



Charting the EU's democratic progress: a resolution for the next legislative mandate

EESC Resolution

18 September 2024



European Economic
and Social Committee

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This Resolution presents recommendations of the European Economic and Social Committee to the legislature 2024-2029. They are based on discussions with social partners and civil society organizations from all walks of life, including young people during the first EESC Civil Society Week, and contain a comprehensive set of actionable steps to strengthen and safeguard democratic principles with the aim of:

- Protecting citizens against external threats and internal risks
- Guaranteeing a competitive social market economy
- Creating a resilient economy for everyone
- Ensuring dialogue and participation of social partners, organized civil society and the public
- Protecting against the risks of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss

1) The EU as a global player for peace, security, trade and progress

- Promoting peace, security and defence, global justice and global progress by **engaging actively for peace, supporting the multilateral system; ensuring fair competition; addressing poverty; fostering social and civil dialogue; promoting democracy, human rights, and a humane migration management system.**
- Introducing **qualified majority voting in EU foreign policy** for greater political integration, enhanced strategic autonomy and a fully-fledged foreign policy.
- **Strengthening the EU Common Security and Defence Policy**, including boosting common EU strategic and critical technologies and defence capabilities, and reinforced cooperation with like-minded partners.
- **Implementing the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals as an overarching EU strategy**, devoted to peace, economic, social and environmental progress.
- Fostering an **open, rules-based European trade policy**, complementing and underpinning other key EU policies on fundamental rights and the rule of law, as well as climate, digital, innovation, social and industrial policy.
- Effectively implementing the recently adopted **directive for due diligence**, fostering human rights and environmental considerations as an integral part of certain supply chains and company operations.

2) Secure our values, respect for fundamental rights and diversity

- Taking action in eventual future **Treaty revisions** to ensure respect for the rule of law, fundamental rights and diversity by exploring changes in the decision-making mechanisms.
- **Establishing a European Democracy Shield** to protect against foreign interference and disinformation and to uphold the integrity of democratic processes across the EU.
- Ensuring an **effective and realistic migration management** that is humane and sustainable under the Pact on Migration and Asylum.
- Establishing a '**Union of Equality**' for all people of all ages, by strengthening the existing legal frameworks and the post of Commissioner for Equality, ensuring it has a dedicated portfolio and a proper Directorate-General.

3) