identity and shared ownership was emphasised.

## **8. What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

- greater attention should be paid in the final document to non-economic policies;
- as a result of the consultation, the document will be less bureaucratic;
- civil society organisations should be encouraged to organise debates internally and to communicate their conclusions.

### **Concluding remarks:**

- Scenario 5 was the most popular, although it should be enhanced by the efficiency aspect and careful selection of priority areas;
- There is insufficient focus on social policy;
- Civil society organisations have to play a bigger role in communicating on EU topics, and by doing so, in increasing public confidence;
- School education has an important role to play in the development of a European identity;
- Civil society organisations must be used more effectively to engage citizens.

## Participants

### PARTICIPANTS FROM THE ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY

	Name of participant	Name of organization
1	Pilawski Lech Krzaklewski Marian Balon Krzysztof	<b>The EESC</b> (moderators)
2		
3		
4	Prawda Marek Otachel Bartosz	<b>The European Commission</b>
5		
6	Aniszczyk Bohdan	(St. Brother Albert Aid Society)
7	Bartkiewicz Katarzyna	("Solidarność")
8	Biskupska Ewa	(Polish Craft Association)
9	Bonikowska Małgorzata	(Centre for International Relations)
10	Doboszyńska Edyta	(Polish Craft Association)
11	Dyba Łukasz	(Polish Confederation Lewiatan)
12	Frączak Piotr	(Social Dialog Association)
13	Hejducka Iwona	(holds occupational therapy workshops in Miejska Góra)
14	Hejducka Anna	(Welfare and Disabled Persons Association in Miejska Góra)
15	Lisicki Robert	(Polish Confederation Lewiatan)
16	Jeleński Maciej	(Polish Confederation Lewiatan)
17	Mańkiewicz-Cudny Ewa	(Polish Federation of Engineering Associations, FSNT-NOT)
18	Michałek Witold	(Business Centre Club)
19	Mizerski Cezary	(Public Benefit Council of the Republic of Poland, RDPP)
20	Niemkiewicz Adam	(Morena Association/Scouting Association of the Republic (ZHR); RDPP)
21	Olechnowicz Marek	(Pomeranian Council for NGOs)
22	Olszewski Dariusz Jacek	(Employers of Poland)
23	Opęchowska Izabela	(Polish Craft Association)
24	Ostrowski Krzysztof	(Business Centre Club, member of the EESC)
25	Pietkiewicz Janusz	(Employers of Poland, member of the EESC)
26	Płowiec Kamila	(The Working Community of Associations of Social NGOs, WRZOS)
27	Męcina Jacek	(University of Warsaw, Polish Confederation Lewiatan)
28	Sinica Małgorzata	(Polish Scouting and Guiding Association)
29	Skotnicka-Illasiewicz Elżbieta	(Team Europe)
30	Szumlewicz Piotr	(All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions)
31	Zarębski Maciej	(Świętokrzyskie Regional Society)

## **Programme**

### **The debate on the White Paper on the future of Europe**

Zielna Conference Centre, ul. Zielna 37, 00-108 Warsaw

23 May 2017

11 a.m. – 11.15 a.m.	<b>Welcome speeches</b> by members of the EESC delegation hosting the debate: <b>Mr Lech Pilawski</b> (Employers 'Group), <b>Mr Marian Krzaklewski</b> (Workers' Group), <b>Mr Krzysztof Balon</b> (Various Interests Group)
11.15 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.	<b>Introduction</b> The presentation of the White paper on the future of Europe <b>Dr Marek Prawda</b> , Director of the European Commission's Representation in Poland
11.30 a.m. – 2.10 p.m.	<b>Open debate</b> Answers to the 7 questions drawn up by the EESC (Moderators: Mr Pilawski, Mr Krzaklewski, Mr Balon (alternately))
2.10 p.m. – 2.30 p.m.	<b>Conclusion</b> Members of the EESC delegation hosting the debate

**POR**TUGAL

## **Report**

### **Summary of discussions on the Future of Europe with Portuguese organised civil society Portuguese Economic and Social Council (ESC), Lisbon, 29 May 2017.**

The debate with Portuguese organised civil society (OCS) on the future of Europe took place at the headquarters of the Portuguese Economic and Social Council (ESC) in Lisbon, on 29 May, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The EESC's delegation, comprised of Pedro Almeida Freire (Group I), Carlos Silva (Group II) and Jorge Pegado Liz (Group III) decided to invite Portuguese OCS organisations to the Portuguese ESC to join their discussions at three separate sessions, as detailed in the programme attached.

The president of the Portuguese ESC, António Correia de Campos, took part in all of the sessions, giving a short introductory speech. This was followed by a presentation of the background to the EESC initiative by a Member representing each of the EESC's groups.

After the introduction, participants were asked to reply to the questions raised in the EESC survey. Occasionally, further questions were asked for clarification or precision. In particular, there was a recurring question regarding the potential need to revise the EU Treaty (arising from the different scenarios presented by the Commission).

As a preliminary consideration, some participants stressed that in qualitative terms, the Commission's document falls short of what we have come to expect from that institution, as it is missing essential elements such as an economic and social impact assessment of each scenario and an indication of the costs involved in each scenario.

#### **Question 1: Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

The responses to this question are far from being unanimous, even at a single session. Hence, at the first session, the CIP<sup>26</sup> and the CCP<sup>27</sup> preferred a scenario combining scenarios 4 and 5, which strengthened cohesion, solidarity and the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and, above all, entailed strong leadership and increased democratic legitimacy from the EU. The CTP<sup>28</sup> preferred to opt for a combination of scenarios 2,3 and 4, while still calling for greater cohesion and an effective response to the problems caused by the economic crisis and the migration crisis.

With regard to the potential need to revise the Treaty, the CIP and CTP are opposed to this because they feel there is a lack of a solid support base, while the CCP deems it necessary in order to "degovernmentalise" the EU.

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<sup>26</sup> Confederation of Portuguese Business.

<sup>27</sup> Portuguese Commerce and Services Confederation.

<sup>28</sup> Confederation of Portuguese Tourism.

At the second session, the CGTP<sup>29</sup> made its position very clear and all the responses agreed that none of the scenarios can be accepted. Moreover, the CGTP calls for "another Europe" of sovereign states that implement policies in the interests of workers and the people, against big business.

The UGT<sup>30</sup>, while maintaining that none of the scenarios are sufficient, is open to admitting that an "improved" scenario 5 could merit further attention. The UGT believes that the EU has been prioritising monetary and budgetary aspects to the detriment of social aspects and that this trend must be corrected. It regrets the total absence of any reference to the social dimension in the five scenarios. In summary, the UGT believes that:

- economic governance goals must not take precedence over workers' rights and that
- there is a need for greater solidarity between Member States.

At the last session, CONFECOOP<sup>31</sup> and CNIS<sup>32</sup> clearly opted for scenario 5, while CNAF<sup>33</sup>, the APMJ<sup>34</sup> and the IOMH<sup>35</sup> rejected all of the scenarios, the members of this latter group presenting a proposal for a 6th scenario (Sustainable Europe for its citizens - see appendix). This proposal aims for a people-centred Europe focused on sustainability achieved through the transparency of the institutions, by strengthening democracy, new economic benchmarks (GDP cannot be the only measurement) and the concept of the caring economy.

Lastly, DECO<sup>36</sup> considers scenario 1 to be the only viable option, although consumer protection policies – which have been recently been called into question – should be strengthened.

With regard to the need to revise the Treaty, the organisations present voiced their opposition, with the exception of the IOMH, which clearly defended this revision, and DECO which implicitly considered it necessary to implement scenario 5.

**Question 2: Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why?  
How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

The answer to this question stems largely from the answer to the first. Most of the organisations seem open to the idea of a 6th scenario combining different aspects of the scenarios presented by the Commission and which boils down to doing much more, much better, all together with and for the citizens.

**Question 3: Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how?**

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<sup>29</sup> The General Confederation of Portuguese Workers

<sup>30</sup> General Union of Workers.

<sup>31</sup> Portuguese Cooperatives Confederation.

<sup>32</sup> National Confederation of Solidarity Institutions.

<sup>33</sup> National Confederation of Family Association.

<sup>34</sup> Portuguese Association of Women Lawyers.

