



EESC Info

European Economic and Social Committee

A bridge between Europe and organised civil society

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[Podcast - The Grassroots View- Episode 9 :Communication during the crisis](#)

In the last episode in the series, produced in French, **Isabel Caño Aguilar**, EESC vice-president in charge of communication, speaks about the experience of COVID. She describes how the pandemic has changed the EESC's communication work, while making solidarity and commitment the key words in all of its work and initiatives, starting with the 2020 Civil Solidarity Prize. For the vice-president, *"nothing will again be like it was before this pandemic, but it is our responsibility to react, to make a stronger Europe. Europeans are asking this of us."*

[Dessine-moi... \(Draw me...\)](#)

The "Dessine-moi... (Draw me...)" column is coming to an end. These final articles add to and enhance the collection of stories that have been shared with us since the start of the pandemic. These heartfelt accounts of this period of involuntary isolation have moved us and encouraged us to find beauty in others, give more thought to the meaning of life and be more aware of the importance of seizing the moment.

Thank you to the members who contributed to the final instalment of our series: **Claudine Otto, Giulia Barbucci, Laure Batut, Bente Sorgenfrey, Karolina Dreszer-Smalec, Dilyana Slavova, Renate**

Heinisch, Janusz Pietkiewicz, Jože Smole, Martin Siecker and Arnaud Schwartz.

On behalf of the entire EESC info team, we would like to thank the 43 representatives of the 27 Member States who gave their time and provided written accounts to give readers the pleasure of finding out new things and the chance to immerse themselves in the authors' emotions and their thoughts on this difficult period we are living through.

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EDITORIAL

[Civil society must seize the momentum to explore new paths with enlightened realism](#)

In this age of accelerated transformations, we have been witnessing how fragile our democracies, our societies and our planet can be.

I started my presidency in April 2018, thinking that we needed to rediscover the humanist spirit of the Renaissance to speed our journey on the path to a sustainable Europe. On the back of Brexit and ahead of the European elections, I knew civil society had a vital role to play in moving the economy towards more sustainable and smarter models.

At the end of my term of office this month, I am in a position to say that Europe has once again shown its resilience. Nationalists and Eurosceptics were defeated in the EU elections and the COVID-19 pandemic has dealt an indisputable blow to their fake narrative. The EU has taken unprecedented measures and in a few months has smashed taboos that seemed to be set in stone, protecting our citizens and communities and investing in a strong strategy for the future with the broadest consensus ever.

Today, I am more and more convinced that the three priorities of my presidency – sustainable development, peace and culture – remain at the core of this Renaissance for Europe.

The pandemic may have been a wake-up call, but we are already experiencing climate change and more extreme weather events. The EU recovery plan adopted on the back of the COVID-19 pandemic is a unique opportunity to avoid doomsday and turn Europe into a world leader in sustainability.

Civil society can lead the way. We were the first among the EU institutions to listen to Greta Thunberg and the young climate activists taking to the streets to demand change now. We at the EESC were the first to roll out circular economy and sustainable development models. Our constituencies, alongside local governments, will still be on the front line in implementing the recovery plan after the pandemic, working to avoid chaos. We are now on the eve of the Conference on the Future of Europe, which is an opportunity to lead us towards a new Europe, together.

Robert Schuman said in his declaration 70 years ago that world peace cannot be safeguarded without creative efforts proportionate to the dangers that threaten it. Never, in any part of the world, at any time in history, have women and men experienced such a long period of peace, stability and economic prosperity; never has there been such an assurance of freedoms and rights as is now the case in Europe. But, as we all know, we cannot rest on our laurels.

Europe has been put to the test by a number of crises – and this time more than ever, with the unexpected and unprecedented pandemic. But I am sure we have enough energy and creativity to emerge stronger once again, all together. Now is the time to rise to the challenge once more.

This House of European Civil Society, which recently celebrated its 60th anniversary, has a role to play at a time when there is renewed capacity for focusing on what really matters, being more open to change and suggesting ways to build Europe "through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity", as Schuman said.

The rEUnaissance will be brought about by men and women who dare to innovate, to dream, to engage, to risk and to cultivate a collective sense of responsibility, while exercising a reasonableness in exploring new paths with passionate and enlightened realism.

Luca Jahier

EESC President

DIARY DATES

6-7 October 2020, Brussels, Belgium

Welcome days for the new EESC members

27- 28-29 October 2020, Brussels, Belgium

EESC renewal - inaugural plenary session

DESSINE- MOI..



[Karolina Dreszer-Smalec: "Coronavirus: lessons learned"](#)

In March 2020, we started to realise that the COVID-19 pandemic was not only a health crisis; it would influence many aspects of our lives. It was also clear for associations and activists that we would face new challenges in our ordinary work. As it turned out, the situation was even worse than we expected.

In May 2020, we organised a "virtual drink". After two months of the lockdown and online work, we decided to meet up and discuss our initial thoughts about this period.

Together with colleagues from the European Civic Forum, a transnational network that brings together over 100 associations and NGOs across 27 countries in Europe, actively working on issues such as citizenship education, the defence of human rights and advocacy for democracy, we spent a few hours in an impassioned debate. Everyone had his or her national perspective, but the conclusions were similar.

On the basis of these discussions, we drafted the following lessons...

Lesson one: Our security depends on other people's security

We need universal health and social protection for everybody in our society and all over the world.

Lesson two: We are all vulnerable and our destinies are interwoven.

Solidarity, equality, rights and caring must be at the base of international relations and of people's daily reality.

Lesson three: The common good exists

Public institutions must serve, protect and implement the common good, not specific interests.

Lesson four: Democracy is the crucial antiviral we all need

Citizens' awareness, civic participation, trustworthy information, public research and education and transparent institutions all ensure the public good.

Lesson five: The global market system has failed

We have to relocate production, implement the circular economy and have a universal basic income for all.

Lesson six: We are the earth's custodians, not its owners

Nature is using our lockdown to recover from the damage we have caused. We must restore environmental justice to the world.

Lesson seven: Essential workers are real heroes. Women are at the forefront

Women's contribution has to be recognised in the social hierarchy, those who are invisible must be able to fully access their rights.

Lesson eight: Time has to slow down

Lockdown forced us to give full place to social bonds, patience, compassion: we have to keep this in the long run.

Lesson nine: We need human, social, ecological security

We commit ourselves to a just recovery and a just transition in our country, in Europe and all over the world.

Lesson ten: The future must be different from the past

We need to learn from these lessons and act together.

