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| **OPINION** |
| European Economic and Social Committee |
| **Strategic Foresight Report 2023** |
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| Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council2023 Strategic Foresight Report Sustainability and people's wellbeing at the heart of Europe's Open Strategic Autonomy(COM(2023) 376 final) |
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# **Conclusions and recommendations**

## The EESC recognises foresight as important in supporting decision-making processes and notes the efforts at EU level to assign foresight a strategic institutional role and to consider it in the EU decision-making.

## The EESC welcomes the appointment of a Vice-President of the Commission as Commissioner for foresight and calls for that role to be confirmed by the new Commission.

## The EESC supports the Commission's intention to continue developing the strategic foresight process, in cooperation with Member States and relevant stakeholders. The EESC calls for greater involvement for the EESC, as the voice of organised civil society and social partners, to enhance the EU's analysis and foresight capacities and help pinpoint trends and possible solutions in a transformative society.

### In this regard, we propose:

### every five years, in the context of the European Parliament election and the nomination of the new European Commission, the EESC will coordinate an internal process to implement – for each section and the CCMI – a foresight exercise **to identify the main trends and scenarios, priorities and actions**;

### every three years the previous exercise will be upgraded and updated (as a mid-term review) on the basis of what actually happened.

### All this **will allow the EESC to provide a strategic foresight framework** capable of being minutely adapted to each section and area for action and will represent our body's contribution to the Commission and the foresight strategists' network.

## The EESC agrees with the Commission's approach of promoting efforts to identify options for new economic models that are feasible and impactful, with a view to ensuring **inclusive and sustainable competitiveness** that maintains a high level of social and environmental protection, good quality jobs, and fair and solidarity-based conditions that preserve the European model of a highly competitive social market economy.

## The EESC calls for a renewed and expanded EU industrial policy aimed at coordinating decisions and interventions (e.g. use of funds, resources, instruments and measures) to increase coherence among sectors – in particular "traditional" and manufacturing sectors – and among Member States towards sustainable competitiveness for the EU.

## The EESC calls for complementary indicators to GDP to be identified and translated into policy measures and specific concrete action, in order to assess the EU's resilience and future-readiness; these indicators should be analysed in particular at local level within the EU and with regard to the EU's international economic competitors.

## Demographic changes and emerging technologies (such as immigration, workforce transitions, labour mobility, skills and raw materials shortages, fertility and ageing) will impact the sustainability of taxation and welfare systems. The EESC calls on the EU and national institutions, the private sector and local stakeholders to work on defining and adopting a new European social contract fit for a sustainable future, as highlighted as the first key area of action in the 2023 Strategic Foresight Report (SF2023 report).

## The EESC recognises that skills are becoming increasingly important in a changing world and calls for education and training systems to be revised to fit the needs, helping workers and companies to adapt to the new requirements, with a view to providing a renewed social contract that will ensure a work-life balance and decent and quality jobs, reduce disparities and increase competitiveness and capacities at geographical and cultural levels, focused on growth and sustainability.

## The EESC asks the EU and Member States to join efforts to ensure the provision of European public goods in a balanced and sustainable way that maintains people's quality of life and dignity. Commodities and services that will safeguard ***defence***, ***security*** (e.g. in *food systems, water, energy supply and distribution, the economy, R&I, access to information, and strategic infrastructure*), ***health***, ***education*** and ***well-being*** are crucial to enable the EU's "comprehensive resilience ecosystem" to achieve and maintain sustainable and inclusive competitiveness and democracy. On this basis the EESC asks for the next Multiannual Financial Framework post-2027 to take into account the results of the 2023 Strategic Foresight Report and the strategic foresight update exercises at EU level.

## EU institutions should carefully evaluate the potential and risks of using artificial intelligence tools in strategic foresight to analyse and understand patterns and interconnections, with a view to speeding up decision-making at European and other political levels.

## The EESC finds it regrettable that the SF2023 report makes no reference to the "EU Blue Deal", and highlights the importance of ensuring a water-secure future for all with a comprehensive and ambitious European water strategy.

# **Background**

## Strategic foresight can be understood as a mix of innovative strategic planning, policymaking and solution design methods that does not claim to predict or foresee the future but works with alternative futures with the aim of trying to shape the final one[[1]](#footnote-1). Based on this vision we agree with the following definition of strategic foresight: "*a systematic, participatory, future-intelligence-gathering and medium-long-term vision-building process aimed at enabling present-day decision and mobilizing joint actions*"[[2]](#footnote-2).

## The objective of foresight is to contribute to the strategic decision-making process by identifying and analysing early warnings, weak signals, drivers, trends, mega trends, wild cards and "black swans" that enable us to predict how the current scenario will evolve along various future paths, identify the future we want and analyse the different paths to reach it.

## Nowadays, our world is facing a multitude of global challenges characterised by diverse interconnected aspects. The complexity of the resulting system makes it necessary to tackle these challenges by integrating the social, economic, political and environmental levels. For this reason, there is a growing demand for strategic foresight.

## In strategic foresight, a long-term vision is not based on a linear evolution of the individual components making up the current system but is a process, still based on experience and knowledge, whose creative and intuitive aspect can bring added value to a business-as-usual approach. In this process the various phases (monitoring, scanning, screening, modification/adaptation, evaluation) are fundamental and are part of that cyclical process of adapting the foreseen scenarios.

## Socio-biologists have described the challenge humans face in dealing with their existence as a system composed of divine technologies, medieval institutions and prehistoric emotions[[3]](#footnote-3). This categorisation suggests that, when analysing scenarios and proposing action, aspects such as services, organisational structures and human nature cannot be neglected. Based on this reflection, alternative perspectives on foresight on global challenges have also been developed to inform policy in areas that are poorly defined or absent from Europe's science agenda. These alternative perspectives argue in favour of increasing research into the human, social, political and cultural processes involved in techno-science endeavours[[4]](#footnote-4).

## Foresight is recognised as a useful tool in decision-making processes and, as a result, has been recently introduced at EU institutional level. The EESC acknowledges the role of foresight in providing a strategic contribution to guiding decision-making at policy level. The EESC welcomes the efforts at EU level to strengthen the foresight processes that were initially carried out in 1979-1994 and have been enhanced over the last decade through the promotion of a joint foresight community[[5]](#footnote-5). In this context, Europe must deal with various policy levels/contexts and capacities, stakeholder types and experiences, objectives and foresight methods[[6]](#footnote-6). The EESC believes that these foresight initiatives – a good example of European investment in high-quality and useful research – will contribute significantly to addressing various scenarios and will facilitate the decision-making process.

## The EESC supports the Commission's intention to continue developing the strategic foresight process, in cooperation with the Member States and with the involvement of the EESC. The EESC has provided input to recent strategic foresight reports (SFRs) by making suggestions in its opinions, jointly organising hearings with the Commission and inviting the Commission to relevant section meetings. The EESC reaffirms the importance of maintaining this constructive cooperation with the Commission so that the Committee can have a greater impact, and asks that the outcomes of the foresight process be tracked throughout the legislative process.

## Considering the relevance of the 2023 SFR and its focus on people and sustainability, the EESC calls for greater involvement for the EESC, as the voice of the social partners and organised civil society, to enhance the EU's analysis and foresight capacities and help to pinpoint trends and possible solutions in a transformative society. The EESC welcomes the appointment of a Vice-President of the Commission as Commissioner for foresight and calls for that role to be confirmed by the new Commission.