<sup>35</sup> Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

<sup>36</sup> The Portuguese Association for Consumer Protection.

In general, the organisations consulted (with the exception of the CGTP, which emphasised the need for policies and not propaganda) agreed on the need for more information, training and education. It is important the citizens (and in particular the youngest among them) are aware of the benefits that the EU brings to them in their daily lives. However, it should not be forgotten that the separation of the EU from its citizens is largely due to a lack of response to their needs and concerns.

It is therefore important that communication is people-centred and that citizens feel they have access to the institutions through locally-held debates. Debates such as those organised by the EESC are very important. The EESC is an excellent tool for bringing together SCO organisations. However, none of this will be enough if there is no follow-up. It is necessary to manage citizen's expectations and respond to their comments.

National parliaments should listen to civil society organisations and involve citizens as far as possible in discussions which are of great interest to all.

The representatives of the IOMH called for rigorous communication and presented tangible proposals for revising the EU portal, holding civil society hearings at the European Councils and setting up a civil society forum.

**Question 4: Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

Generally, in the view of most organisations, there are policy areas which are missing from the five scenarios and should be mentioned. The most frequently mentioned examples are cohesion and solidarity policy, institutional reform, and governance and expansion of the EU.

Other areas were raised, such as consumer policy (DECO), households (CNAF), the social economy (CNIS), the social economy (CONFECOOP and CNIS) and birth-rate policies, innovation and inclusion (APMJ).

It should be noted that both the business organisations and the UGT considered Scenario 5 to be the one that could best serve the interests of businesses (the former) and a more social Europe (the latter).

**Question 5: Regarding "the way ahead", how should the "Future of Europe Debates across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organized civil society play in the "way ahead" and how?**

The involvement of civil society is crucial for all participants, who stressed the importance of the discussions that the EESC organises. Organisations and citizens should see that the institutions are close to them. However, it is also very important to be able to manage expectations, and show them that their concerns are taken into account and that answers are being sought. On the other hand, it is not acceptable that representatives of the EU institutions present preconceived solutions to citizens or to organisations, without having really listened.

The participants underlined the need for closer contact between the ESC and the EESC and all showed a willingness to deepen these relations.

The involvement of OCS in parliamentary debates is also very important and in the case of Portugal, it is vital that the Portuguese ESC be heard by the Assembly of the Republic.

With regard to OSC's involvement, some participants highlighted the varying influence of organisations and individuals, and secondly, the need to broaden consultation to include other institutions not represented by the Portuguese ESC.

In this context, the Portuguese ESC's president committed to organising a debate or proposing an EESC opinion on this subject in September and expressed his readiness and interest in working together with the EESC on this matter.

**Question 6: What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

With the exception of the CGTP, which has no expectations for the results of the OCS consultation, all other participants hope that it can contribute to a better EU for citizens and businesses, bringing growth, solidarity and employment.

**Question 7: How can the citizen be more empowered in the shaping of the future of Europe?**

Most of the participants stressed the importance of Article 11(2) of the Treaty and highlighted the fact that initiatives such as the EESC's were precisely one such means of implementing this provision.

Participants felt that more and better communication, information and training was needed to make citizens feel heard and involved. In this regard, it is particularly important to focus on younger generations.

Again, on this point, the need for wide-ranging discussions with citizens and businesses was raised.

**Other points raised:**

- the participants expressed their support for face-to-face discussions without excluding other forms of consultation,
- the issue of European citizenship was mentioned as a way of reinforcing the concept of Europe and solidarity,
- The question of President Macron's recent comment on a form of European protectionism was also brought up. The participants considered it to be a negative route, which could lead to an escalation of protectionism.

## **Participants and programme**

### **Dialogue with Portuguese organised civil society on the White Paper on the Future of Europe — Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 in 2025**

**Lisbon, 29 May 2017**

Meeting held at: the Portuguese Economic and Social Council  
(Rua João Bastos, 8 – Lisbon)

## **Programme**

### **EESC delegation**

Pedro Almeida Freire (Group I, Employers)  
Carlos Silva (Group II, Workers)  
Jorge Pegado Liz (Group III, Various interests)

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.      **Representatives of Portuguese Employers' Organisations**

Welcome by the President of the ESC, Prof. Dr António Correia de Campos

- Confederation of Portuguese Tourism – CTP
  - Dr Nuno Bernardo, Member of the Executive Board
- Confederation of Portuguese Business – CIP
  - Dr Patricia Gonçalves, Director, Economic Affairs Department
  - Dr Nuno Biscaya, Deputy Director, Department of Legal and Socio-Employment Matters
- Portuguese Commerce and Services Confederation – CCP
  - Dr Hélder Pedro, Vice-President of the Board of Directors
  - Dr Vasco de Mello, Vice-President of the Board of Directors
  - Dr Luís Cabaço Martins Member of the Board of Directors

14 a.m. – 16 p.m.      **Representatives of Portuguese Trade Union Organisations**

Welcome by the President of the ESC, Prof. Dr António Correia de Campos

- The General Confederation of Portuguese Workers – (CGTP)
  - João Torres, Member of the Executive Board
  - João Barreiros, Member of the National Council
  - Fernando Maurício, International Department
  - Maurício Miguel, International Department
- General Union of Workers (UGT)
  - Dr João Dias da Silva, Vice-President
  - Dr Paula Bernardo, Deputy Secretary-General
  - Dr Luis Correia, Deputy Secretary-General
  - Dr José Cordeiro, Executive Secretary
  - Dr Carlos Alves, Executive Secretary
  - Dr Lina Lopes, Chair of the Women's Committee
  - Dr Carlos Moreira, Chair of the Youth Committee

4 – 6 p.m.

**Representatives of organisations representing various interests at the Portuguese ECS.**

Welcome by the President of the ESC, Prof. Dr António Correia de Campos

- Joaquim Pequicho, Executive Director of CONFECOOP
  - Dr Alberto Regueira (DECO)
  - Dr Ana Cristina Tapadinhas, Director-General of DECO
  - Dr José Leirião (CNIS)
  - Dr Maria Teresa Costa Macedo, President of the National Confederation of Family Associations (CNAF)
  - Dr Ana Sofia Fernandes, Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
  - Dr Ana Coucello, Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
  - Dr Marlene Mendes, Portuguese Association of Women Lawyers (APMJ)
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**ROMANIA**

## **Report**

**Date of the meeting: 29 May 2017**

**EESC delegation:** Ana Bontea (GR I), Minel Ivașcu (GR II) and Cristian Pîrvulescu (GR III)

### **I. 'White Paper on the Future of Europe - Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025'**

On 1 March 2017, the European Commission presented the *White Paper on the Future of Europe - Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025*, which paves the way for comprehensive debates in the national parliaments, European Parliament, local and regional authorities, and **within civil society** in general, on the state of the Union and the way ahead for the upcoming years. The White Paper considers how Europe will change in the next ten years, from the impact of new technologies on society and jobs to the doubts raised as a result of globalisation, to concerns regarding security and populism augmentation. It puts forward five scenarios:

- **Scenario 1: Carrying on** – The EU-27 focuses on implementing its current positive reform agenda, in line with the guidelines called ‘A New Start for Europe’ presented by the Commission in 2014 and with the Bratislava Declaration, agreed by all the 27 Member States in 2016.
- **Scenario 2: Nothing but the single market** – The EU-27 is gradually re-centred on the single market, as the number of policy areas in which the 27 Member States fail to reach a common position is constantly growing.
- **Scenario 3: Those who want to do more** – The EU-27 proceeds in the same way as today but allows willing Member States to do more together in specific areas such as defence, internal security and social matters. One or more ‘coalitions of the willing’ are formed.
- **Scenario 4: Doing less more efficiently** – the EU-27 focuses on more and faster results in certain policy areas, acting less in areas where it is perceived as having no added value. Attention and limited resources are focused on selected policy areas.
- **Scenario 5: Doing much more together** – Member States decide to share more power, resources and decision-making across the board in all areas. Decisions are made more rapidly across Europe and are implemented quickly.

### **II. Debate with organised civil society in Romania at the initiative of the EESC**

On **29 May 2017**, at the initiative of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), **a national debate between Romanian civil society on the future of Europe was held** on the premises of the Economic and Social Committee.