Do we have a chance to learn more after the crisis? Are we able to turn the crisis into a new chance?

I am convinced that the future must be different from the past.



[Martin Siecker: "Always look on the bright side of life"](#)

Would I like to share my thoughts, analysis and emotions on how I experience the Corona crisis in 2000 characters? Not much for something disruptive like that, one character per century. But anyway, my thoughts are private and chaotic.

Everything is new, this is the first pandemic I've experienced personally. Searching on the internet I found a list with the 10 worst pandemics in history and I learned that the last one to hit Europe before Covid 19 was the Spanish Flu in 1920. And I may be old - but I'm not that old.

My partner is very contagious due to reduced resistance to germs and if she catches something she is extremely vulnerable to a chronic respiratory lung disease. So we are very reluctant to have contacts with others. That brings new experiences for both of us. She is more or less in self-chosen isolation to prevent being infected. And I have to do things she used to do before, like buying groceries. Pre-crisis, I participated, pushing the shopping-cart 1 meter behind her while she filled it. But now it's different.

Pushing is easy; you just follow and think about creating a better world while she fills the cart. Since I have to fill it myself, I'm paralyzed with choice stress at every shelf. The shopping list asks coffee, the shelf offers dozens of different brands that all look the same. And what toilet paper do we need - with 1, 2, 3 or 4 layers? My wife knows which product she wants and where they are, we're in-and-out in minutes. To me shops are labyrinths: only in the beer department I don't feel choice stress, all the rest takes me hours - lost in maddening dilemmas.

I was surprised by the initial response of the Dutch towards the pandemic. They reacted unanimously and with solidarity. Unfortunately the human attention span turned out to be pretty short for a small group

of entangled and otherwise deplorable individuals, within a few weeks their solidarity crumbled. People stopped respecting the rules, blamed the government for undermining their fundamental rights and limiting their four freedoms. So, in order to claim their unalienable right to party they filed law suits against the state - lost in raging madness.

Thank goodness we live in Europe, where democracy and rule of law are relatively well guaranteed (in most member states) and healthcare is pretty good compared to other parts of the world. Looking at how it affects different generations it's clear the young suffer most of the virus that reflects their age. At 19 you're supposed to date, to explore your sexuality and to discover that crazy little thing called love. In times of pandemics even innocent hugs are taboo. These kind of things make young people insecure - lost in unsatisfied desire.

The key question is what to do with the economy. A restart based on the principle 'business as usual' when the pandemic is under control? Or grab this opportunity, turn away from a system dominated by

cannibalistic monopolists and move into an inclusive model with sustainable, small scale initiatives in peaceful coexistence with liable big businesses? the choice between going on with business as usual or change our lemming's behaviour will define our future and decide if we will be alive or extinct - lost in the abyss of self destruction.

I wish you all a nice time, with meditation, reflection and - to whom it may concern - repentance.



Jože Smole: "We have come out of the crisis united and stronger"

We were faced with a situation we had never experienced before. The virus was suddenly here and it was spreading very quickly, which led to the entire country being placed under complete quarantine. Since the situation was unprecedented, we had no experience of how to deal with it in the most efficient way.

What next, we wondered. At the beginning we were terrified and helpless. In business, all plans for the current year (2020) were dropped practically in an instant, and because of the uncertain situation, all future plans are surrounded by a high degree of uncertainty as well.

We were all asking ourselves the same question: what next? How do we act in this new situation: the quarantine, complete isolation and no way of knowing when it will be over? The greatest fears and worries are always caused by the inability to predict what will happen next. Businesses, too, initially reacted similarly. They all wanted us to tell them how long this

situation would continue, what the response of the government would be and what kind of aid they could count on. Already at a very early stage, it was starting to become clear that not all of us were in the same position: for some economic sectors, such as tourism and logistics, the crisis meant ruin, while to others, such as the IT sector and the food industry, it brought new opportunities and challenges.

We were fortunate that the government, although newly formed, responded quickly and adequately, so that together we were drafting programmes of action, support, incentives etc. For this purpose, we maintained consistent direct contact with a large number of our members from different sectors, in order to be as well informed as possible about the situation in individual sectors, gather as many ideas as we could about what form of aid would be most efficient, and provide information to government representatives.

What I miss the most are face-to-face communication and contacts. The fact is that during this period, communication has moved online as much as possible, while face-to-face communication has largely disappeared. The giant digitalisation leap in electronic communication among businesses and between the state and businesses, as well as with the public and users, can be considered one of the biggest benefits of COVID-19.

Results have shown us that what is most important is good organisation and discipline on the part of all citizens in accepting and respecting instructions and measures, as only these can lead to the right solutions.

The fact is that COVID-19 will bring about changes in many fields. However, we do not even know how long the COVID-19 epidemic will last; nor do we know whether, in the wake of the epidemic, we will start counting the periods between one wave of COVID-19 and the next, as we will not be able to shake off the virus permanently. The crisis has manifested itself in all areas, from education and health to the financial and economic sectors, inter alia. We do not know what the situation will be like once the crisis is over or how severely the economy will be affected.

Many changes will come about that are as yet unknown; therefore it is wrong to be asking which jobs will be cut. We must all strive to make sure that when the crisis is over, our businesses and thus our jobs will be as competitive as possible. We will achieve this not only with the help of state aid but also through continuous education at all levels.

The fact is that the period of isolation has clearly shown us that digital communication alone cannot replace face-to-face contact, whether in schools, when doing business or during other activities. Thus, our goal, naturally, is to re-establish face-to-face communication, both within our association and with all those with whom we are currently communicating only through online tools.



Janusz Pietkiewicz: "Services of General Interest and the Pandemic"

As February turned into March, while studies and debates were taking place, we shared in the joyful *Martenitsa* celebrations of our Bulgarian friends, as we do at this time every year. We wore thin bracelets of braided red and white string and little woollen ragdolls were given as a token of good luck. The optimism of the coming spring was palpable. We wished each other success for the final stage of the five-year term of office at the EESC.

We instinctively stayed away from the threat to our orderly lives in the heart of the EU posed by the virus that was spreading in Asia. It's true that signs and serious warnings were already reaching us from southern Europe, but we had to protect the procedures of the European institutions from the pandemic. And besides, as our colleagues from beyond the Danube joked, as a last resort a drop of medicine from the home pharmacy - i.e. *Martenitsa* rakia - couldn't hurt. Indeed, calls for disinfectants in meeting rooms were ignored, but we were always ensured that the risk was being carefully monitored, so our fears about the virus were assuaged.

As of Wednesday 11 March, I was still discussing recommendations on the sustainable Europe investment plan in the ECO/505 study group. In the sections, we made action plans and booked our next trips, and then suddenly, a week later, life ground to a halt. *Lockdown!* I could compare it metaphorically to a train suddenly slamming on the breaks, shooting

sparks from under its wheels.

No one expected the containment measures that were growing stricter every day. It struck at the very foundations of our lives. It was a psychological tsunami, peculiar, as the poet Ildefons Gałczyński would say, "a sadness flowing through the mindset". It was surprise at the need to stay at home and the everyday fear. It was questions about the possibility of getting help and essential products, rethinking our habits.

I didn't think that I would not come back to Brussels until June, travelling by car along empty highways, because the flights had not started running again. I remember printing out the "license" to travel that I received by email from the secretary-general – the *COVID-19 laissez-passer*, issued on 29 May 2020 in four languages and adorned with an imposing round stamp. This was meant to guarantee that I would not be held in quarantine.

To be on the safe side, I confirmed this by phone with the German *Gesundheitsamt* offices of the regions I had to travel through. On 8 June in Brussels I took part in the first hybrid meeting of the ECO/510 study group and then in the plenary session of 10 and 11 June.

Public and social media were already flooded with commentary and suspicions as to the imagined real creators of the virus. It's a shame that, at least for the time being, it has not led to a contemporary masterpiece along the lines of Giovanni Boccaccio's 14th century *Decameron* or Albert Camus's 1947 novel *The Plague*, which truly demonstrate the shortcomings of human nature and the fight of humanity against disease.

In terms of the experience of the worldwide lockdown and warnings of a further attack of SARS-CoV-2, this time in combination with seasonal flu, which costs many lives each year in many countries – even more so than COVID-19 currently does, I thought about the meaning of "services of general interest", which have been neglected for decades.

The COVID-19 pandemic finally demonstrated the highly important and stabilising function of local, regional and Europe-wide suppliers of these services. The social sphere has finally started to believe in their essential role, which is the backbone of the European social model and potentially of a positive recovery of the economy in the framework of the Next Generation EU and European Green Deal instruments.

Energy and water services, waste processing and public transport in times of economic crisis have ensured that the ebbs and flows of life in our communities can continue and have provided security. After all, without previous investments in these sectors, it would not be possible to deal with everyday issues, like taking a morning shower at home, making coffee, or getting to work or the hospital on time. This also applies to issues of healthcare, care for people with disabilities and elderly people. They would not work without crisis management procedures, or if services of general interest had not found political understanding and public support.

Similarly, we need to look at the hugely important area of education, research and the general concept of culture, and only then can we complain about the difficulties we have experienced during the crisis.



Giulia Barbucci: "Over these months, the voice of the trade unions has been stronger than ever"

11 March, back to Rome, back home. Heavy atmosphere, anxiety; in Northern Italy they are already counting the dead. My daughter Ilaria has returned from Milan where she studies; my eldest, Miriam, lives and works in Barcelona, and is very worried.

In the evening, the prime minister Mr Conte announces a lockdown for the whole country. A lockdown is already in place in the "red zones" in the North, requiring people from those areas to isolate.

The schools are closed, the football league and recreational and sporting activities suspended, and visiting patients in hospital is prohibited. No travel is allowed by public or private transport, and non-essential economic activities are halted.

A cloak of unreality envelopes Italy. Disorientation, fear: the virus seems to be getting out of control and becoming unstoppable.

Two images encapsulate the harsh reality: the convoy of military trucks in Bergamo transporting bodies out of the region, as the cemeteries were full, and the powerful, indelible image of Pope Francis praying in an empty St Peter's Square, broadcast worldwide on television on 28 March.

The Italian trade unions took action immediately with the government on ensuring the safety of essential businesses, which had to be kept open to ensure that people could purchase essential supplies in supermarkets and medicines in pharmacies. The trade unions never stopped working, supporting those losing their jobs, seeking agreements with employers to launch remote working, and securing income support, with incomes becoming insecure.

The hospitals are overwhelmed: running out of beds, and with intensive care units pushed to their limits, as also are health workers: nurses, doctors, orderlies forced to stay away from home in quarantine, working flat out, with the huge psychological burden of caring for people who are dying without the comfort of their loved ones.

At that time we all said that "we would not forget what had happened". Now we are trying to move forward, but the virus is not defeated: small or large outbreaks are popping up across the EU, and each country is responding in its own way, with its own measures. It is precisely now that the EU, thanks to the huge economic support it has deployed for all countries, should act in a united way by coordinating the efforts of individual Member States; we realise, however, how difficult this still is. But we will not win this war acting individually.

Over these months, the voice of the trade unions has been stronger than ever. The trade union is not an abstract concept: it is workers pointing a country towards rightful demands for social equality, dignity and respect. People who have experienced the reality of the hospitals, care homes for the elderly, shops, cleaning, transport, businesses in which basic workplace health and safety rights are infringed can tell us how to change an economic and social model that is revealing its limitations and threatening the future of those who will come after us.

So, this is what I would like for my daughters, Ilaria studying in Milan, and Miriam working in Barcelona: a world that fits them, and is sustainable economically, environmentally and socially.



Dilyana Slavova: "COVID-19 has taught me not to delay my life projects"

The impact of the pandemic made borders in Europe visible again, sometimes even within the same country. One might think that, as a result, the scope for transnational cooperation among regions and cities has decreased. But actually, quite the opposite has happened.

So what was it like to live through the lockdown in Bulgaria? Well, for a dynamic and energetic outdoors enthusiast like me, it was hard. There were many restrictions. We had to stay at home and could only go out during the opening hours of essential shops to buy food, medicines or household goods. Social distancing of >1.5 m was compulsory when walking inside and outside the shops. It was rather complicated: whenever you left the city of Sofia, you had to fill out a form stating the reason and the place where you were going. You were required to show it to the police upon request.

The positive news is that the population has become much more self-sufficient and residents are much more appreciative of local food, local providers and short food supply chains. Demand for food from farms and food purchased directly from growers has increased. Grassroots initiatives are promoting gardening and small-scale production of vegetables and herbs.

Market places remain open to the public. They represent a traditional place for the sale of food, seeds, vegetable seedlings, fruit and vegetables and flowers. Leaving them open – with strict safety measures to be respected – contributes to preserving a sense of normality and a familiar routine.

In the mountain areas local action groups have also been very active. To further support local producers of home-grown food during the epidemic, they have been collecting and sharing useful contacts on their websites.

Indeed, in compliance with various travel and contact restrictions, in my organisation we all had to cancel many of the physical meetings and events which usually make it easier to set up cooperative initiatives and disseminate the results. However, these restrictions did not stop our activities – far from it. We are continuing to work together efficiently to make mountain regions stronger and even more resilient. In some cases, we adapted our work plans and are now developing common solutions to help vulnerable EU regions and cities cope better with the current emergency.

We started a "Giving a hand" a platform to foster solidarity in rural areas. It promotes solidarity between people, connecting persons in need of assistance with volunteers who are willing to literally "give a hand". Its current activities are focused on helping vulnerable, disabled and elderly people with shopping or homecare (not personal care) and on arranging babysitting for parents who have to work and cannot not find another solution for their children.

Many other initiatives have flourished in rural and mountainous areas, giving an insight into the resilience and strong sense of mutual assistance that flourish in our communities. What I learnt during this time is that I should not delay my life projects! Being active saves us in difficult times.



Claudine Otto: "Greater autonomy regarding globalisation should be considered at European level"

The streets have been deserted since the lockdown was declared. The most striking thing is the silence. Gone are the race for jobs, travelling abroad for a two hour meeting, the honking horns of city traffic, the bus that doesn't come...

Like so many others, we have complied with this forced confinement, trying our hardest to deal with this new way of life. While teleworking was easy for me, it was inconceivable for my husband, as his job and the infrastructure were (and are still) not suitable for it. This lack of suitability cost him several sleepless nights as a result of record absenteeism by his employees. Fear has spread at least as fast as the virus itself.

Now that the first wave has passed, I wonder what mental, social and economic condition we will be in when we emerge from this crisis. If the pandemic allowed for a new hierarchy of needs and environmental awareness, it has also borne witness to individual behaviours on a national and global scale. No one in Luxembourg would have believed that the borders could be closed again. Cross-border work is essential in the Grand Duchy and the restriction of free movement of people has led to fears such as a shortage of healthcare workers.

This crisis is also an opportunity for introspection regarding our own vulnerability. We are discovering that we are dependant, not only on healthcare workers, but also on each other's behaviour.

We will achieve the economic recovery together. Let's avoid nationalism and the collapse of economies while some countries discuss nationalising value chains in the name of resilience. Greater autonomy regarding globalisation should be considered at European level. With this crisis, we have the opportunity, for example, to stop for a moment, which should help us reflect on ourselves.



Renate Heinisch: "Stamping out loneliness together"

As a pharmacist, I have been paying close attention to the question of gender medicine during the coronavirus pandemic. The gender differences in COVID-19 are particularly striking in the field of mental health.

Men - particularly young men - are more likely to require intensive care, and more likely to die.

Since the lockdown, young women have been falling ill more often, due to their new role in society: precarious employment, more part-time work, more contact with people, less working from home, more care work.

We need to take another look at the roles of women and older people in families, because there is also discrimination against older people. I will keep having conversations about this.

Recently, I have been sitting on the bench outside our chemist's shop discussing these things with family members, and they were all happy having these conversations.

I have also stood in the street outside our local care home and greeted the residents up in their rooms, and we have sung together.

We need to stamp out loneliness and support family members. Policy must take account of this in stimulating employment in this area, but until that is achieved we all need to provide support.

I have also canvassed parents about educational issues and arranged video-conferences with teachers on media literacy.



Laure Batut: "Fear, resilience, and then?"

First, fear and astonishment

Fear, real fear. A fear that has brought everything to a halt ... which – with the evening death toll – makes you fear for your dear ones, the young, the old and the vulnerable. A fear that reminds you that the shadows are circling, that they are waiting ...

Astonishment at the lack of preparedness of the French public health services and of the medical profession on the front line with the public behind the lines, all of them lacking basic resources for protecting themselves and caring for others. Astonishment too at the capacity of a country like France, including its overseas territories, to cease – all of a sudden – all signs of human activity and empty towns and schools after a winter of legitimate social discontent on the streets.

The world, which has become even more globalised as a result of the pandemic, with the lockdown fragmented into a multitude of individuals doing no more than living alongside one another, yet separately. The

pandemic has widened all disparities.

The return of the State

Public services, particularly health services, have the task of ensuring that life wins out. Gradually they have been given logistical support, with some measures that were just for show, such as the transfer of patients by train or helicopter, while private clinics that had declared their willingness to help were not asked for such help.

The State has given assistance to businesses delivering essential services in order to ensure that life can go on, through the provision of supplies, ensuring cleaning, etc.

But their employees were in very different situations as regards protection against the virus, and have not been systematically recompensed for their extra efforts.

Then resilience

Resilience has come to the fore thanks to links – both essential and social – between teachers and their pupils, via networks, the telephone, radio and TV, and other media. It was necessary to fill the time, manage time and work. At 8 every evening, the public – from their windows and doorsteps – applauded medical staff; the State had not given them the full recognition that had been expected.

Employees have re-discovered their own capacity for innovation. Teleworking, which had sometimes been denied to some employees, has spread at great speed. Parents, especially mothers, have had to take on two professions: their own, and that of teacher.

The trade unions' role as intermediaries between employees, employers and government has restored their legitimacy in the country. It is hoped that they will not only be listened to, but above all heard.

Europe

The EU, thanks to the Commission's initial statements, has also astonished people!

The rescue plan that has been announced is much more than a Marshall Plan. A blast of recovery for Europe! But governments and Parliament were quick to find reasons for procrastination – of which we are all aware.

However, many small businesses – with few employees and very little funds – have already gone under in the country: small restaurants sold at a loss, young people who had just started out in the world of work The banks were not there for them. Employees have the right to partial unemployment benefits until September, but what will happen afterwards? Despite receiving aid from the relevant States, large companies, such as Air France-KLM (which received EUR 7 billion from the Netherlands and France), Airbus, etc. have laid off their employees. It is a scandal. All this when 700 000 young people will be arriving on the labour market after the summer...

The day after?

It is beginning to look more and more like the day before! Firstly, because the virus is still in circulation. Secondly, because the reforms that were already under way 'before', will come back 'afterwards', while the world of work in France does not want any of it. The government is assuring the public that taxation will not be used to pay for the 13% drop in GDP, but this summer's litany of redundancies and price increases is never-ending, be it in the energy, transport, fruit and vegetables sectors, etc.