# **The European approach: comments on the 2023 Strategic Foresight Report**

## The EESC recognises the European Commission's efforts and welcomes the 2023 Strategic Foresight Report[[7]](#footnote-7) (2023 SFR). The 2023 SFR was drawn up against the backdrop of a very dynamic social, geopolitical and economic situation, where Russia's military aggression against Ukraine has amplified and transformed many of the major challenges identified in recent years. In this new global context, now exacerbated by the Middle East crisis, the strategic decisions made by the European Union are set to impact not only its achievement of the objectives of the **green and digital transitions, but also its resilience and open strategic autonomy.**

## The report provides an accurate description and analysis of the **present threats** to which the EU's sustainable transition is exposed, within its borders and at global level, and concerns for some rights that EU citizens gained in the past that are now at risk. These are not only associated with specific areas (e.g. *security, food, water, ageing*) but with cross-cutting and structuring aspects of our society, such as *peace, democracy, wellbeing and social cohesion***:** i) ***the rising importance of geopolitics and the reconfiguration of globalisation***; ii) ***the quest for a sustainable economy and wellbeing*;** iii) ***increasing pressure to ensure sufficient funding***; iv) ***the growing demand for skills and competencies for the sustainable future***; v) ***the widening gap in social cohesion***; vi) ***threats to democracy and the existing social contract****.*

## The EESC acknowledges the conclusion of the foresight exercise, which suggests the need to tackle the adverse impact of ***climate change, biodiversity loss and the degradation of the environment***, and ensure the supply of ***critical******raw materials*** and the transformation of ***energy*** production and distribution. The EESC recognises that high energy prices and the alarming geopolitical situation are heavily impacting the social and economic dimensions, including in terms of the available opportunities in the EU production system and labour market.

## In this context, the EESC considers it crucial to implement an effective EU industrial policy aimed at coordinating decisions and interventions (e.g. use of funds, resources, new common instruments and measures) to increase coherence among sectors and among Member States towards inclusive and sustainable competitiveness for the EU[[8]](#footnote-8).

## The strategic courses followed by the main global players and emerging countries are galvanising geopolitical, economic, social and technological global rivalry. Developments on the global stage may jeopardise the foundations of multilateralism and the rules-based international order and threaten the EU's position. The EESC supports the EU's efforts in promoting its values and standards, including through smart investments in quality infrastructure and services, while respecting the highest social and environmental standards.

## The report identifies ***10 strategically key areas*** ***for EU action***: i) ***ensuring a new European social contract fit for a sustainable future***; ii) ***leveraging the single market to champion a resilient net-zero economy***; iii) ***strengthening the interlinkages between the EU's internal and external policies, also to boost the EU's offer and narrative on the global stage***; iv) ***supporting shifts in production and consumption towards sustainability***; v) ***moving towards a "Europe of investments" by increasing private financial flows in support of strategic investments for the transitions***; vi) ***making public budgets fit for sustainability***; vii) ***further shifting policy and economic indicators towards sustainable and inclusive wellbeing***; viii) ***ensuring that everyone can successfully contribute to the sustainability transition;*** ix) ***strengthening democracy, including by increasing citizens' agency***; x) ***reinforcing the EU's toolbox on preparedness and response to complement civil protection with "civil prevention"***.

## The report tentatively identifies the main problem stemming from the international context. The EESC agrees with the call for EU policies to be adapted to **a new economic model**, for an increase in investment to enhance wellbeing and for Europe's economic system to become more fair, resilient and competitive. A new economic model can indeed induce a cascade effect on many different aspects that are reported as critical challenges (e.g. the social contract). **Decoupling economic growth from resources,** promoting and supporting circular economy activities**,** and the need to tackle interconnected aspects driving the major challenges (e.g. water supply, CO2 reduction, adaptation to adverse events caused by climate change, pandemic preparedness) are also linked to changes in behaviour, consumption and production. The EESC notes that all these aspects require massive investment, and joint institutional action to support the long-term transformation of the EU productive system and its workers. In this context, the EESC fully supports the revision of indicators of progress and prosperity that are now mainly identified in GDP.

## The EESC notes the increase in investment in **defence** by some countries, and in developing robotics, digital and cyber technologies. The EESC notes the increasing role of **intangible assets**, which can already be identified in process-based industrial and market transformations (e.g. distribution chains and client profiling), online platforms, and cyberwarfare. Eliminating the well-known "EU valley of death"[[9]](#footnote-9) for innovations and start-ups requires **new forms of financing** and regulation to develop start-ups and scale up innovative companies.

## Skills are becoming increasingly important in a changing world. This is coupled with shifts in the values and aspirations of the younger generation towards a work-life balance and decent and high-quality jobs. The EESC recognises that **education and training systems** have to be revised to fit the magnitude and speed of the transformations. The deluge of information that will be accessible in the future will require a problem-setting approach to learning that will enable people to navigate the uncertainties and crises that a complex world will face. In this context, where the circulation of information will be global, efforts are required to eliminate **disparities** and align capacities at geographical and cultural levels.

## Despite the accurate list of vulnerabilities that the EU could face in future scenarios, the EESC notes that the **10 key areas for action** described in the report do not provide a clear focus on what the EU should prioritise in terms of effort and investment in specific measures/tools. As stated previously[[10]](#footnote-10), the EESC notes that, while they are relevant, the 10 areas are not presented as logical and pragmatic solutions impacting on general trends and uncertainties. Hence, the EESC calls for an assessment of which activities should no longer be considered priorities, and of which tools and actions could have an impact at global level.

## The 2023 SFR refers to the issue of governance many times, in geopolitical, economic and social contexts. The EESC believes that suitable levels of strategic intelligence and **anticipatory governance** are required to guide the future-proofing of a growth-enhancing regulatory framework. In various global and local contexts where increased complexity is threatening democracy and competitiveness, it has been demonstrated at different levels that decentralising the organisational structure, adopting few rules and providing common fundamental services can ensure resilience and survival[[11]](#footnote-11).

## The EESC agrees with the Commission's approach of promoting high-quality social services, welfare politics, the elimination of inequalities and discrimination, and common current issues (climate, water and energy security, raw materials, environmental protection, defence of democracy and the rule of law, accountability of social platforms). The EESC fully supports the development of the concept of EU "**civil prevention**", embedded in established civil protection, with the aim of boosting the bloc's preparedness and its ability to respond quickly to emergencies. In this context the EESC finds it regrettable that the SF2023 report makes no reference to **the EU Blue Deal** and the importance of ensuring a water-secure future for all with a comprehensive and ambitious European water strategy.

## The EESC notes that the 10 areas do not identify **structural transformations** in the institutional organisation, including in view of the planned EU enlargement, in the management of human capital or in the adoption of high-risk and breakthrough actions to anticipate and guide events at global level. The term **sustainability** is used more and more in SFRs. The EESC notes that achieving integrated sustainability combining strategic autonomy, environmental protection and widespread social security requires dialogue and compromise, with transparent communication of the pros and cons of the various options.

## Foresight addresses a process of strategic thinking within the institutions involving continuous interaction with the context in which they operate. It aims to help make multilevel governance more appropriate and effective to better fulfil people's needs. The EESC asks the Commission to map and monitor of the foresight exercises carried out at EU and national level.

## The EESC offers to utilise its organisational structure and expertise to identify priorities and potential action and to help involve the various stakeholders in foresight. This will be possible thanks to the acknowledged capacity of the EESC to engage civil society organisations and social partners at local level, as well as international level. These efforts will be structured and coordinated as part of a five-year process involving each EESC section and the CCMI, to implement foresight activities to identify the main trends and scenarios, priorities and actions. A mid-term review after three years will make it possible to upgrade and update the exercises on the basis of the evolution of the scenarios. The output will feed the European policy-making process in interaction with the Commission, Parliament and relevant networks and initiatives.