The event was attended by the Romanian ESC President, Mr Iacob BACIU, Deputy Head of the European Commission Representative in Romania, Mr Cristian BUCHIU, EESC members, national representatives of employer and trade union confederations and of civil society, members of the Committee on Rights and Liberties of the Civil Society Organisations within the Economic and Social Committee (Annex 1).

During the national debate in Romania on the future of Europe, the participants expressed different views on the following areas:

- **The scenarios in the White Paper and possible scenarios** (Which of the five scenarios presented in the White Paper best matches – from your point of view – the internal and external challenges faced by the EU? Why? Is there another possible scenario not mentioned in the White Paper which would be preferable? If so, why? In your opinion, how can confidence across the Union be boosted?);
- **Major policy areas, visibility, communication** (Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in terms of their importance? Is there a major policy area which has not been sufficiently well mentioned or highlighted? If so, which policy area and which of the five scenarios best matches its development? Is there any need for greater visibility and better communication regarding the European Union? If so, how should that be achieved?);
- **‘The way ahead’, the role of civil society, expectations** (Regarding ‘The way ahead’, how should the ‘Debates on the future of Europe in parliaments, cities and regions’ be structured? What role should organised civil society play with regard to the way ahead and how should that be achieved? How can citizens become more accountable for building Europe’s future? What are your expectations regarding the result of the consultation?).

### **III. Conclusions and recommendations**

**Panel I: The scenarios in the White Paper and possible scenarios** (Which of the five scenarios presented in the White Paper best matches – from your point of view – the internal and external challenges faced by the EU? Why? Is there another possible scenario not mentioned in the White Paper which would be preferable? If so, why? In your opinion, how can confidence across the Union be boosted?)

The ‘scenario’ on the future of Europe **should ensure unity**, not split the Member States. It **should focus not only on the present internal and external challenges, but also on fully achieving the objectives and goals** laid down in the *Treaty on European Union: fostering peace, values, welfare; upholding* the principles of freedom, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law; **economic, social and territorial cohesion**, and **stepping up solidarity**, whilst respecting the Member States’ history, culture and traditions; **strengthening national economies** and ensuring their convergence, **establishing an economic and monetary union for all the Member States**, with a single and stable currency, **fostering economic and social progress**, taking into account the principle of sustainable development in the completion of the internal market, of consolidating cohesion and environmental protection; **enhancing the democratic nature of the institutions and how effectively they are run; facilitating the free movement of people**, whilst ensuring safety and security by establishing an **area of freedom, security and justice and common citizenship** for the Member States’ nationals; **common external policy and common security policy**, including gradual establishment of a common defence policy, which could lead to common defence.

**The ‘Doing much more together’ method** (Member States and the European Union sharing power, resources and decision-making across the board, deep cooperation, faster decision-making and fast enforcement across Europe) **may help to accelerate the achievement of the objectives** laid down in the *Treaty on European Union*, with important results on: **consolidating the single market** ‘through harmonisation of standards and stronger enforcement’, **completing the single market in the field of energy, in the digital sector and in services**, achievement of economic, financial and fiscal union through ‘**much greater coordination on fiscal, social and taxation matters, and European supervision of financial services**’, **additional EU financial support shall be made available** to boost economic development and respond to shocks at regional, sectoral and national level’, **Closer partnerships and increased investment** in the European neighbourhood and beyond with a view to creating economic opportunities, managing regular migration and tackling irregular channels’, **joint investment in innovation and research**’, **fully integrated capital markets**, with a view to mobilising finance for SMEs and major infrastructure projects across the EU’, **a European Defence Union shall be created**’, **in full complementarity with NATO**’. **The objectives of the European Union as a whole must be taken into account, for all the Member States.**

By 2025, cohesion should be enhanced and the economic, social, territorial gaps between different regions/Member States should be significantly reduced, and **monetary union should be completed**, with a single and stable currency used in all Member States.

If confidence in the European Union is to be restored, taking over more powers from national authorities must lead to **significantly improved results in the** achievement of the objectives laid down in the *Treaty on European Union*, with an impact at local, regional, national, European and individual (citizen) level. **Continuous and effective dialogue with organised civil society will boost confidence across the Union.**

**Panel II: Major policy areas, visibility, communication** (Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in terms of their importance? Is there a major policy area which has not been sufficiently well mentioned or highlighted? If so, which policy area and which of the five scenarios best matches its development?)

Policy areas should focus not only on the current internal and external challenges, but also on **all the areas laid down in Article 2 to Article 6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union** (consolidated version), and on **the medium- and long-term challenges. Important areas laid down in Article 2 to Article 6 of the Treaty** are missing, and they should not be ignored.

We **should foster and support common European democratic culture**: Europe’s cultural, religious and humanist heritage, which is the origin of the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of man, such as freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law, pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity, which are of particular importance to citizens and Member States, admitting the historic importance of the end of splits in Europe and the need to lay good foundations for the architecture of the Europe of the future.

The debates revealed **the particular importance of the single market and trade policies**, with the exercise of free movement of people, goods, services and capital, economic and monetary union,

security, cooperation on border management, foreign and defence policy, the EU budget and the capacity to deliver.

**Panel III - ‘The way ahead’, the role of civil society, expectations** (As regards ‘The way ahead’, how should the ‘Debates on the future of Europe in parliaments, cities and regions’ be structured? Is there any need for greater visibility and better communication regarding the European Union? If so, how should that be achieved? What role should organised civil society play with regard to the way ahead and how should that be achieved? How can citizens become more accountable for building Europe’s future? What are your expectations regarding the result of the consultation?)

As regards ‘The way ahead’, the debates on the future of Europe should focus on **all levels** (local, regional, national, European), including during the campaigns for the election of MEPs.

**More visibility and better communication** are needed regarding the European Union, among citizens, in organised civil society, at local, regional and national level.

The EU institutions must **constantly ensure an, efficient and transparent social and civic dialogue** with the representatives of social partners and of civil society. It was proposed that an online **interactive platform at EESC level should be established**, so that documents could be forwarded to all the relevant stakeholders, and that **more active/accessible consultation platforms/instruments** should be established, including **groups of civic dialogue/debates**, on specific themes, managed by the EU institutions and MEPs, with a view to boosting transparency and dialogue with civil society.

**More extensive involvement** of social partners and civil society in the consultation procedures across Europe needs to be fostered, and for that purpose, a proposal has been put forward which would **establish a specialised committee within the Economic and Social Committee in Romania**. Debates need to be organised at local, regional and national level to provide an interactive framework for public consultation.

During the debates, **the participants unanimously agreed on the need to carry on the dialogue on the future of the EU and to deepen the analysis of the impact, positive aspects and risks for each scenario** by properly making use of the proposals made by social partners and by civil society organisations.

## Participants

Nr.	Surname	Name	Organisation
1	<b>BONTEA</b>	Ana	Membru al CESE, Grupul "Angajatori"
2	<b>DRAGOMIRESCU</b>	Corina	Vicepreședinte, Academia de Advocacy
3	<b>MIRICĂ</b>	Paul	General manager, Metarom Group / Confederația Patronală din Industria Română (CONPIROM)
4	<b>NICOSEVICI</b>	Radu	Președinte, Academia de Advocacy
5	<b>NICULAE</b>	Elena	Consilier juridic, Consiliul Național al Întreprinderilor Private Mici și Mijlocii din România (CNIPMMR)
6	<b>POPESCU</b>	Andrei	Administrator, Comitetul Economic și Social European (CESE)
7	<b>SÎRBU</b>	Iulia	Specialist comunicare și PR, Consiliul Național al Întreprinderilor Private Mici și Mijlocii din România (CNIPMMR)
8	<b>VARFALVI</b>	Ştefan	Prim-vicepreședinte, Uniunea Generală a Industriașilor din România (UGIR)
9	<b>VIERU</b>	Dumitru	Consilier juridic, Consiliul Național al Întreprinderilor Private Mici și Mijlocii din România (CNIPMMR)
10	<b>MANOLIU</b>	Mihai	CNPR- CESE
11	<b>VOICU</b>	Mihail	CNSLR- Fratia
12	<b>PETRARIU</b>	Ioan-Radu	CES
13	<b>BAN</b>	Simona	ASE Bucuresti
14	<b>BUCHIU</b>	Cristian	Reprezentanta Comisiei Europene
15	<b>ONU</b>	Ana Maria	Institutul National pentru IMM
16	<b>NICA</b>	Sorana	INIMM
17	<b>ENACHE</b>	Florentina	CNSLR fratia
18	<b>PADURE</b>	Stefanita	CMPR
19	<b>MINEA</b>	Radu	CSDR – CES
20	<b>GRECU</b>	Gheorghe	CSDR – CES
21	<b>BENEÀ</b>	Ion	PNR
22	<b>BACIU</b>	Iacob	CSDR- CES
23	<b>STEFANESCU</b>	Ion	CSDR – CES
24	<b>PETRARIU</b>	Ioan	USR
25	<b>MURESANU</b>	Mircea	CSN Meridian
26	<b>CHIRILA</b>	Florin	Times Romania
27	<b>MARIN</b>	Florian	BNS
28	<b>RUSU</b>	Sabin	CSDR
29	<b>PAUL</b>	Mirica	CONPIROM