In view of the lessons from the crisis, the way work is organised will change. Teleworking, platform work and videoconferencing will need regulations that do not yet exist. After resilience, vigilance is the order of the day. Will the crisis reveal that those who are the strongest in economic terms always come out better and those with the least resources suffer more and more? In the Paris region, the poorest district is the one where there have been the most cases of the virus. Sadly, what is new here?



[Bente Sorgenfrey: "Focusing on the essentials of my own life"](#)

When the coronavirus crisis broke out in Denmark, on 11 March, my colleagues and I got busy ensuring an orderly shutdown for our members. Many employees had to work from home, others in stressful situations in hospitals, nursing homes and in the service sector, which remained open throughout the crisis. Clear answers and close cooperation with colleagues were necessities.

I am also vice-president in the European Trade Union Movement ETUC, so I also needed to work with colleagues in other countries. I was pleased that on 14 March we – the Danish government and the social partners – concluded a tripartite agreement on temporary wage compensation. The agreement covers employees working in private companies that are suffering particular financial hardship due to COVID-19.

Companies have used the new wage compensation scheme where they have opted out of the existing arrangements for temporarily laying off employees without pay. Support schemes were set up for small businesses, self-employed workers and freelancers. Some parts of the agreement expire soon and we are currently negotiating its replacement so that employees continue to be protected.

I myself have been working from home and I quickly became a superuser of new virtual tools. This time at home could have been very stressful because of uncertainty about the future, but in the end it let me focus entirely on my work and gave me more time with my family. I am convinced these recent months have given me and my colleagues a sharper focus on our core mission and contributed to greater discipline at meetings. It has also meant for me personally that I have been able to concentrate on the essentials of my own life.



Arnaud Schwartz: "Health, ecological, social, and economical crises: let's cooperate for a liveable world"

A far cry from inward-looking nationalism and the temptation of authoritarianism, cooperation on a European scale is essential. It is vital that countries work together to combat the virus and to tackle its causes and consequences, especially as future pandemics - just like pollution, climate change and the biodiversity crisis - know no borders.

Europe has powerful levers for putting the general interest back at the heart of the continent's development. By improving the Green Deal, the Common Agricultural Policy and the multiannual financial framework (MFF) we could effect a major shift in European and national projects and financing to ensure that Europe, a world leader, takes the path towards a liveable world.

Prioritising cooperation over competition and moving from an individual to an international scale is far from plain sailing. Looking out only for our own interest seems so comfortable. Faced with this temptation, we must remember that this short-termist vision will lead to our downfall: it will come back to us with a violent boomerang effect. These are historical crises, the challenge seems immense and we will not be able to deal with it alone.

My call is clear: to get out of these crises we need to set aside our selfishness and cooperate in the general interest. Take care of yourself, your loved ones, strangers in need and the living environment around you, and let's try to expend our energies on ensuring that we come out of these unprecedented crises on top.

EESC NEWS

Isabel Caño Aguilar, Vice-president for communication: "It's only goodbye for now"

There is a time for everything. The time has now come for us to say farewell. We have spent two and a half years together: since April 2018, I have had the honour of serving as vice-president for communication, alongside Milena Angelova, the Vice-president for budget.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the readers of EESCinfo, for your loyalty. We have had the privilege of sharing the best moments of our events, seminars, debates, discussions and plenary sessions with you - in a nutshell, all of the initiatives that have defined the EESC's term under the presidency of **Luca Jahier**.

I have had the opportunity to work with a fantastic team in the Directorate for Communication and Interinstitutional Relations. I will take with me memories of the colleagues who have supported me throughout this period, of these women and men who have helped me to grow, who have taught me to be more attentive to the world around us and with whom I have shared all of the initiatives implemented during this term. Without their work, their commitment and their enthusiasm, my task would have been impossible.

How many times have we put into practice Hannah Arendt's notion that finding the right words at the right time is action!

So many reminders, faces and words will stay in my memory. These include the journalists from December's seminars and among others: the words of Andrew Caruana Galizia who launched a call for freedom of expression, the speech by Marta Lempart and the second civil society prize in 2019, dedicated to equality and awarded to the Polish Women's Strike, which called on women to bring about change.

I remember the advice from the media correspondents in Brussels, who we invited to the COCOM meetings: "Listen to your members, who all have stories to tell".

Sometimes lively discussions filled the rooms where we met in Athens and in Malaga. In 2018, the Athens seminar, held in the cradle of democracy, gave us the opportunity to reconnect with the roots of our European values. In 2019 we met in Malaga, at a seminar full of initiatives by young people, and we reaffirmed that the European Union is a project that should be built hand in hand with civil society.

From March 2020 onwards, we have had to lock down and reorganise our daily work. The pandemic has led us to live and to work differently. The Committee reacted quickly and on 17 March we published a statement calling for greater solidarity and joint action at European level to deal effectively with the consequences of the pandemic.

We worked hand in hand with other institutions to tackle the social, economic and political crisis. As representatives of organised civil society, we spoke with a united voice, highlighting that we will only have the strength to tackle the crisis if we work together.

As the communication department, we have ensured media coverage for our legislative work, which has never ceased. However, we also wanted to share how EESC members were working in their countries, within their own organisations, to tackle the effects of the pandemic.

Our "Dessine-moi..." section opened its columns to members, who shared their emotions, thoughts and comments about the moments they experienced during the pandemic, when it seemed like time was standing still. Most significantly, they helped us rediscover the diversity of our Committee, and of all the activities carried out by trade unionists, entrepreneurs and members of other civil society organisations.

We will soon be writing a new chapter in the history of our institution. I thank you all for your work, your commitment, your dedication and, above all, for the readiness you have shown to communicate the European Economic and Social Committee.

Thank you to all the readers of EESCinfo for always being eager to receive news from the EESC, thank you to the members for sharing their thoughts, thank you to the groups, thank you to the sections and thank you to the translators, for the precise work they do despite being under time pressure.

A big thank you to the Press unit team for their efficiency and creativity and for publishing this newsletter, which never ceases to attract new subscribers. Thank you to colleagues from the INF unit, for bringing their artistic and technical touch to the production of EESCinfo.

I am not leaving, I will be staying with you and continuing my role as a member. You will find in me a fervent supporter of all your information and communication-related activities.

My final message is borrowed from Albert Camus, and is a sort of motto that I leave you with in the hope the we can apply it every day: "To create is to live twice".