# **Critical issues**

## The EESC asks the EU and Member States to join efforts to ensure the provision of EU public goods, including by adapting the EU budget to the new scenario. Commodities and services that will safeguard ***defence, security*** (e.g. in *food systems, water, energy supply and distribution, the economy, R&I, access to information and strategic infrastructure*), ***health, education*** and ***well-being*** are crucial to enable the EU's "comprehensive resilience ecosystem"[[12]](#footnote-12) to achieve and maintain sustainable and inclusive competitiveness and democracy.

### Recent geopolitical developments (e.g. the crisis in Ukraine and the Middle East) have worsened some external relations and put at risk the stability of the EU. Common political action and joint efforts at EU level would ensure that people and companies are defended from these external threats (tangible and intangible) that may threaten the EU's "comprehensive resilience ecosystem".

### The diversity of the interconnected variables of the market, at the level of sectors, stakeholders, standards and rules, means that the security of certain aspects needs to be ensured at public level. Security and safety of food systems and water, energy production and distribution, the economy, R&I, communication and access to information, and the use of strategic infrastructure (e.g. transport and the internet) should be guaranteed.

### The recent experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that the EU is able to tackle such challenges and prepare for future emergencies, thanks to the contribution of research and coordinated intervention at political, logistical and financial levels. Efficient and effective coordinated public health systems and their digitalisation will be fundamental in supporting EU citizens in managing diseases and ageing.

### Ensuring inclusive and equitable education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all is grounded in long-established foundational principles of education as a human right and as a public good. The notion of education as a public good underlines the primary responsibility of the State in safeguarding social justice and the public interest in education.

### Well-being is a multifaceted concept encompassing emotional, functional and structural dimensions that are compatible with living well, with dignity, and with full participation in society. As a public good, it is connected to self-worth, freedom, achieving adequate living conditions, creativity, entrepreneurship and active citizenship.

## The EESC calls for the promotion of EU scientific excellence and of an ecosystem that can provide intangible assets. This requires a stronger commitment to funding **high-risk ideas** and to adopting specific rules and standards for their protection in applicable solutions (e.g. through taxation or adjustment mechanisms). Many emerging technologies have been identified and some of them would be useful in tackling certain challenges[[13]](#footnote-13). In the long term, other promising solutions can achieve integrated sustainability ensuring the supply of critical raw materials combined with environmental protection[[14]](#footnote-14) and carbon neutrality (i.e. artificial photosynthesis[[15]](#footnote-15)).

### The EESC calls for the creation of safe spaces, e.g. at local level, for testing scenarios, combining "exnovation" with innovation, and identifying weak signals and breakthrough ideas to integrate short- and long-term visions in preparing fair transitions.

## The EESC calls for an effort to be made to identify options for **new economic models** that are feasible and impactful, with a view to ensuring inclusive and sustainable competitiveness that maintains a high level of social and environmental protection, good quality jobs, and fair and solidarity-based conditions that preserve the model of a highly competitive social market economy. Moreover, the EESC fully supports the desire to identify **complementary indicators to GDP** and to translate these into policy measures and specific effective action to be taken. The combination of different indicators will provide new paths for addressing challenges and will eliminate the concept of ranking countries based solely on GDP.

## Population ageing as well as the uneven demographic situation across Europe and a shrinking working-age population will result in a combination of interconnected aspects (e.g. immigration, work force transformation, labour mobility, skill shortages, fertility and aging, sustainability of taxation and welfare system) that will put at risk the EU stability at socio-economic levels. The EESC calls on the EU institutions, the private sector and local stakeholders to work on defining and adopting a new European social contract fit for the challenges foreseen in the future and an EU fiscal capacity that can guarantee the sustainability of financial systems at EU and national level.

## In the face of an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world, education can make the difference. **Education and training systems** need to radically transform their approaches in order to face future challenges. The exploitation of planetary resources requires intergenerational, knowledge-based support in order to promote common prosperity and wellbeing. This process will require a variety of stakeholders to be involved[[16]](#footnote-16). With an increasing deluge of data and information being accessible to the global population, the concept of knowledge will need to be revised, and skills should focus on collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking (usually referred to as the four c's)[[17]](#footnote-17).

Brussels, 24 April 2024.

*The President of the European Economic and Social Committee*

Oliver RÖPKE

Enclosed:

Annex 1 – Contributions from the sections

Annex 2 – List of relevant EESC opinions

**ANNEX 1**

*The following text has been drafted on the basis of contributions from the EESC Sections and the CCMI.*

***Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO)***

***Section for External Relations (REX)***

***Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC)***

***Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (NAT)***

***Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT)***

***Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN)***

***Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI)***

# **The EESC's contribution to the 10 key areas for action.**

## Over the last few years, the EESC has drawn up specific opinions for each of the 10 key areas for action identified in the 2023 Strategic Foresight Report (SFR), with the following main messages.

## **Ensuring a new European social contract fit for a sustainable future**

(Section SOC contribution)

### **The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan** must become an effective tool to allow all parties involved to work in partnership and build more equal, sustainable, inclusive and resilient European societies. The EPSR supports a social market economy, scaling up and adapting its social model to the changes of the future. To build social resilience and sustainability the EPSR Action Plan needs to ensure widespread well-being and an inclusive labour market where discrimination is banned, and jobs are stable and well remunerated.

### Competitiveness and higher productivity based on skills and knowledge represent a sound recipe for maintaining the well-being of European societies. Economic growth and a well-functioning internal market are an important element in strengthening the social dimension of the EU. We need to reinforce the strengths of our European social market economy system while removing the weaknesses, thus adapting it to face the challenges ahead.

### The EESC believes that **guaranteeing** **minimum social standards** for every person living in the EU is of the utmost importance for building a fair and inclusive society. In implementing the social pillar, a balanced mix of legislation and soft law should be sought.

### The EESC has addressed the question of **welfare systems and access to social security for workers in the new forms of work**, like platform work and hybrid/remote work. Developments in technology and in ways of working are gathering pace, meaning that rules and practices need to be adapted to new conditions in the future.

### The EESC has also looked into **teleworking** and pointed out that the organisation of working time, the risks to health and safety at work, work-life balance, the right to disconnect and the effectiveness of labour rights when teleworking must be given special attention.

### The EESC also adopted an opinion on the ***Adequate minimum wages directive* in 2021**, in which it supported well-developed wage-setting systems and well-functioning social protection systems that provide safety nets for those in need, as well as other measures to prevent in-work poverty.

### EESC believes that a robust methodology is needed **for setting the level of minimum income** benefits to take into account the different income sources and specific situations of households. Minimum income schemes should be part of national strategies to combat poverty that integrate measures to achieve, among other things, fair wages and decent work and access to affordable and good quality essential services.

### The social partners will continue to play an important role in shaping economic, employment and social policy. A new European social contract cannot be achieved without them. Wage coordination plays a key role in helping social partners account for the macroeconomic effects of wage agreements on competitiveness. The social partners must assume greater importance in a dynamic labour market and identify opportunities for ensuring the viability of **sound and solid structures for social dialogue**. The EESC believes that collective bargaining and social dialogue can support industrial strategy in changing economic conditions and boost productivity at the workplace, in line with national industrial relations.

### **Protecting the most vulnerable citizens**, such as homeless people, has always been one of the EESC's priorities. In its recent opinion on homelessness, the EESC clearly stated that tackling homelessness must remain a social policy priority.