Nr.	Surname	Name	Organisation
30	<b>COSTI</b>	Andrei	Reporter
31	<b>LUCAN</b>	Eugen	Angel Association
32	<b>MACOVEI</b>	Ion	Asociația Pro Carpatina

## **Programme**

**Monday 29 May 2017**  
**at the headquarters of Romania's Economic and Social Council**

<b>9 - 9.30 a.m.</b>	Registration
<b>9.30 - 9.45 a.m.</b>	Opening speech Angela Cristea, head of the European Commission Representation in Romania
<b>9.45 - 10.45 a.m.</b>	<b>Panel I: The scenarios presented in the White Paper and other possible scenarios</b> Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why? Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why? How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union? <b>Moderator: Cristian Pîrvulescu</b> , EESC's Various Interests Group
<b>10.45 - 11 a.m.</b>	Coffee break
<b>11 a.m. - 12 p.m.</b>	<b>Panel II: Major policy areas, visibility, communication</b> Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development? Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how? <b>Moderator: Minel Ivașcu</b> , EESC's Workers' Group
<b>12 - 1 p.m.</b>	<b>Panel III: "The way ahead", the role of civil society, expectations</b> Regarding "the way ahead", how should the "Future of Europe debates across Europe's national parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organised civil society play in the "way ahead" and how? How can the citizen be more empowered in the shaping of the future of Europe? What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation? <b>Moderator: Ana Bontea</b> , EESC's Employers' Group
<b>1 - 1.15 p.m.</b>	<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>

**SLOVAKIA**

## **Report**

### **Final report: National debate on the White Paper on the Future of Europe**

**1 – 3.30 p.m., 23 May 2017**

**KOVO trade union, Miletičova 24, Bratislava, Slovakia**

#### **1. Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

Everyone in the discussion agreed that the answer to the current crisis had to be sought – as with the founding of the EU sixty years ago – in unity and collaboration. We have to look for the values that unite us and not divide us. In looking for a common approach we have to keep in mind two basic EU goals, namely peace and prosperity.

The EU is unquestionably a good thing for Slovakia. However, we do need to decide what direction to take and to make the case for this to civil society, which at the moment is sceptical about the common European project. The EU must be based on values people can identify with.

There was no support for the first and second scenarios: the first (keeping the status quo) does not solve the present crisis, while the second (focused exclusively on the single market) would mean a step backwards and seems to be rejected across the entire political spectrum.

The third scenario (a multi-speed Europe) had some support. It has already been de facto applied in some areas (the euro area, Schengen) and could be extended to others.

With the fourth scenario (doing less more efficiently), the difficulty appears to be in deciding which areas should be returned to the national level. One issue that came up in the discussion was the quotas for distributing refugees. Slovakia has only limited experience of multiculturalism and people were very wary of the quotas, which were seen as a "diktat from Brussels". However, it should be said that this was partly triggered by negative rhetoric from domestic politicians.

Trade union representatives favoured the fifth scenario, which the European Commission also backs. However, it is questionable whether this scenario is realistic. So far, there does not seem to be the political will for it. The general feeling among Slovaks is that the EU has too many powers already and adopting the fifth scenario would make this worse.

#### **2. Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why? How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

People will regain trust in the EU if they see tangible answers to their problems and an improvement in their standards of living. It is especially important to strengthen the common social policy and even out pay, work and social differences.

The European Trade Union Confederation has set out these ideas in its Pact for the Future of Europe, which is based on prosperity, social justice and democracy.

A European Pillar of Social Rights should be part of the new strategy.

**3. Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how?**

Everyone agreed communication needed improving, both from the EU and from national politicians, who are also to some extent responsible for Slovaks' dim view of the EU. Politicians and other members of the elite should set people a good example – especially young people.

People are unaware of many of the good things the EU has achieved for them and this has to change.

The rhetoric has to change as well and the focus should be on tangible issues instead of discussing institutional matters. Public opinion needs to be listened to and the EU explained in clear terms.

It is also important to focus on those who have a negative view of the EU. They are the ones who need to have their hope in a shared Europe restored.

How we communicate is very important. Emphasis should be placed on face-to-face meetings, which can provide direct feedback, and we should not communicate exclusively via social media. It is more effective to focus on fewer topics and go into detail, rather than trying to cover a lot of issues and just skimming the surface.

Consultations conducted only via online questionnaires were seen as the wrong approach. (One example being the recently concluded discussion on the Common Agricultural Policy, in which farmers accounted for only 5% of participants.)

Debates held nationally, on the other hand, were a good idea. (The recent discussion on the European Pillar of Social Rights or the ongoing debate on the White Paper on the Future of Europe were examples here.) It was recommended that face-to-face meetings continue at various levels, from local to regional.

Last but not least, there could also be a problem of unrealistic expectations on the part of the public. We need to make sure, therefore, that people understand properly the division of powers between the EU and the Member States and that domestic politicians do not point the finger at "Brussels" as a matter of course.

**4. Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

One of the main issues is that of tax havens, the lack of tax harmonisation within the EU (businesses must pay taxes where they make their profits) and low taxation of transnational corporations at the expense of the working and middle classes. Efforts should be made to achieve social harmony, which is the only way of stemming the rise of populism, nationalism, xenophobia and other forms of extremism. Social harmony is also essential in combating crime.

Other challenges include digitisation, robotisation and widening income disparities. The decline of the middle class, which has been going on since the 1970s, is untenable.

The focus also has to be on boosting competitiveness, supporting science and research, protecting the environment, improving and streamlining the European Commission's management system, improving and increasing the credibility of the European institutions at all levels and fighting corruption, as well as on young people, who are most at risk of supporting populist and extremist views. At the same time, however, young people are open to discussion and this should be harnessed.

Two documents are important for trade unionists at this moment: the discussion document on the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Reflection Paper on Harnessing Globalisation. In their view, none of the scenarios on offer pays sufficient heed to social policy, an area which should be pivotal and should affect all other policies. Productivity is growing in the EU and people have to feel the benefits. The idea was repeatedly stressed that social rights have to be placed above economic rights. Finally, we need to think about a new social model, possibly based on that of Scandinavia.

Employers' representatives pointed to the importance of supporting agriculture and the food industry and evaluating these policies separately. This was because they considered these sectors to be very important, as evidenced, for example, by the fact that 38% of the budget goes to agriculture. When Slovakia joined the EU in 2004 there were high expectations in this area, which unfortunately failed to materialise, leading ultimately to disappointment and confused values.

**5. Regarding "the way ahead", how should the "Future of Europe Debates across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organised civil society play in "the way ahead" and how?**

Trade union representatives hoped that the social partners would be systematically involved at all levels.

Employers' representatives considered face-to-face consultations and meetings important at which positions can be explained and discussed. It is important to set out clearly what matters Member States decide on and which areas are decided by the Commission or "Brussels".

**6. What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

Trade union representatives believed that the EU must have common priorities on social matters so it can adopt a joint response to the new opportunities and challenges arising from globalisation, the digital revolution, robotisation, changing work patterns and demographic change.

**7. How can the citizen be more empowered in the shaping of the future of Europe?**

People should think about joining a trade union, which can champion their interests both nationally and at European level.