Milena Angelova, Vice-President for Budget: "Choosing the best course of action"

The European Union is living through dynamic, crucial moments. It needs the coordinated efforts and synergy of all institutions, all stakeholders, all European citizens to find the right strategy to successfully face all the challenges and perform as a strong world actor.

The European Economic and Social Committee has an important role to play in this process as a unique platform that gathers and conveys the views of employers, employees and civil society organisations on all important aspects of how to deliver better in achieving our common European project.

It is the responsibility of the EESC presidency to navigate the Committee and to choose the best course of action for each mandate, to launch common political priorities and define the best way of realising them.

It was a great honour and a pleasure to serve together with my esteemed colleagues for the last two-and-a-half years and to endeavour together with them to achieve this. Our joint efforts were based on the firm belief that each and every EESC member has unique competence, experience and knowledge and serves as a link with businesses and citizens across Europe, while being an immediate link with his or her domestic constituency.

Therefore, we strove for all the EESC members to have the best environment, conditions and support to unleash their potential and creativity, so that their contributions are tapped in the best way and are combined in professional, representative and balanced opinions. Our efforts were targeted at much greater visibility, more structured follow-up and promotion of our work across Europe – to the European and Member State institutions, decision-makers and partner organisations.

I am proud and grateful that we achieved much together, by joining our forces as a well-functioning and coherent team, committed to providing equal opportunities and conditions for each EESC member to contribute to the common success of our Committee in fulfilling its mission. And I wish all the best luck to the incoming presidential team during the new mandate!



[Artificial Intelligence: EU law should set safe boundaries for high-risk applications](#)

Biometric recognition for tracking, surveillance and detecting emotions should have no place in Europe's human-centric Artificial Intelligence (AI), says the EESC in its [response](#) to the European Commission's [White Paper on AI](#), adopted by the EESC plenary in July.

The European Commission has proposed that an AI application should be considered high-risk if it involves both a high-risk sector (healthcare, transport, energy and parts of the public sector) and high-risk use, with a few exceptions to be defined. Only if these two conditions are met should we talk about high-risk AI, which would fall under specific regulations and

governance structures.

The EESC believes that this definition risks creating potentially dangerous loopholes.

"Take Facebook's political advertising", argues opinion rapporteur Catelijne Muller. "Advertising is a low-risk sector and Facebook's news aggregation function can be regarded as a low-risk use. However, we have seen during election campaigns that the spread across Facebook of fake news and deepfakes generated with the help of AI can have many negative effects and influence how people vote, with interference even from outside Europe."

The EESC believes it would be better to draw up a list of common characteristics to be considered high-risk no matter what the sector.

AI-driven biometric recognition for surveillance or to track, assess or categorise human behaviour or emotions should also be banned, the EESC insists. All the more so since there is no scientific evidence that we can discern a person's feelings based on their biometrics, stresses Ms Muller.

Additionally, the EESC warns against an uncontrolled surge in tracking and tracing technology finding its way into our society in a bid to fight the coronavirus outbreak.

"AI techniques and approaches to fight the pandemic should be just as robust, effective, transparent and explainable as any other AI technique in any other situation," says Ms Muller. "They should uphold human rights, ethical principles and legislation. They should also be voluntary, because whether we like it or not, many techniques introduced during the crisis will become permanent". (dm)



EU gender equality strategy must not fail to address the damaging effects of the COVID-19 crisis on women

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) calls on the European Commission to promptly implement its new Gender Equality Strategy, while tackling the damaging gender impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which has further exacerbated existing social and economic gender inequalities, increasing violence against women and different forms of discrimination against them.

"With COVID-19, women have increasingly been at risk of violence, poverty, multiple forms of discrimination and economic dependence. The strategy should be implemented without delay, to prevent women from continuing to pay the price for the pandemic," said **Giulia Barbucci**, rapporteur for the EESC opinion on gender equality, adopted at its July

plenary session.

In its opinion, the EESC argued that the Commission must make sure that the Strategy takes account of the negative repercussions of the crisis for gender equality and that the gender perspective is incorporated into all the Member States' recovery measures.

Co-rapporteur of the opinion, **Indrė Vareikytė**, underlined the important role played by the media in creating and perpetuating stereotypes that lead to prejudice against women and create further inequalities.

She said the EESC was calling for a new thematic focus – media and advertising – to be included in the next Gender Equality Index published by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). The media should thus adopt codes of conduct and other measures outlawing sexism and dismantling stereotypes.(II)



Achieving climate neutrality will depend heavily on the EU's capacity to engage with citizens

Tackling climate and environmental challenges has become a top EU priority. From climate change to climate emergency, the EU needs to make substantial changes to foster a well-being economy.

In order to address these challenges and bring about these changes, the European Commission adopted the European Green Deal and opened a consultation to gather views on ways to engage the public in a European Climate Pact (ECP).

The EESC was, therefore, called upon to provide guidance on how to build on existing structures like citizens' dialogues and assemblies to achieve the desired societal engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals, as the success of all climate action measures will depend on it.

"In implementing the Climate Pact, the Commission has an important opportunity and obligation to model an innovative approach which will mirror, support and inspire action already happening in civil society, within communities, cities and regions," emphasised **Dimitris Dimitriadis**, rapporteur of the ECP opinion.

The Commission is, moreover, proposing to put a new target for 2030 into EU law through the recently proposed [European Climate Law](#) (ECL), which sets a legally binding target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

"There can be no more important time for the combined forces of civil society and government to commit to the implementation of the Climate Law as we move into post-COVID recovery. The pandemic has helped us all realise that with effort we really can do things very differently," stressed **Jan Dirx**, rapporteur of the ECL opinion. (mr)



EESC pushes for data exchange for digital and collaborative economy

The EESC urges EU Member States to intensify their coordination on tax matters at European and international level with a view to the digital and collaborative economy. A closer coordination of tax policies applicable to the new economic sector and devising instruments and working solutions could improve tax compliance, assure fair competition and tap the full potential of this new economic sector.

While the EESC welcomes the existing cooperation of the European Commission, the EU Member States and the OECD/G20 on this issue, it encourages the Member States, in an opinion that was adopted by the EESC plenary on 15 July 2020, to find solutions at EU level if international agreement is not reached as planned by the end of 2020 and cannot be expected in the foreseeable future.

The Committee proposed clear and harmonised reporting obligations for digital and collaborative businesses and a functional and proportionate system for collecting and exchanging data at EU level if international agreement is lagging behind.