(Section TEN contribution)

### ***The conclusions*** of the 2023 edition of the Conference on **Tackling Energy Poverty for a Just Transition** highlighted in particular the need to:

# lift the stigma surrounding vulnerable citizens in situations of energy poverty;

# create opportunities for prosumerism (enable consumers to become producers as well);

# establish one-stop shops for energy-related assistance, improving communication to reach the most vulnerable consumers;

# protect vulnerable populations from the financial burden of energy-efficient renovations;

# provide a sustainable and affordable transport system;

# promote a gender-balanced approach to energy poverty with a view to achieving true equity and inclusivity.

### The conclusions of the conference *#ReskillEU – new jobs for energy and transport in Europe* highlighted the following aspects:

# The skills gap is one of the crucial factors in and obstacles to the EU green and digital transition. According to the Commission, 74% of SMEs are facing labour shortages.

# Industries need to increase their attractiveness to young workers and align the evolving skill sets of young professionals with the requirements of emerging jobs.

# Access to continuing professional development and lifelong learning should be improved.

# Comprehensive, collaborative efforts within the industry-workforce-education triangle are crucial in order to effectively address the future skills gap.

# Lifelong learning requires an integrated approach that blends in-house training within companies with external educational opportunities.

# Consultation and participation of workers and social partners plays a vital role in anticipating changing skills needs.

# Embracing a bottom-up approach, working with regional and local authorities, will establish a robust system of best practices, where regions actively learn from one another.

# The gender disparity prevalent in energy and transport professions inhibits diversity and hinders workforce availability.

(Section INT contribution)

## **Leveraging the Single Market to champion a resilient net-zero economy**

(Section INT contribution)

### Completing the single market could add more than EUR 700 billion in economic output over ten years, and a common digital economy could contribute another EUR 178 billion. Transforming European industry goes well beyond clean-tech manufacturing, because Europe is home to a lot of energy-intensive heavy and primary industries that need to be decarbonised and are not included in the Green Deal Industrial Plan (GDIP). A coherent industrial strategy for Europe consists of inclusive economic growth that ensures that all Member States and regions participate in and benefit from the green industrial transition. Therefore, it is crucial for the GDIP to avoid any fragmentation of the single market and to aim for cohesion between Member States and regions. Regulation must be complemented by other tools such as subsidies, in order to avoid a loss of GDP and welfare. Reporting requirements, notably across the EU's green, digital, and economic legislation, should be streamlined and, where possible, harmonised, in order to avoid a proliferation of rules, regulatory chaos and fragmentation of the single market**.**

### The quest for open **strategic autonomy** requires that an ambitious programme of modernisation and framework conditions be launched in strategic sectors of services of general interest (SGEIs), such as energy and raw materials, mobility and public transport, water, sanitation and water resources, and telecommunications and digital accessibility.

### A strategy for the future of the internal market should focus on several aspects: a European industrial policy, a favourable framework for businesses and SMEs, social economy enterprises, public support for the European project, properly organised and efficient services of general interest and steps to preserve and develop our social model.

### The new industrial strategy must:

# develop a robust industrial economy which is green and digital, sustainable and fair, limit excessive dependence and guarantee access to safe, sustainable sources of critical raw materials, consolidate the European social model and uphold people's fundamental rights;

# promote the development of modern, interoperable and strategic European digital infrastructure, which is key for a smart, competitive, green and resilient industry, including artificial intelligence (AI);

# combat climate change by ensuring carbon neutrality through energy efficiency, renewable energy use, the circular economy, longer-lasting products, etc.;

# devise a stable economic policy with clear rules, ensuring legal certainty and providing for sufficient capacity in public finances for innovation;

# guarantee steady access to green energy at stable, competitive prices to support energy-intensive industries, the backbone of European industry;

# strengthen the workforce's adaptive capacity and skills, along with decent working conditions in the industrial sector so as to cope with demographic challenges.

## **Strengthening the interlinkages between the EU's internal and external policies, also to boost the EU's offer and narrative on the global stage**

(Section REX contribution)

### The EU should work with like-minded partner to strengthen the UN through fundamental reform, but should also preserve the multilateral rules-based order. To make it fit for the growing challenges and to stabilise the consensus on shared values and norms, UN governance needs to become more representative, inclusive and effective.

### In order to remain competitive, **the economic intelligence and foresight capabilities of the European institutions and national administrations** should be further strengthened. They should be able to foresee and assess the strengths of the EU in relation to geopolitical and geoeconomic developments and measures by other global players and to measure the long-term consequences.

### The EU should apply **a proper competitiveness check to EU policy initiatives**, thereby contributing to the EU's economic security.

### The EU should develop **its long-term economic security strategy and monitor the economic security strategies and related strategies of other main trade partners and blocs**.

### The EU should **facilitate cooperation on research, innovation and skills development with like-minded partners in increasingly critical and strategic resources and raw materials, and also on critical themes such as water.**

### The EU's global cooperation initiatives, such **as the Global Gateway**, should be carefully designed and implemented using the Team Europe approach in order to deliver real impact. These initiatives should be communicated more effectively in order to showcase that the EU is making good use of the initiative to **strengthen economic and political ties with the EU's partner countries**, enabling the EU to compete effectively on a global level in the provision of infrastructure.

### Efforts should be made to include **maritime security cooperation in future EU trade agreements**.

### The EU should **maintain a sustainability approach in its trade agreements and trade policy**, step up its multilateral outreach, and coordinate the advancement and implementation of the sustainability strategy with partners in order to ensure that EU competitiveness is not affected and to avoid trade tensions.

### The EU should pay **attention to other important issues such as health** (including digital health) to strengthen the EU's global leadership role; health considerations, including mental health, should be integrated into all areas of EU external engagement such as trade agreements and development cooperation.

### The EU Member States **need to better coordinate national capability development and defence planning, and undertake much more joint procurement**. Greater effectiveness of European defence capabilities must be achieved through much better coordination of national industrial policies.

### Specific capacities and projects should also be developed for the **protection of EU critical infrastructure**.

### The EU should develop a credible strategic plan to **adjust its climate diplomacy to the current geopolitical landscape**. This strategy should set both short- and long-term priorities and concrete activities for different EU actors in order to integrate climate action into all fields of external action, including trade, investment, transport, migration, development cooperation, culture and health.

### **The EU should improve international cooperation and preparedness for migration flows induced by climate- and environment-related phenomena**.

### **Ocean governance should take all SDGs into account**, as it is a transdisciplinary topic that calls for international cooperation and affects land-based activities as well. Fisheries must be made more sustainable, thanks to a zero-tolerance approach towards illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU), stricter standards on bottom trawling, and greater compliance with labour rules.

## **Supporting shifts in production and consumption towards sustainability**

(CCMI contribution)

### To enable the EU to deliver on its promise of placing sustainability at the core of its strategic autonomy, the EESC stresses the importance of green energy security and access. Efforts to address climate change need to be built upon rapid and widespread transformation on an unprecedented scale, in numerous industries, driving a massive increase in green energy demand. The result is a dramatic transformation of the entire system of power generation, energy access, transmission, and energy security, which needs to be placed at the core of all EU green policies, so that industries, economies, countries, and citizens can thrive and can do so sustainably.

(Section INT contribution)

### Most European consumers complain that there is a lack of information on the environmental impacts of consumption. This lack of information is harmful because clear and comprehensible information is conducive to behavioural change. This has been confirmed by the EESC, in a study it carried out involving 3 000 European consumers. The study involved a simulation in which information was provided on the lifespan of everyday consumer products on an online shopping site; it found that providing this information would see a 56% increase in sales of products with a long lifespan. Improving consumer information will help to strengthen the business model of European businesses. Given the risks of dumping with imports of cheap products, micro-enterprises and SMEs – as well as their clients – are likely to gain a higher profile among consumers, enabling them to promote the quality of products designed in Europe.