Employers' representatives suggested loosening the rules on citizens' right to petition.

## **Participants**

Ľuboš Blaha, MP

Dušan Chrenek, head, EC representation in Slovakia

Jarmila Dubravská, Group I – Employers, Slovak Agriculture and Food Chamber

Oliver Šiatkovský, Slovak Agriculture and Food Chamber, Trnava Regional Agriculture and Food Chamber, Madunice Farming and Trade Cooperative (PVOD Madunice)

Matej Korpáš, Slovak Canning Trade Union

Ján Baršváry, Slovak Agriculture and Food Chamber

Emil Machyna, Group II – Employees, KOVO Trade Union

Jozef Kollár, Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic

Anton Szalay, Group II – Employees, Slovak Health and Social Services Trade Union

Mária Mayerová, Group II – Employees, Slovak Public Administration and Culture Trade Union (SLOVES)

Monika Sitárová, KOVO Trade Union

Juraj Sipko, Group III – Various Interests, Institute for Economic Research of Academy of Sciences of the Slovak Republic

Ivana Šikulová, Institute for Economic Research of Academy of Sciences of the Slovak Republic  
Sandra Salamonová, Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Computerisation of the Slovak Republic

Boris Hosoff, Institute for Economic Research of Academy of Sciences of the Slovak Republic

## **Programme**

Discussion chair: **Emil Machyna**

Max. ten-minute speeches:

- 1) Opening statement by Emil Machyna
  - 2) Dušan Chrenek, head of the European Commission representation in Slovakia
  - 3) Ľuboš Blaha, MP and chair of the Slovak parliament's European affairs committee
  - 4) Jozef Kollár, general secretary of KOZ SR (Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic)
  - 5) Jarmila Dubravská, Employers' Group
  - 6) Juraj Sipko, Various Interests Group
  - 7) Round-up and conclusion.
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**SLOVENIA**

## **Report**

In Slovenia, the debate on the proposed White Paper on the Future of Europe was held on 22 May 2017. Participating were all the Republic of Slovenia Economic and Social Council members from employers' and trade unions' organisations. Likewise taking part in the discussions were representatives of non-government organisations, pensioners' associations, the Slovenian Student Union (ŠOS) and the National Youth Council of Slovenia. There were 57 participants in all.

The debate was based on a questionnaire which had been sent out to participants beforehand; however, it unfortunately has to be said that the debate did not produce answers to all the questions. In particular, no direct answers were forthcoming to the question on the expected outcome of the consultation.

What was clear was that the participants were very sceptical vis-a-vis the proposed scenarios and that they deemed none of them to be realistic. In any case, it was felt that much needs to change in the European Union, because otherwise the future of the EU looks very uncertain. This means that Europe will lose influence and importance if it continues on the same path and keeps on operating in the same way (there was even pessimism expressed about whether the EU would continue to exist if it were not to radically change its way of working).

None of the proposed scenarios were deemed acceptable and no solutions were put forward. The way the institutions operated was described as inefficient, bureaucratic, overly administrative, non-transparent and in a manner unknown to the public. The European institutions were deemed to be remote from ordinary people and from reality and to give the impression that they operated for the benefit of large multinationals and subject to a great deal of influence from lobbyists. All this is however damaging to the image of a social Europe. That is also why there are so many incomprehensible and illogical difficulties in implementing the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the provisions of Article 3 of the Treaty on the European Union. The European Union would come over as more likeable if it were to have a golden rule for social policy, because the golden rule for fiscal policy is dependent on the way that national budgets operate and is an excuse for weakening social rights. Of course, we have to realise that the European Union's economy needs the right conditions for competing on the global market. For this it requires the single market, trade agreements and above all less bureaucracy. Also urgently needed are changes in legislation to accompany changes in the economy (e.g. digitalisation). The leisurely times are long gone, for competition is fierce in global and national economies.

Because of the above, Europeans are noticeably sceptical about the EU and nationalism too is on the rise. European firms are much more aware of the importance of the European Union and the way it works than is the public. The reason for this is above all the fact that measures take to date by the European Commission and other European institutions have been directed first and foremost at securing the single market, and more particularly the free movement of goods, services and capital. People and their rights are however being forgotten. It is also for this reason that Europeans do not identify with the values of the European Union.

An additional problem comes from the fact that the European Union is misunderstood and remote and that there is a gap between what it promises and what it delivers. No mention of this is made in the white paper at all, however.

The scenarios do not provide any response to these challenges. They do not offer any solutions - neither for the economy nor for people. We need Europe to be for the people; a common currency, the euro, should not be the only thing that unites us. As a consequence there has to be more social protection and justice; the democratic deficit in the way the European institutions work must be reduced. However, we do have to enable the economy to develop in this globalised world. Balanced economic and social development, based on the principles of equality and solidarity, are urgently required.

Against this background, it was concluded that it is at any rate necessary to raise the profile of the European Union, but above all the way its institutions work needs to be made more democratic and transparent.

To achieve this it would be necessary to enhance the role of civil society organisations in shaping and taking decisions. It would have to be mandatory for the social partners at European level to discuss economic and social policy rules applying throughout the European Union before they were adopted; on specific issues or topics, before the final adoption of decisions, the opinion of national economic and social councils could also be sought. This could ensure a stronger presence for civil society, its organisations and the social partners in the European Union's decision-making process.

There must be a special place in the European Union for young people. The youth representative pointed out that young people have many expectations, but also resentment about the way the European Union works (deterioration in social rights during the crisis). Young people are calling for a social, sustainable Europe. They see Europe as an area of opportunities; key problems are the remoteness of the institutions and the abstract nature of Europe, as well as a lack of social and cultural protection and of a forward-looking approach. They are expecting an ambitious approach. The European Union must be a social and just Europe; changes are required in education to meet the challenges of digitalisation; mobile social rights are needed, because it is mainly young people migrating every day to other Member States. The Erasmus+ and Youth in Action programmes are commendable, although other projects do need to be adopted and implemented.

Participants emphasised above all that in order to boost the effectiveness of the way the European Union works, it is in any case necessary to have a single policy, particularly for the economy, tax rules and social issues. A single, or common, foreign policy would also need to be much better defined. Europe cannot just wait to see how events turn out, but must become an active player in world-wide events.

We do not want a multi-speed Europe, because this would lead to inequalities between Europeans and social dumping. The differences between east and west and north and south Europe are growing, and this is not a good development. A situation is developing where there are first-, second- and third-class citizens.

One of many solutions would be a federal structure for Europe. Here it is necessary to be careful that when shaping common policies bigger countries do not obtain privileges or exceptions. There should be as few exceptions from common policies as possible; smaller countries should not be put in a position of dependence. Equality between each member of the European Union at all levels should become a guiding principle behind the way it operates. A common social policy, introducing minimum standards, is urgently needed if the European Union wants to regain people's trust.

**Media coverage of event:**

Slovenian press agency: Brez konvergencije gospodarstva in socialne politike razvoja EU ne bo (Without convergence in the economy and social policy, the EU will not develop):  
<https://www.sta.si/2390024/brez-konvergencije-gospodarstva-in-socialne-politike-razvoja-eu-ne-bo>

Activity on Twitter on the day of the debate:

EESC: [https://twitter.com/EESC\\_PRESS/status/866585870249472000](https://twitter.com/EESC_PRESS/status/866585870249472000)

European Commission Representation in Slovenia:  
<https://twitter.com/ECinSlovenia/status/866566815522193408>

Slovenian Minister for Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Anja Kopač Mrak:  
<https://twitter.com/AnjaKopacMrak/status/866570004136939520>