At the EESC plenary session, the rapporteur of the opinion, **Ester Vitale**, drew special attention to the urgent need for action. "*Taxation and tax policies must adapt to the constant developments in the collaborative economy. International, European and national institutions must act effectively and rapidly in order to deal with the challenges it poses. A solution should, preferably, be found at international or even global level,*" Ms Vitale said and specified that "current tax rules and models must be adapted to the new business environment." (mp)



EESC backs the European Year of Rail in 2021

Rail should play a prominent role in the EU's future mobility and become the primary form of transport. For this reason, the EESC is pleased to support the European Commission in proposing to mark 2021 as the Year of Rail.

In the opinion approved at the July plenary session and drafted by **Alberto Mazzola**, the Committee says that, on the one hand, the EU has to invest more in rail in line with the goals of the European Green Deal and, on the other, it has to raise its visibility, bringing about a debate on passenger services, including on people with reduced mobility, digitalisation and environmental sustainability.

Against the backdrop of the European Year of Rail in 2021, rail will be showcased as a prime example of smart mobility and an innovative and safe mode of transport, with efforts to reach out to the wider public, especially young people. Projects, debates, events, exhibitions and initiatives organised throughout Europe will be aimed at citizens,

businesses and authorities and explain why rail is an attractive and sustainable way to travel across Europe, emphasising its EU-wide aspect.

Commenting during the plenary, Mr Mazzola stressed that this initiative "*should also be an opportunity to better communicate the attractiveness of a career in rail, especially to young Europeans, by supporting joint initiatives with social partners, universities, the academic community at large as well as European youth*

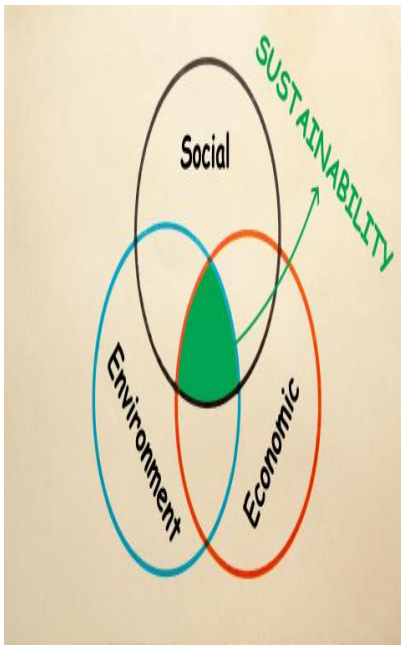


[The EESC outlines the key role of trade in promoting a sustainable economic recovery from COVID-19](#)

At its July plenary session, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) adopted an [opinion](#) on the latest annual report issued by the European Commission on the implementation of free trade agreements (FTAs), covering 2018. The EESC outlines the key role of trade in "*promoting a sustainable economic recovery and allowing companies to rebuild and re-organise their disrupted value chains*". At the same time, it regrets that civil society's monitoring work remains "*largely absent*" from the implementation report.

In its opinion, the EESC urges the EU institutions to draw important lessons from the current situation. These include the need to restore more resilient, diversified and responsible global supply chains and to develop stronger mechanisms "*to deliver on a sustainable trade and investment agenda in all its dimensions*".

The EESC particularly regrets that the work done by domestic advisory groups (DAGs) to monitor the impact of agreements on trade and sustainable development (TSD) commitments is "*largely absent*" from the report. The EESC calls for DAGs "*to be strengthened to fulfil their monitoring tasks successfully*" and expresses its concerns "*given that TSD chapters currently lack binding enforcement tools*".(dgf)



Coronavirus crisis: EESC says EU companies should rethink their business model

We need to change the way we do business in Europe and around the world, but the EU's long-term goals for sustainable economic growth should remain the pillars of our future in spite of the COVID-19 crisis.

In its opinion on Enhancing sustainable economic growth across the EU, drafted by **Philip von Brockdorff** and adopted at the July plenary session, the Committee underlines that the crisis is an opportunity to rethink and improve the way EU companies do business. It must not be an excuse to undermine the objectives set in the European Green Deal, the 2020 Sustainable Growth Strategy and the European Pillar for Social Rights.

During the plenary debate, **Mr von Brockdorff** said that "*the economic problems brought about by the coronavirus crisis call for a change in the modus operandi of businesses within the EU and across the globe. Supply chains have proved vulnerable and need to be secured. EU operators need to rethink their supply-chain strategies, focusing on diversification and realignment of supply chains across multiple sectors. Some form of sectoral deglobalisation is also needed, at least for EU companies producing essential goods, which should consider moving their manufacturing plants back to Europe*".

In order to make sustainable growth a reality in the next few years, we need to re-jig the European economy, keeping in mind the keystones of environmental sustainability, productivity gains, fairness, social progress and macroeconomic stability.

The European Union needs to play a more prominent role in world trade. This is key for EU companies and their business prospects. For global firms operating in a global marketplace, a level playing field is also essential in a wide range of areas, such as international labour standards, fair competition and compliance with climate change targets. (mp)



Constant changes are jeopardising the completion of the trans-European transport network

Constant changes in EU Member States' domestic political priorities are a fundamental obstacle to achieving timely implementation of trans-European transport network (TEN-T) projects, and this raises doubts as to whether it will be possible to complete the core network by 2030.

The warning comes from **Alberto Mazzola's** information report entitled *Evaluation of the Trans-European Network – Transport (TEN-T) guidelines 2013-2020*, adopted at the EESC's July plenary session.

The main barriers to completing the TEN-T projects include not just changes in national political priorities, affecting projects with cross-border significance in particular, but also opposition from citizens and other stakeholders. This shows that there are important social and economic

issues related to TEN-T policy where civil society needs must be addressed, because only if civil society organisations are involved and consulted early on can proper follow-up be carried out and the impediments to the project's implementation be removed.

During the plenary debate, **Mr Mazzola** said: "*We share stakeholders' doubts as to whether the core network can be completed by 2030, but we consider this target to be important in order to push Member States to work harder, and we believe that several major cross-border projects could be completed by that date. Civil society participation and monitoring of corridor and project development are fundamental to implementing the projects in the most appropriate way. Where this has been carried out at an early stage with widespread information campaigns, the projects are advancing quite well, while where this has not been done there is strong resistance from parts of the population.*" (mp)



Global warming: EESC calls for new tax measures to reduce CO₂

New taxes and additional measures on CO₂ emissions will help, but will not be sufficient: global warming is likely to continue unless existing CO₂ emissions can be taken out of the atmosphere.