### While appropriate environmental information needs to be provided, it is important to ensure that all environmental impacts are taken into account. In all these aspects, the average European's consumption is not environmentally sustainable. For example, ecological footprint calculations have shown that the way of life of an average European is now equivalent to 2.8 planets. In many cases, the way a product is designed shortens its lifespan, be it through technical processes, barriers to repair or software techniques. The resulting premature obsolescence is one of the main issues that fuels consumer dissatisfaction, as they are disadvantaged by considerable information asymmetry.

(Section TEN contribution)

### It is crucial to emphasise the central and active role of the general public, positioning them at the heart of Energy Union policies to integrate them into the market and transform them into genuine "prosumers". For these trends to effectively drive the green and energy transitions while maintaining economic and social equilibrium, a people-centric discourse on self-consumption and self-generation of energy is imperative. It is also essential to acknowledge the societal dimension, particularly in the context of combating energy poverty. Even though more than six years have passed since the introduction of the Clean Energy Package, energy communities and collective self-consumption remain marginalised in Europe's energy systems, with the European Commission yet to address existing barriers.

### Energy, including the infrastructure for transport and distribution, cannot be treated like any other commodity. It is therefore necessary to create regulatory framework conditions for future energy that guarantee both the right to energy and an environmentally friendly, affordable and reliable supply of energy.

### Persistent high inflation, driven by surging energy prices, is diminishing the purchasing power of European workers, consumers, and businesses, impacting family living standards, internal demand, and overall growth. Despite the EU's successful diversification from fossil fuel sources and reduced reliance on Russian energy, the measures have shown limited effectiveness in addressing escalating energy bills. For future measures a "green triple T" criterion should be implemented for tailored, targeted, and transition-proof interventions. The shift to fully decarbonised energy consumption requires affordable and stable energy prices. Achieving a just twin transition demands a more robust EU policy with a long-term vision to prevent demographic exclusion, surpassing temporary measures and emphasising inclusive and sustainable solutions.

(Section NAT contribution)

### The "take-make-waste" model of production and consumption that still dominates our economy today is not only culminating in wasted resources, but also undermining the fight against climate change. The circular economy is a regenerative and restorative design that focuses on economic value creation and retention, tackling global environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution while yielding economic benefits.

### The Circular Economy Action Plan sets out a comprehensive framework to make the EU economy more sustainable, with a strong focus on recycling, reducing waste, and extending product lifecycles. However, the EESC proposes faster and more ambitious implementation, while drawing particular attention to the fact that the circular economy approach can only succeed if all economic operators – producers, consumers and workers – and authorities are properly involved and informed.

### The revised monitoring framework for the circular economy is essential for effective and practical implementation, and new indicators including a consumption footprint, a material footprint for manufacturing and one for packaging waste, a Circular Materials Use Rate and use of Waste Per Capita are a positive development. Nonetheless, although the importance of eco-design in driving systemic change is well reflected in the CEAP and Ecodesign legislation, monitoring of design remains insufficient.

### To achieve sustainable food systems, we need to foster a holistic and systemic approach across the entire supply chain. There is a need for enabling frameworks and policies for innovation to support sustainable food business with adequate solutions and tools, while taking into account the social dimension of the food sector (e.g. security for workers). As we highlight in our opinions, we need to prioritise the "value of food" from nutritional, social, environmental and economic points of view. We reiterate the importance of investing in education on sustainable diets from an early age, to help young people appreciate the "value of food". A common European food labelling approach reflecting the Sustainable Dietary Guidelines would improve transparency and discourage the use of unnecessarily cheap raw materials that are both unhealthy and unsustainable.

(CCMI contribution)

### **Ensuring a water-secure future for all with a comprehensive and ambitious European water strategy – an EU Blue Deal:** Given the essential nature of water and the current and future challenges facing the world and our continent, the EESC calls on the European institutions to consider water as a priority and to adopt an EU Blue Deal as a standalone strategic policy, on an equal footing with the EU Green Deal. The water dimension should be embedded in all EU policies. Europe can transform water-related challenges into new opportunities for technological development, societal progress, new jobs, skills and business growth while respecting the environment and safeguarding water resources for the benefit of all.

## **Moving towards a "Europe of investments" by increasing private financial flows in support of strategic investments for the transitions**

(Section ECO contribution)

### **Public and private investment** will remain key, supported by well-functioning **capital markets**. A further shift in investment towards long-termism and sustainable assets is required.In this respect, it remains of the utmost importance that all substantive and systemic measures **to complete the Banking Union** and the **Capital Markets Union** be adopted and implemented. Civil society has a considerable interest in ensuring the **stability of the financial sector** and therefore sound capital requirements and risk preparedness in the banking and insurance sector.

### The EESC strongly supports the goal of **redirecting investment** in such a way that it contributes to the EU's transition to a sustainable economy, and recognises that the EU sustainability taxonomy is an important tool in this context. There is a need to regulate **environmental, social and governance (ESG) ratings** in order to facilitate their contribution to the transition to a climate-neutral economy – a legislative proposal the EESC has called for previously. **Minimum quality requirements for ratings** would help to prevent greenwashing, "social washing" and other types of misinformation, and the mandatory inclusion of double materiality should be part of these minimum quality requirements for ESG ratings. The focus on **social sustainability** needs to be tightened so that people and the world of work are at the centre. Social partners and civil society organisations (CSOs) should be fully involved in this process. The EESC recommends **integrating a social taxonomy** into the sustainable finance framework.

### Massive investment is needed to preserve the EU's **industrial base and ensure its competitiveness**, promote the green and digital transitions and enhance **open** **strategic autonomy**, using **EU funds** and considering to what extent investment should be covered by **EU programmes,** Member States, or private or blended financing tools.

## **Making public budgets fit for sustainability**

### Europe has faced unprecedented challenges in recent years. Enhancing the resilience and sustainability of the EU economy has become more important than ever in light of these challenges and is a key aspect in Europe's open strategic autonomy. One key issue is **the review of the** **economic governance framework**, which plays a crucial role in supporting the EU's growth agenda. **A balance is needed** between ensuring a gradual reduction of public debt ratios and ensuring that sufficient public and private capital can be mobilised for the green and digital transitions. Most importantly, for a reformed framework to be successful, **ownership** is key. The EESC considers it of paramount importance for minimum standards of **national parliamentary oversight and social partner and CSO involvement** to be established for the drafting of national medium-term fiscal structural plans. In this regard, the EESC is convinced that **the European Semester process must be revised**, with an EU regulation to establish basic criteria and define the principles and general characteristics of structured and permanent involvement of social partners and CSOs.

### The **multiannual financial framework (MFF)** is an important tool for financing programmes and actions in **all policy areas**, in line with the EU's **long-term priorities**. The EESC requests that civil society be heavily involved in the design, planning and implementation of MFF programmes and that effective **monitoring measures** be introduced to oversee programme implementation. There is also an urgent need to adjust the already proposed new **own resources** and put forward new additional own resources. A structural modernisation of the own resources system should support digital, environmental, and sustainable economic growth objectives.

## **Further shifting policy and economic indicators towards sustainable and inclusive well-being**

(Section NAT contribution)

### Governments should prioritise a well-being economy that protects ecosystems, preserves biodiversity and ensures a just transition to a climate-neutral way of life across the EU while promoting economic prosperity within planetary boundaries. Building the well-being economy must start by adopting a precautionary approach in which macroeconomic stability does not depend on GDP growth. Therefore, the EESC proposes the development of new indicators of economic performance and social progress beyond GDP.

### The EESC proposes the adoption of a living standards framework and the introduction of a well-being budget for the EU, modelled on approaches already adopted elsewhere. We also recommend a review of the EU's fiscal and monetary rules to ensure they are fit for purpose in achieving the transition to a climate-neutral economy. The EESC proposes the adaptation of the Stability and Growth Pact and the Annual Growth Survey to ensure that the well-being economy is fully consistent with the SDGs and the European Pillar of Social Rights. The EESC has repeatedly called for a new European Green and Social Deal that responds to existing needs at local level and is based on the values of well-being and sufficiency as well as on the engagement of civil society and its organisations.

(Section ECO contribution)

### One of the challenges is to decouple economic prosperity as far as possible from environmental degradation. In this transition to a new economic model, the EESC fully supports the identification of indicators complementary to GDP that will enable more effective monitoring of the transformation of society and the economy to be carried out as policies driven by the European Green Deal are implemented.

(Section SOC contribution)

### Imagining and creating resilient, inclusive, equal and sustainable societies will require bottom-up initiatives that embrace new definitions of well-being and development beyond GDP and invest in social innovation, whilst respecting the opinions and rights of citizens.

### The countries with less robust social models should be strongly supported, by encouraging investment, learning and benchmarking. The well-being and fundamental rights of citizens should be built around a common and consistent social model.

(Section NAT contribution)

### In addition, the social dimension is still not adequately addressed in the monitoring framework. The circular economy is a practical way of generating prosperity and wealth, in the context of a well-being economy, which further supports the move away from the narrow focus of GDP. Monitoring should be linked to SDGs and complement the positions taken by EESC on "Beyond GDP".

(CCMI contribution)

### The availability of workers with the appropriate technical and soft skills will be crucial for the viability of the transitions and the EU competitiveness. By incorporating training in beyond-GDP metrics, we can equip our workers with a comprehensive skill set that will be essential for sustainable industry practices. Skills are becoming increasingly important on top of formal qualifications. The integration of economic, environmental, and social training readies our workforce for the complex challenges of industrial transitions, fostering innovation and adaptability.

## **Ensuring that everyone can successfully contribute to the sustainability transition.**

(Section NAT contribution)

### The notion of the just transition has become a central point in debate and has moved up the policy-making agenda in recent years. However, there is limited experience of implementing industrial policies for a just transition, and most just transition policies focus only on the energy transition.

### The EESC is concerned that the term "just transition" might become empty words or simply a concept that entails a technological transition but does not incorporate the social and labour aspects. Naming initiatives as "just transition projects" when they are not conducive to social justice, and when the workforce, company and community dimensions are not at the core of the action, might simply contribute to creating an empty assurance, and feed scepticism towards environmental and climate policies.

### Ensuring a just transition is essential for all regions and countries. It is also crucial for all economic sectors – not solely energy supply – and urban and rural areas. For this reason, the EESC highlights the need to make progress on a just transition policy framework at the EU level, which can at the same time accelerate the implementation of the SDGs**.**

(CCMI contribution)

### The European Green Deal relies on the ability to enable people to successfully participate in and benefit from the transition. Promoting lifelong learning initiatives is fundamental to ensuring broad industry participation and inclusivity in the transitioning economies. Customised training and vocational education programmes can supply the industry with employees ready to tackle these challenges through flexible educational pathways. Upskilling and reskilling, exemplified by microcredentials and individual learning accounts (ILAs), are crucial when devising policies and solutions aimed at bridging current job market. Moreover, the Commission's Foresight Report emphasises how reducing the gender gap in STEM is crucial for accelerating research and innovation in green and digital technologies and may potentially lead to an improvement in European GDP of up to EUR 820 billion in the next 30 years. The economy thrives when social disparities are effectively addressed**.**

### Sustained efforts are needed to increase labour market participation among all segments of the population. Sector-tailored training programmes can effectively satisfy specific industry needs, thus enhancing active labour market engagement.

### Our education and training systems are not yet fit for the magnitude and speed of the transformations. Fostering a workforce trained in strategic foresight is imperative for preparing for future industry trends and maintaining a competitive edge.

## **Strengthening democracy, including by increasing citizens' agency**

(Section NAT contribution)

### Despite of the uncertainties of the war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate and biodiversity crisis, young people remain the engine of the European project, and their creativity, energy and enthusiasm are the driving force for its sustainability. Decisions made today determine our world tomorrow, and it is thus crucial to ensure that young people have a say in decisions affecting their future, since even indirect policies can have great impact and relevance for young people and generations to come.

### In particular, the intergenerational aspect of climate and sustainable development policies and implementation mechanisms needs to be reflected in strong meaningful youth engagement at all stages of EU decision-making processes, from the drafting of legislative proposals and initiatives through to implementation, monitoring and follow-up.

### The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through the European Green Deal requires a new approach to a more inclusive multi-stakeholder governance model that would put young people at the heart of the engagement process and go way beyond ad hoc meetings and mere calls for consultation.

### To this end, the EESC is committed to amplifying the voice of young people and youth organisations in its opinions and to implementing the EU Youth Test in all policy fields. However, the EESC also calls for youth mainstreaming in policy-making at all levels and for the development of a common approach towards structured and meaningful youth engagement for all EU institutions, based on the following pillars:

* co-creating youth-related initiatives/projects/events with youth organisations involved from the very beginning, and ensuring that they have a say during each step of the process;
* sharing the ownership of such initiatives/projects/events with youth organisations, giving them a leading role and following their priorities and needs;
* strengthening the capacity of youth organisations, supporting them with the necessary financial resources and adequate tools to participate;
* building structured and meaningful follow-up processes, going way beyond ad hoc meetings and mere calls for consultation.

(Section REX Contribution)

### The EU should invest in **preventing disinformation and fact-checking competences, in particular among young people**. Basic competences on issues such as youth-friendly spaces, consultation skills, and youth work methods should be developed to ensure that young people can get more involved in EU policy.

### **Cultural relations** can, more than ever, be a tool for dialogue, peace and the future, if we make it a key and strategic vehicle of the European Union's foreign policy. A fully-fledged multiannual strategic action plan for culture should be adopted which will create real synergy with the various policies and structures of the European Commission and the Member States, and provide a platform for effective interconnection with wider entities.

(CCMI contribution)

### It is important to distinguish facts from mis- and disinformation. Digital literacy training is paramount for preserving industry integrity, particularly as reliance on digital platforms and rapid information exchange grows. Adopting a lifelong learning approach is therefore vital in order to enhance the adaptability of individuals, companies, and communities. This approach necessitates systemic efforts to promote "life competences", which include a spectrum of skills from communication and critical thinking to digital literacy, equipping individuals to flourish in dynamic environments. Cultivating preparedness in citizens also means advancing intergenerational justice, shaping the prospects and well-being of current and future generations by addressing the economic, social, and environmental resource gaps inherited from the past**.**

### The capacity of local institutions and other actors needs to be strengthened. In the midst of industry transformations, public servants are instrumental in facilitating change and upholding democratic values. In terms of reinforcing public-private cooperation, EU flagship initiatives such as the [Pact for skills](https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/index_en) must be bolstered.

## **Reinforcing the EU's toolbox on preparedness and response to complement civil protection with "civil prevention"**

(Section REX Contribution)

### The EU should strengthen the **Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM**) to be sufficiently capable of responding to disasters linked to climate change and multiple risks in terms of prevention, preparedness, warning, planning and operational capabilities, for events occurring inside and outside the Union's territory. It should therefore better address the link between civil protection (short-term operations) and humanitarian aid (long-term management).

(Section NAT contribution)

### Risk prevention should be improved by requiring Member States to further develop their assessment of their risk management capability and their risk management planning, strengthening disaster prevention and preparedness mechanisms in conjunction with increasing the resilience of infrastructure and ecosystems, which will reduce response needs.

### The use of more novel technologies is recommended in the areas of prevention and preparedness to close the distance with a well demonstrated response capacity. An initiative should be developed to incentivise innovative start-ups to develop high-tech tools in the areas of prevention and response, e.g. forecasting, warning and response systems.

(Section REX Contribution)

### The EU needs to strengthen its **new outlook on the climate and security nexus**, by better establishing its geographical, political and military parameters and investing in setting up resilient responses.

### The EU should further integrate the climate and security nexus by creating proactive interfaces between the institutions responsible for external relations, for internal EU cohesion, and for the Member States' security and defence services, and by incorporating permanent dialogue with the scientific community.

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**ANNEX 2**

**List of relevant EESC opinions**

**CCMI opinions**

* [CCMI/189 Roadmap on security and defence technologies](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/roadmap-security-and-defence-technologies)
* [CCMI/195 European Chips Act](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/implications-european-chips-act-defence-and-aerospace-manufacturing)
* [CCMI/196 New Space](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/space-based-secure-connectivity-and-new-space-european-industrial-path-towards-sovereignty-and-innovation)
* [CCMI/198 Defence Investments Gaps Analysis](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/defence-investment-gaps-analysis-and-way-forward)
* [CCMI/200 Defence reinforcement through procurement](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-defence-industry-reinforcement-through-common-procurement-act)
* [CCMI/203 European defence investment programme](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-defence-investment-programme)
* [CCMI/206 Initiative on virtual worlds, such as the metaverse](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/initiative-virtual-worlds-such-metaverse)
* [CCMI/208 Water-intensive industries and water-efficient technologies](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/water-intensive-industries-and-water-efficient-technologies)
* [CCMI/209 A call for an EU Blue Deal](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/umbrella-opinion-call-eu-blue-deal)
* [CCMI/212 Securing Europe’s medicine supply: envisioning a Critical Medicines Act](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/securing-europes-medicine-supply-envisioning-critical-medicines-act)
* [CCMI/214 Drone manufacturing industry: a case study to assess the outcome in a strategic sector of the different policies in place to enhance European strategic autonomy](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/drone-manufacturing-industry-case-study-assess-outcome-strategic-sector-different-policies-place-enhance-european)
* [CCMI/215 EU space strategy for security and defence](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-space-strategy-security-and-defence)
* [CCMI/216 Initiative on virtual worlds](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/initiative-virtual-worlds-such-metaverse)
* [CCMI/218 Strategic technologies as a driver for European sovereignty and resilience](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/strategic-technologies-driver-european-sovereignty-and-resilience-supplementary-opinion-rex579-european-economic)
* [CCMI/219 A European Innovation Stress Test for an innovative and forward-looking industrial policy: the example of the pharmaceutical sector](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-innovation-stress-test-innovative-and-forward-looking-industrial-policy-example-pharmaceutical-sector)
* [CCMI/220 Towards a more resilient, competitive and sustainable Europe](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/towards-more-resilient-competitive-and-sustainable-europe)
* [CCMI/221 Communication on availability of medicines](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/communication-availability-medicines)
* [CCMI/222 European defence industrial strategy](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-defence-industrial-strategy)
* [CCMI/223 Initiative for water resilience](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/initiative-water-resilience)
* [CCMI/224 Industrial and technological approaches and best practices supporting a water resilient society](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/industrial-and-technological-approaches-and-best-practices-supporting-water-resilient-society)
* [CCMI/227 Advanced materials for industrial leadership](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/advanced-materials-industrial-leadership-coordinated-plan-member-states)
* [CCMI/230 Industry 5.0 – how to make it happen](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/industry-50-how-make-it-happen)
* CCMI/232 The contribution of the robotics metaverse in the medical sector
* CCMI/233 Sector-specific industrial policies supporting greater strategic autonomy

**INT opinions**

* [INT/1027 GDIP/NZIA](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/green-deal-industrial-plan)
* [INT/1043 New European strategy for the internal market](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/developing-new-european-strategy-internal-market-helping-our-businesses-meet-technological-social-environmental-and)
* [INT/968 Consumers and the green transition](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/empowering-consumer-green-transition)
* [INT/1015 The right to repair](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/right-repair)

**ECO opinions**

* [ECO/625](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/mid-term-revision-multiannual-financial-framework) Mid-term revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework
* [ECO/626](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/next-generation-own-resources) Next generation of own resources
* [ECO/623](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/environmental-social-and-governance-ratings) Environmental, social and governance ratings
* [ECO/602](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/listing-rules-public-markets-listing-act) Listing rules for public markets (Listing act)
* [ECO/591](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/crypto-assets-challenges-and-opportunities) Crypto Assets – Challenges and opportunities
* [ECO/581](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/social-taxonomy-challenges-and-opportunities) Social taxonomy – Challenges and opportunities
* [ECO/549](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/sustainable-finance-taxonomy-climate-change) Sustainable finance taxonomy - climate change
* [ECO/574](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-single-access-point-esap) European Single Access Point (ESAP)
* [ECO/608](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/review-bank-crisis-management-and-deposit-insurance-framework) Review of the Bank crisis management and deposit insurance framework
* [ECO/615](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/strategic-importance-eu-financial-sector-how-improve-assessment-and-evaluation) The strategic importance of the EU financial sector - How to improve assessment and evaluation
* [ECO/621](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/recovery-and-resilience-facility-and-cohesion-policy-towards-cohesion-policy-20) The Recovery and Resilience Facility and cohesion policy: towards cohesion policy 2.0
* [ECO/616](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/digital-euro-and-scope-and-effects-legal-tender-status-banknotes-and-coins) A digital euro and the scope and effects of the legal tender status of banknotes and coins
* [ECO/622](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/new-economic-governance-rules-fit-future) New economic governance rules fit for the future
* [ECO/600](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eescs-recommendations-solid-reform-european-semester) The EESC's recommendations for a solid reform of the European Semester
* [ECO/551](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/beyond-gdp-measures-successful-recovery-and-sustainable-and-resilient-eu-economy-own-initiative-opinion) Beyond GDP measures for a successful recovery and a sustainable and resilient EU economy

**NAT opinions**

* [NAT/912](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/revised-monitoring-framework-circular-economy) Revised monitoring framework for the circular economy
* [NAT/903](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-and-agenda-2030-strengthening-implementation-sdgs) EU and Agenda 2030: strengthening the implementation of the SDGs
* [INT/895](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/new-circular-economy-action-plan) New Circular Economy Action Plan
* [NAT/857](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/sustainable-products-initiative-including-eco-design-directive/opinions) Towards a sustainable food labelling framework to empower consumers to make sustainable food choice
* [NAT/851](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/sustainable-products-initiative-including-eco-design-directive) Sustainable products initiative, including Eco-design Directive
* [NAT/821](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/aligning-food-business-strategies-and-operations-sdgs-sustainable-post-covid-19-recovery-own-initiative-opinion) Aligning food business strategies and operations with the SDGs for a sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery
* [NAT/791](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/compatibility-eu-trade-policy-european-green-deal-own-initiative-opinion) Compatibility of EU trade policy with the European Green Deal
* [NAT/789](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/towards-eu-strategy-sustainable-consumption-own-initiative-opinion) Towards an EU strategy on sustainable consumption
* [NAT/760](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/reflection-paper-towards-sustainable-europe-2030) Reflection Paper 'Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030'
* [NAT/755](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/promoting-healthy-and-sustainable-diets-eu-own-initiative-opinion) Promoting healthy and sustainable diets
* [NAT/765](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/sustainable-economy-we-need-own-initiative-opinion) The sustainable economy we need
* [SC/53](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/leaving-no-one-behind-when-implementing-2030-sustainable-development-agenda-own-initiative-opinion) Leaving no one behind when implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda
* [NAT/915](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/advancing-eus-just-transition-policy-framework-what-measures-are-necessary) Advancing the EU's just transition policy framework: what measures are necessary
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* [SOC/728](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-youth-test) The EU Youth Test
* [NAT/788](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/towards-structured-youth-engagement-climate-and-sustainability-eu-decision-making-process-own-initiative-opinion) Towards structured youth engagement on climate and sustainability in the EU decision-making process
* [NAT/881](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/information-reports/ex-post-evaluation-european-unions-civil-protection-mechanism-including-resceu) Ex-post evaluation of the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism (including RescEU)
* [NAT/774](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/union-civil-protection-mechanism-amendment) Union Civil Protection Mechanism
* [NAT/750](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/strengthen-eus-civil-protection-response-resceu) Strengthening the EU's civil protection response – rescEU