## Participants

Name	Organisation
Jože Smole Andrej Zorko Primož Šporar Jakob Počivavšek Dare Stojan Nadja Götz	EESC members
Jana Valant	EESC secretariat (INT)
Anja Kopač Mrak Damjana Šarčevič Neva Grašič Polona Križnar	Slovenian Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
Zoran Stančič Tina Vončina	EC Representation in Slovenia
Irena Štamfelj Lučka Böhm Dušan Semolič	The Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (ZSSS)
Tatjana Pajnkihar Napret	The Association of Employers of Slovenia (ZDS)
Maja Rigač Tatjana Čerin Samo Hribar Milič Igor Knez	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS)
Karmen Fortuna	Slovenian Chamber of Commerce (TZS)
Urška Ahlin Ganziti	Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia (KGZS)
Anka Tominšek	ZDUS (Slovenian non-governmental umbrella pensioner organization)
Anton Dobrina Darko Hribar Mitja Mrzljak Marijan Papež David Klarič	Pension and Disability Insurance Institute of Slovenia (ZPIZ)
Martin Zdovc Žiga Lavrič	Slovenian Ministry of Finance
Slovenian Press Agency (STA) Delavska enotnost Radio Slovenia	Media
Jožica Maučec Zakotnik Zvezdana Veber-Hartman	Slovenian Ministry of Health
Mitja Perko	Slovenian Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (UMAR)
Tanja Bogataj Nina Cinkole	Slovenian Ministry of Public Administration Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Jasmina Opec Vörös Tin Kampl Tibor Vörös	National Youth Council of Slovenia
Aleksandar Spremo Luka Špoljar	Slovenian Student Union (ŠOS)
Oskar Komac	National Council of the Republic of Slovenia
Franc Zupanc Slavko Pangeršič	Zveza delavskih sindikatov Slovenije – Solidarnost (Workers Trade Union of Slovenia - Solidarity)

Name	Organisation
Bojan Goljevšček	SZS Alternativa (Slovenian Trade Union Association – Aternativa)
Bojan Hribar	KSJS (Slovenian Confederation of Public Sector Trade Unions)
Peter Majcen Bojan Žvinkart	KS 90 (Slovenian Trade Union of Postal Workers)
Aljoša Čeč	KSS Pergam (Slovenian Trade Union Confederation - Pergam)
Miroslav Barb Evelin Vesenjak	KNSS – Neodvisnost (Trade Union of Ljubljana region)
Andreja Rajh Natalija Berlec	Economic and Social Council of the Republic of Slovenia (ESS), The Secretariat-General of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia

## **Programme**

**Ekonomsko-socialni svet bo skupaj z Evropskim ekonomsko-socialnim odborom v ponedeljek,  
22. 5. 2017, ob 10. uri opravil posvetovanje glede Belo knjige o prihodnosti Evrope in  
Evropskega stebra socialnih pravic.**

Seja bo potekala v veliki sejni sobi ZPIZ (VIII. nadstropje), Kolodvorska 15, Ljubljana. Na sejo ste vabljeni tudi predstavniki nevladnih organizacij in zainteresirane javnosti.

Izhodišče za razpravo je Bela knjiga o prihodnosti Evrope: Razmisleki in scenariji za EU-27 do leta 2025, ki jo je Evropska komisija objavila 1. marca 2017. V njej ponuja pet možnih scenarijev o razvoju Evrope do leta 2025 na različnih področjih, kot so enotni trg in trgovina, migracije in varnost ter ekonomska in monetarna unija. Razprava bo potekala tudi o Evropskem stebru socialnih pravic, ki ga je Evropska komisija skupaj s svežnjem dokumentov predstavila konec aprila 2017. Tematiki bo predstavil vodja Predstavništva Evropske komisije v Sloveniji g. Zoran Stančič.

Vljudno prosimo, da zaradi omejitve prostora vašo udeležbo sporočite najkasneje do petka, 19. 5. 2017 na naslov [ess@gov.si](mailto:ess@gov.si).

dr. Anja KOPAČ MRAK l.r.  
PREDSEDNICA ESS

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**SPAIN**

## **Report**

**WHITE PAPER ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE  
DEBATE WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF SPANISH CIVIL SOCIETY  
Madrid, 19 May 2017**

**CONCLUSIONS**  
(following the structure of the EESC questionnaire for the EU 27)

**1. Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

Setting aside the first two scenarios, as they limit integration, the views expressed during the debate agree that the third scenario is, at present, the most realistic of the five. The European project opens the door to "variable geometry", which has been happening in practice since the Treaty of Maastricht and has achieved major success: Schengen; the euro. In terms of the process of European integration, this scenario is neither the most progressive nor the most solidarity-based – but given the variety of socio-economic and fiscal situations, it would be the most viable, provided that some basic conditions were met, such as:

- safeguarding the single market; articulating (and making viable) a European project with genuine and effective social elements as well as other essential EU policies (Schengen, freedom of movement, etc.);
- the goal of creating a political union should not be abandoned (see scenario 5). This last scenario would be the most advanced in terms of the long-term European project, but it would be good to enrich it with a particular focus on searching for the greatest possible efficiency, and with elements from other scenarios.

A combination of scenarios 1-3 and 4, focused on aspects/policies that are central to European interests, could be feasible.

Whichever scenario is chosen, the final objective must always be kept in mind: a stronger EU that has more legitimacy, is more socially and economically cohesive and is more competitive.

**2. Would another scenario, not mentioned, be possible and preferable? If so, why? (*Response in the first answer.*) How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

Assuming that the EU is the solution and not the problem, the unanimous conclusion of the debate is that the lack of confidence in the European project on the part of civil society and the general public arises from public disillusionment, particularly after the onset of the last decade's economic crisis, since political leaders did not – or did not want to – acknowledge and highlight European achievements and their positive impact at that juncture. This situation was aggravated by the lack of joint EU measures to tackle key foreign policy issues (refugees) and the lack of satisfactory solutions to the economic crisis and the social damage caused in the worst-hit countries. To build up trust, it is essential to:

- give people hope, bringing the European project closer to them and articulating and disseminating all of its achievements: peace and stability in Europe; good relations with the rest of the world; economic progress, single market, free movement of persons; climate protection, environmental protection, consumer protection, etc.;
- move towards creating a genuine Social Pillar, with policies focused on social protection and job creation;
- encourage the institutions to scrutinise themselves and stimulate debate among them.

More specifically, and to increase the public's and civil society's trust:

- each institution should play a role in making political decisions at EU level more transparent;
- interaction and permanent dialogue between the EU institutions and national institutions should be put in place;
- the mass consultation carried out by the Commission is not the only suitable participatory method – it has many disadvantages.

### **3. Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how?**

There is a legitimacy problem which is approached differently in each country. The traditional enthusiasm for the project in Spain was based on improvements in quality of life and economic prosperity and progress. The onset of the economic crisis and unemployment have tarnished the image of the EU due to the imposition of drastic cuts in public expenditure, which have a social impact. Following a democratic approach, European policies must be accountable and undergo democratic scrutiny in national parliaments. EU and national institutions must take more joint responsibility and engage in more dialogue and cooperation so as to strengthen the links between the EU and its citizens.

The unique institutional structure of EU decision-making is hard to understand. The institutions must be reformed: the Parliament and the Court of Justice should be the main focus of the reform, according to one speaker, alongside changes in the role of the Council as co-legislator with the European Commission.

The achievements already made and the benefits the European project brings – as well as those that it might provide in the future – need to be explained to the public. Citizens also need to be made aware that the process of European integration is entirely reversible, in the light of Brexit, and they need an explanation of the consequences of this setback.

### **4. Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

Since the onset of the Great Recession, important agreements have been concluded to complete the economic and monetary union. The institutional framework that has been put in place has already

produced significant results, albeit to a different extent depending on the field of activity. The manufacturing production base and services base must become more competitive – this is a vital prerequisite for their sustainability.

The European social dimension is the most significant omission in every single scenario set out in the White Paper. None of the five scenarios set out in the White Paper deals with the Social Pillar, although it is mentioned within the timeframe of the entire process up to 2019.

The most widely-held view in the discussion is that several aspects of the Social Pillar lack detail and political ambition and that it merits being driven forward. Which of the five scenarios would be best suited to developing it was not discussed. Its development must be compatible with preserving European businesses and with their competitiveness. Incorporating its main objectives into European Semester procedures and evaluations can be an effective tool to this end.

The social aspect must have its own identity and must run alongside the economic dimension. There is a need to address the social impact of the recession, which continues during the current recovery stage, to the exclusion of wide swaths of the population. An employment policy should be drawn up at European level (with active and passive policies), touching in particular on youth employment and the long-term unemployed.

At the same time, one speaker noted the impossibility of reaching this goal with shrinking EU budgets. Perhaps the solution would be provided by a reform of the Stability and Growth Pact accompanied by stronger economic growth. Greater attention to social policy must have the necessary legitimacy, which is lent by dedicated budget items, but without reducing the funds destined for key EU policies to maintain and increase the competitiveness of the European economy.