In an opinion drafted by Krister Andersson and adopted at the July plenary session, the Committee highlights the fact that a new system is needed whereby CO₂ emissions are not only taxed and therefore discouraged, but emissions that are already in the atmosphere can be removed, stored and used for other purposes.

Commenting during the plenary, **Mr Andersson** said: *"It is important to use taxation to reach Europe's climate neutrality goals, but there is a need for additional tools. It would be efficient if, as well as being able to reduce CO₂ emissions, we could also remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. This is why we are calling for a symmetrical taxation approach based on this strategy: tax revenues from CO₂ taxes could be used to pay for activities that remove CO₂ from the atmosphere"*.

The EESC also recommends developing, through dedicated investments, new technologies at EU and national level, allowing for carbon capture and storage (CCS) as well as carbon capture and utilisation (CCU). These measures would be a further step towards reducing the impact of CO₂

emissions, thereby complying with the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN and the Paris Agreement on climate change. (mp)



Globalisation without regulation leads to increased inequality, says EESC

Fostering competitiveness, innovation and job creation should be a priority in global regulatory cooperation through a renewed multilateral trading scheme, says the European Economic and Social Committee in an [opinion](#) initiated by Georgi Stoev and Thomas Student and adopted by the EESC plenary in July.

Disruptions like coronavirus (COVID-19) threaten to bring the global economy and social life to a standstill. Its impacts include recessions in the USA, the EU, Japan and other regions of the world, extremely slow growth in China and huge losses in terms of output. Governments have to offset economic damage with fiscal and monetary policies and cope with the expected changes to the economic paradigm.

"Industrial development in Europe must not fall victim to unfair economic, social and environmental dumping. This could become a real threat to European industries and the European social model," said the rapporteur of the opinion, **Georgi Stoev**. "We are concerned about the negativity regarding international trade and globalisation and the rise of populism. Protectionism and nationalism cannot provide answers to economic and social problems," he concluded.

"Europe urgently needs a new project for internal integration: a common economic, social (including public health coordination), fiscal, energy and environmental strategy and a coherent trade policy," said the co-rapporteur, **Thomas Student**. The EESC believes that the Green Deal should integrate a new industrial strategy and trade policy together with economic, regulatory and competition policy in a comprehensive effort to help the environment, without creating a threat to the single market and European companies and jobs, and should set high environmental targets for industry as a whole. (ks)

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS



[The EESC calls for improved agricultural safeguard clauses in trade](#)

By the EESC Employers' Group

An own-initiative opinion on [Introduction of safeguard measures for agricultural products in trade agreements](#) was adopted at the July plenary session.

This opinion, adopted just before the Commission's revision of EU trade policy is due to start, emphasises the geostrategic challenge of food production and the need to protect the production capacity of each country by promoting agricultural and trade policies adapted for this purpose, while guaranteeing international trade that can cope both with production fluctuations and with the perennial shortcomings of certain geographical areas.

According to the rapporteur, **Arnold Puech d'Alissac**, a member of the EESC Employers' Group, "*IT capacity developments now make it possible to implement much more effective measures. These can be swift, automatic, proportionate and exhaustive in order to fulfil their role of protecting sectors, from producers to consumers*".

The rapporteur also stresses that, "*it's also an opportunity for the concept of sustainability to be recognised in trade negotiations to prevent cheap imports with insufficiently sustainable production conditions from being favoured over European production. In light of the Green Deal, consistency between environmental, agricultural and trade policies is vital.*" (kr)

How would the economy react if we ensured common minimum standards for unemployment across Europe?

By the EESC Workers' Group

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has transformed a looming crisis into a full-scale economic depression, seeing the largest GDP drops in peacetime for a century, and has sent millions to different - unemployment or part-time - schemes. Despite their role in cushioning the bulk of the impact, our social systems are in general as ill-prepared as our health systems were for the pandemic, as they have been severely undermined by years of austerity since the 2008 crisis.

Moreover, the measures in place to protect workers and their jobs are uneven, with the most precarious workers often left outside the traditional protection schemes – such as those with delivery and other "new forms of work" contracts.

The system of unemployment benefits is not only fragmented within countries, but also between them: there are massive differences in duration and coverage of benefits, as well as replacement – share of the former salary received.

The study commissioned by the Workers' Group analyses how the economy as a whole in the EU, and in individual countries, would react if the unemployment systems had a common floor of coverage, duration and replacement, ensuring workers in Europe a common minimum standard. Using macroeconomic modelling, the study tests this hypothesis against the 2008 crisis, a whole budgetary cycle and, more relevant today, against the pandemic economic downturn.

Results show clearly that the impact on the economy would be positive, much more so if used together with other social policies, ensuring the protection of jobs and avoiding another economic recession. You may find the full study and details in the following [link](#). (prp)





[New study "Finding a new consensus on European civil society values and their evaluation" commissioned by EESC Diversity Europe Group published](#)

By the EESC Diversity Europe Group

Do civil society organisations (CSOs) in France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Hungary and Poland share a common understanding of the values of democracy, the rule of law and solidarity?

The new study [Finding a new consensus on European civil society values and their evaluation](#), carried out by the European Policy Centre (EPC) for the EESC at the request of the EESC's Diversity Europe Group, shows that CSOs in the researched countries tend to converge in their definitions of these values, even if they display more diverse interpretations of solidarity than of democracy and the rule of law.

The study also reveals that CSOs recognise the crucial role that the civil sector plays in promoting these values. However, CSOs face diverse challenges in doing so, relating especially to restricted access to funding, technological and generational change and, above all, unfavourable political environments. Government and civil society itself are becoming more confrontational, more political and less open to compromise in all countries studied. CSOs in the South and East describe their situation, perception of values and future outlook less positively than CSOs in the West.

According to the study, the future will require cooperation and innovation from both civil society and governments at all levels if CSOs are to be able to continue defending the values of the European Union.

On 2 September, EESC Diversity Europe Group president **Arno Metzler** presented the study together with **Corina Stratulat**, EPC Senior Policy Analyst, and **Paul Butcher**, EPC Policy Analyst, two of the study's

authors, during a remote press event.

Consult the EESC web page to find out more about the proposals and recommendations from CSOs themselves and from the research team presented in the study. The study and its [executive summary](#) as well as a [related press release](#) are available online.(jk)

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