**SOC opinions**

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* [SOC/660](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/challenges-teleworking-organization-working-time-work-life-balance-and-right-disconnect) Challenges of Teleworking: organization of working time, work life balance and the right to disconnect
* [SOC/709](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/working-conditions-package) Working conditions package
* [SOC/662](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/teleworking-and-gender-equality-conditions-so-teleworking-does-not-exacerbate-unequal-distribution-unpaid-care-and) Teleworking and gender equality
* [SOC/767 - Strengthening collective bargaining power across the European Union](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/strengthening-collective-bargaining-power-across-european-union)
* [SOC/768 - For an EU framework for national homeless strategies based on the principle of "Housing First"](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-framework-national-homeless-strategies-based-principle-housing-first)
* [SOC/781 - Digitalisation in social security](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/digitalisation-social-security)
* SOC/744 [Recommendation on minimum income](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/recommendation-minimum-income)
* [EESC Resolution](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/files/eesc-2021-02200-00-00-res-tra-en.docx) - European Civil Society Working in Partnership for our Sustainable Future, as a contribution to the Porto Social Summit for the Portuguese EU presidency
* [SOC/679 Action plan on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/action-plan-implementation-european-pillar-social-rights)
* [SOC/748 Social Imbalances Procedure](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/social-imbalances-procedure)
* [SOC/756 Social Progress Protocol](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/social-progress-protocol)
* [ECO/584 Gender-based investments in national recovery and resilience plans](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/gender-based-investments-national-recovery-and-resilience-plans)
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* [SOC/774](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/digital-skills-and-education-package) [Digital skills and education package](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/digital-skills-and-education-package)
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* [SOC/689](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/how-guarantee-decent-work-young-people-and-ensure-inclusion-neets-through-proper-elaboration-national-recovery-plans-own) How to guarantee decent work for young people and ensure the inclusion of NEETs through the proper elaboration of National Recovery Plans
* [SOC/755](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/competence-and-skill-development-context-green-and-digital-transition) Competence and skill development in a context of the green and digital transition
* [SOC/749](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-year-skills-2023) European Year of Skills 2023
* [SOC/708](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/learning-and-employability-package) Learning and employability package
* [SOC/728](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-youth-test) The EU Youth Test
* [SOC/759](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/cooperation-youth) Cooperation on youth
* [SOC/755](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/young-peoples-role-green-transition) Young people's role in the green transition
* [Resolution](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/documents/long-lasting-legacy-european-year-youth-youth-mainstreaming-and-empowerment) The long-lasting legacy of the European Year of Youth: youth mainstreaming and empowerment
* [SOC/672](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-democracy-action-plan) The European democracy action plan
* [SOC/713](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/reinforcing-democracy-and-integrity-elections-package) Reinforcing democracy and integrity of elections package
* [SOC/773](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/defence-democracy-package) The Defence of Democracy Package
* [SOC/643](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/principles-public-services-ie-public-services-citizens-public-administration-contribute-directly-stability-free) Public services as stabilisers of democracy
* [SOC/691](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/impact-covid-19-fundamental-rights-and-rule-law-across-eu-and-future-democracy-own-initiative-opinion-frrl) The impact of COVID-19 on fundamental rights and the rule of law across the EU and the future of democracy
* [SOC/762](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/civil-society-support-and-funding-area-fundamental-rights-rule-law-and-democracy) Civil society support and funding in the area of fundamental rights, the rule of law, and democracy
* [SOC/782](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/strengthening-civil-dialogue-and-participatory-democracy-eu-path-forward) Strengthening civil dialogue and participatory democracy in the EU: a path forward
* [SOC/766](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/how-engage-intended-public-and-how-effectively-use-results-works-citizens-panels) How to engage with the intended public and how to effectively use the results of works of the citizens’ panels?

**TEN opinions**

* [TEN/803](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/follow-inflation-and-energy-measures-and-eu-energy-resilience-essential-economic-sectors) Follow up to inflation and energy measures
* [TEN/801](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/individual-and-collective-energy-self-consumption-factor-fight-green-and-energy-transition-and-economic-and-social) Individual and collective energy self-consumption
* [TEN/798](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/digitalising-energy-system-eu-action-plan) [Digitalising the energy system](https://navigate.eesc.europa.eu/opinions/opinion?id=938)
* [TEN/791](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/state-energy-union-2022) State of the Energy Union 2022
* [TEN/793](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/electricity-market-reform) Electricity market reform
* [TEN/799](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/monitoring-eus-extraordinary-measures-and-resilience-field-energy) Monitoring of extraordinary measures and energy resilience of the EU
* [Conclusions](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/files/eesc_2023_energy_poverty_conference_conclusions.pdf) of the 2023 Energy Poverty Conference
* [Conclusions of Reskill EU](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/agenda/our-events/events/conference-reskilleu-new-jobs-energy-and-transport-europe)

**REX opinions**

* [REX/572](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/global-battle-offers-chinese-belt-and-road-initiative-eu-global-gateway-vision-european-organised-civil-society) Global battle of offers – from the Chinese Belt and Road initiative to the EU Global Gateway
* [REX/573](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-global-health-strategy-better-health-all-changing-world) EU Global Health Strategy - Better health for all in a changing world
* [REX/562](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-strategic-compass) The EU Strategic Compass
* [REX/569](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-climate-diplomacy) EU Climate Diplomacy
* [REX/576](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/joint-communication-update-eu-maritime-security-strategy-and-its-action-plan-enhanced-eu-maritime-security-strategy) The EU Maritime Security Strategy
* [REX/554](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/instrumentalisation-migrants) Instrumentalisation of migrants
* [REX/558](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/setting-course-sustainable-blue-planet-update-international-ocean-governance-agenda) Setting the course for a sustainable blue planet, an update of the international ocean governance agenda
* [REX/542](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/consolidating-eu-civil-protection-mechanism-order-improve-eus-capacity-react-face-extreme-events-including-those) Consolidating the EU Civil Protection Mechanism in order to improve the EU's capacity to react in the face of extreme events, including those occurring outside its territory
* [REX/548](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/cultural-diplomacy-vector-eu-external-relations-new-partnerships-and-role-cso) Cultural diplomacy as a vector of EU external relations – new partnerships and role of CSOs
* [REX/571](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/strengthening-multilateralism-and-core-international-principles-rules-based-order-rapidly-changing-world-importance) Strengthening multilateralism and core international principles for a rules-based order in a rapidly changing world – The importance of the civil society contribution to the UN system
* [REX/578](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/addressing-impact-climate-change-and-environmental-degradation-peace-security-and-defence) Addressing the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on peace, security and defence

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