The globalisation process, launched by the liberalisation of capital movements, should be completed and balanced by strengthening the taxation convergence/harmonisation process started by the G-20 and OECD, with the EU also playing an important role.

The consequences of the recession include a drastic fall in investment, particularly public investment, which weakens the economic recovery process. The European Fund for Strategic Investments (Juncker Plan) has sought to reverse this dynamic, but the gap between the required objectives and the available resources is too wide. Thus this instrument needs to be strengthened. It would also be useful to bring back the "golden rule" so that appropriations for productive public investment are not taken into account when calculating public deficits.

Some specific items were identified for inclusion in policies to mitigate unemployment: specific provision of a mechanism to alleviate youth unemployment, increasing its efficiency and effectiveness; economic strengthening and simplification of the Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in order to be able to mitigate the impact of company relocations; creation of a European Social Semester, with job quality benchmarks.

The positive results achieved within the social dialogue should also be highlighted, such as the framework agreement on active ageing.

## Participants

Names	Organizations	Function
Adela Crespo Alvarez	CCOO	RESPONSABLE DE LA OFICINA DE SEGUIMIENTO PARLAMENTARIO Y LEGISLATIVO
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Andrés Barcelo	EESC	Director general de la Unión de Empresas Siderúrgicas (UNESID)
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Ann Vestman	COM	OFICINA DE LA COMISION EN MADRID
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Belen Carrasco Rodriguez	COM	Commission europea
Carlos Martín Urriza	CCOO	DIRECTOR DEL GABINETE ECONÓMICO CONFEDERAL
Carlos Molina del Pozo		Catedrático de Derecho Administrativo de la Universidad de Alcalá y Catedrático Jean Monnet "ad personam" de Derecho Comunitario Europeo
Carlos Trías Pintó	EESC	Director de la Asociación General de Consumidores - Director de la Unión de Cooperativas de Consumidores y Usuarios de España
Concepción Mora	FESMC-UGT	
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Jesus Gallego Garcia	UGT	Secretario de Internacional
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Jorge Aragón Medina	CES	GRUPO I
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Jose Antonio Suarez Llanos	ARVI	Director Gerente de Cooperativas de Armadores de Pesca del Puerto de Vigo y Consejero del CES de España por el grupo III
Jose Maria Lacasa	CEOE	Presidente de la Fundación CEOE y Vicepresidente del CES
Juan Manuel del Campo Vera	CCOO	FEDERACIÓN DE SERVICIOS A LA CIUDADANÍA
Juan M. Trujillo	FSC-CCOO	
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Paula Guisande Boronat	CCOO	COMISIÓN EJECUTIVA DE CCOO-MADRID. ÁREA INTERNACIONAL
Ramón Baeza San Juan	CCOO	DIRECTOR DE LA FUNDACIÓN 1º DE MAYO
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Santos Nogales	FESMC-UGT	
Teresa Díaz de Terán López	CES	GRUPOII
Valérie Parra	UGT	Internacional-CEC
Xavier Vidal Folch		El País

## **Programme**

### **Debate con la sociedad civil organizada. Libro blanco sobre el Futuro de Europa**

**19 mayo 2017, de 9:00h a 14:30h.**

**Consejo Económico y Social, calle Huertas 73, 28014 Madrid**

### **PROGRAMA**

**Modera el debate: Xavier Vidal-Folch**

**9:00h**

#### **Apertura y Presentación**

- Presidente del Consejo Económico y Social

#### **Presentación de la consulta emprendida por el CESE**

- Presentación del Libro Blanco, Miguel Ángel Cabra de Luna, Consejero del CESE, Grupo Actividades Diversas
- El calendario europeo, Patricia Cirez Miqueleiz, Consejera del CESE, Grupo Empleadores
- El método de consulta a la sociedad civil organizada, José Antonio Moreno Díaz, Consejero del CESE, Grupo Trabajadores

**9:30h**

#### **Diagnóstico sobre el estado de la Unión Europea. Identificación de las deficiencias actuales**

- Ignacio Molina, investigador del Real Instituto Elcano y Profesor de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
- José Antonio Suárez Llanos, Director Gerente de Cooperativas de Armadores de Pesca del Puerto de Vigo (ARVI) y Consejero del CES de España por el grupo III
- Jesús Gallego García, Secretario de Internacional de UGT

*Debate*

**11:00h**

#### **Pausa-café**

**11:30h**

#### **Perspectivas de futuro. Nuestro escenario para el Futuro de Europa.**

- Cristina Faciaben Lacorte, Responsable Confederal del Área Internacional y Cooperación de CCOO
- Carlos Molina del Pozo, Catedrático de Derecho Administrativo de la Universidad de Alcalá y Catedrático Jean Monnet “ad personam” de Derecho Europeo
- José María Lacasa, Presidente de la Fundación CEOE y Vicepresidente del CES

*Debate*

**13:00h**

#### **Conclusiones a cargo de Xavier Vidal-Folch**

- Síntesis a partir de las contribuciones de cada panel
- Próximas etapas.

#### **Clausura y Cierre**

**SWEDEN**

## **Report**

### **Exchange of views about the future of Europe with representatives of civil society organisations in Sweden**

#### **Introduction**

After Karin Ekenger (Gr. I) had briefly welcomed participants, Katarina Areskoug Mascarenhas, Head of Representation, opened with a presentation of the Commission's White Paper on the future of the EU. Some twenty participants representing the three Groups took part in the exchange of views that followed, which was chaired by EESC members Karin Ekenger (Gr. I), Ellen Nygren (Gr. II) and Ariane Rodert (Gr. III).

#### **Issues discussed and outcome of the discussions**

##### **1. Which of the five scenarios set out by the White Paper best meets from your perspective the internal and external challenges facing the EU, and why?**

###### Short comments on the different scenarios

Scenario 1 is a short-term solution, but may also be perceived as slightly defeatist, neither can it be sustainable in the long run. Scenario 2 focuses strongly on the internal market, and would risk civil society becoming subordinate to market forces, as well as losing valuable cooperation in other areas. Scenario 3 would most likely mean the euro countries deepening their cooperation. On the other hand, solid cooperation between the euro area countries would benefit the rest of the EU. At the same time there is a fear of euro area members moving ahead and creating "an EU within the EU". Other configurations are also conceivable under this scenario, with cooperation between countries in areas such as migration and security. This could be a way of accelerating the process for those who wish to cooperate while giving others time to catch up. Scenario 4 would produce efficiency gains. It is positive to build on what is good and to have clear remits, but there is concern that certain policy areas are being excluded. Scenario 5 would imply more cooperation, and cooperation that is seen as positive in matters which can best be dealt with within the Union framework, but there are issues with transferring powers. It is important to uphold the authority of the national level and national values. Scenario 5: to ever be able to get to this point, consolidation is needed now.

The five scenarios are far too limited. What we will see in the future is likely to be a mixture of all five, and it is important not to cleave to the scenarios put forward but to articulate what we want to do together in the EU. The following principles are important:

###### Consensus

It is important to build on the consensus about the strengths of EU cooperation: the internal market, the four freedoms, and free trade. Economic integration and trade have helped to create peace and prosperity. The importance of the internal market should therefore be highlighted. If we do not work on the basis of a consensual model, we risk more countries leaving the EU.

### Consolidation and implementation

What is good should be consolidated and existing legislation should be implemented before progressing. In the current situation, the most important thing is to defend what we have achieved and to address the challenges that individual countries cannot confront alone, i.e. where the EU adds value. The EU must produce results, results that are achieved through proper application of the EU acquis, which is currently missing to some extent.

## **2. How do you see trust and confidence being fostered within the Union?**

### Clarifying where responsibility lies

Trust and confidence are largely about expectations. It must therefore be made clear where responsibility lies, e.g. that there is no EU-level competence for social affairs. It is equally important to use the instruments of national governments to improve standards of living.

### Importance of adhering to joint decisions

The Member States must abide by and comply with joint decisions. Respect for fundamental rights is also important in relation to trust. Politicians must defend national interests at EU level and not blame the EU when they have to implement hard decisions back home.

### Importance of shared values

Trust and confidence in the EU are based on reciprocity. It is therefore important that the countries who are part of the project are those that have chosen cooperation. But what do we do in cases where we do not share values and when there are countries that fail to comply with joint decisions? Abuse of referenda amounts to a lack of political responsibility. Politicians must have the courage to take difficult decisions and should not force the people to decide without due justification; this does not enhance representative democracy. It is important for politicians to have the resolve to defend decisions taken in the Council. We must bear in mind that it is the EU Member States that are the EU. Political responsibility is important for trust and confidence. The EU plays an important role in peacekeeping and peace support. The EU has been able to influence and set the course of global developments, and that influence will continue to be important.

### The problem of knowledge, information and participation deficiencies, and lack of transparency

People who pass on information, such as teachers and journalists, are often ill-informed. They often do not know how the EU works, and this leads to many problems being blamed on the EU, which is bad for the Union's credibility. Journalists do not report on the EU decision-making process: one study has shown that most decisions are taken in consultation between the Commission, the Council and Parliament behind closed doors in "trialogues", a new way of working which undermines confidence in the EU.

### Problem of micro-management

The EU should not get into details, but should rather focus on the broader picture. It is important to talk about whether the EU is working on the right issues, and what the appropriate level of governance is.

### Avoiding false expectations

It is important to think about how to communicate about what is being done, and also to communicate about what is not being done, otherwise false expectations are raised that will lead to disappointment and are likely to undermine confidence. It is important to clarify where various decisions were taken – at EU or at national level.

### **3. Is more visibility of and better communication on the European Union required, and how?**

#### Incorporate EU policy into national policy

The EU must be made more visible during general elections and promoted in national policy-making, since we are part of the project and we are involved in EU decision-making and live with its consequences.

#### Better understanding of the EU through trade unions and other organisations

In Sweden, some trade unions organise talks to raise awareness among elected representatives. It is important that such organisations consider what they can do for their target groups. It is also important to think about communication within each organisation and not slip into a populist mindset and malign or blame the EU. Populism is best combated with facts.

#### What is communicated

The EU should avoid forefronting its own excellence and concentrate instead on a more nuanced communication approach which recognises shortcomings and gaps and clarifies what expectations are realistic. At present, communication covers individual steps, but there is a lack of understanding of the broader picture.

#### Identity-building

Decorating buses with a national flag and the EU flag on Europe Day is a positive example of how to create a common identity: we are a part of the EU, and the EU should not be regarded as something "alien". Exchanging best practices through study visits between EU Member States is also a good idea and strengthens people's sense of belonging, of being part of the EU.

### **4. Are the policy areas referred to sufficiently comprehensive and illustrative? How would you rank them in a scale of importance? Is there a major policy area not mentioned or insufficiently highlighted? If so, which one and which of the five scenarios would best suit its development?**

The EU should step in where the Member States themselves are unable to be effective. There is a lack of information about how the EU can work with social investment. Today, there is a focus on hard investment, but the social dimension is missing. It is important to show that economic and social issues are related: one of the conditions for effective social sustainability and for the economy is a functioning internal market, but it is also important in the global world in which we live to highlight competitiveness, free trade and the possibility of different solutions in different countries. The focus is on people already in work, and on protecting them, but it is also important to discuss how to get more people into work. Child poverty in the European Union is another important issue that should receive attention. Sustainability criteria should be given greater scope within the EU. It is also important that authorities be able to operate on the basis of trust rather than under scrutiny.

**5. Regarding "the way ahead", how should the "Future of Europe Debates across Europe's national Parliaments, cities and regions" be structured? What role should organised civil society play in the "way ahead" and how?**

At Member State level it is important to bring the EU into national debates and get away from the idea of being "for" or "against" the EU, thinking instead about how people want the EU develop. It is equally important to make people understand that Sweden is part of the EU. Swedish officials' knowledge of EU policy needs to be improved. There are different perceptions of what the EU is and does, and it is important to reach out to people by giving them correct information. Where the media are concerned it is easy to focus on the negative and allow emotion-driven politics to predominate at the expense of facts. But who is going to take the lead here – the EU itself, the Member States, or civil society?

Civil society must call on politicians to engage in a constructive dialogue in the form of an open debate. The study material could be simple, and one feasible approach would be workshops. People are interested, but communication channels are lacking. It is important to reach the local level and to make the issues accessible for everyone. It is also important to include young people who are positive about the future and who want to engage in discussion.

**6. What are your particular expectations as regards the outcome of the consultation?**

Transparency is important and there is a need to discuss the facts and not focus on form. The time frame is too short, and the consultation should be seen as the beginning of a conversation that will continue when all the discussion documents are available. It is important to have a forum to keep the discussion with civil society alive.

**7. How can the citizen be more empowered in the shaping of the future of Europe?**

NGOs should be involved in this task. Inclusion is important – it is not just a question of the right to participate, but also of strengthening citizens' ability to do so. It is also important to engage with the Swedish policy-makers who are involved in decision-making Brussels.

**Key recommendations and conclusions**

- EU cooperation should continue: the need for a peace-democracy-liberty project is now more pressing than ever.
- The internal market is an instrument for achieving greater prosperity for citizens and a prerequisite for strengthening the social market economy.
- Consolidation and implementation: decisions taken must have effect and be applied.
- Importance of shared values and of adhering to joint decisions.
- Importance of addressing ignorance and lack of information and participation.
- Avoiding false expectations by clarifying governance levels.
- Making EU policy visible in national policy.
- Promoting familiarity with the EU at local level through trade unions and organisations.

- The EU must engage in calibrated communication in order to clarify what can realistically be expected.
- Measures to strengthen our identity as European citizens.
- Efforts to communicate within organisations.
- Avoiding emotion-driven policy – populism is best combated with facts.

## Participants

	FIRST NAME	SURNAME	ORGANISATION
<b>1</b>	Monika	ARVIDSSON	LO (Swedish Trade Union Confederation)
<b>2</b>	Jonas	BERGGREN	Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
<b>3</b>	Karin	EKENGER	Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
<b>4</b>	Birgitta	ENGLIN	Global Challenge
<b>5</b>	Mattias	GOTTING	LRF (Federation of Swedish Farmers)
<b>6</b>	Per	HILMERSSON	TCO (Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees)
<b>7</b>	Nina	LIND	The Church of Sweden
<b>8</b>	Sara	LOWEMARK	Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
<b>9</b>	Cecilia	NAHNFELDT	The Church of Sweden
<b>10</b>	Ellen	NYGREN	LO (Swedish Trade Union Confederation)
<b>11</b>	Berivan	ÖNGÖRUR	TCO (Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees)
<b>12</b>	Patrik	OSCARSSON	Swedish Sports Confederation
<b>13</b>	Göran	PETTERSSON	Forum for Voluntary Social Work
<b>14</b>	Ariane	RODERT	Forum for Voluntary Social Work
<b>15</b>	Maria	SUNÉR FLEMING	Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
<b>16</b>	Erik	SVENSSON	ALMEGA
<b>17</b>	Frida	UNENGE	Save the Children Sweden
<b>18</b>	Karla	WIXE	LO/TCO/SACO (Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations) Brussels office

## **Programme**

*Wednesday 17 May 2017*

*9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.*

*Europahuset, Regeringsgatan 65, 2nd floor, Stockholm*

## **Programme**

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**8.30 a.m. - 9 a.m. | Registration**

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**9 a.m. - 9.05 a.m. | Welcome and introduction**

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**9.05 a.m. - 9.45 a.m. | Presentation of the White Paper**

-  *Katarina Areskoug Mascarenhas, Head of the European Commission's Representation in Sweden*
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**9.45 a.m. - 11 a.m. | Discussion on the White Paper**

**Short introduction by the moderators**

**Exchange of views about the future of Europe with representatives of civil society organisations**

*Moderators:*

-  *Karin Ekenger, EESC member, Employers' Group*
  -  *Karin Ekenger, EESC member, Workers' Group*
  -  *Ariane Rodert, EESC member, Various Interests' Group*
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**11 a.m. - 11.15 a.m. | Break**

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**11.15 a.m. - 12 noon | Continuation of discussion**

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**12 noon - 12.30 p.m. | Close**

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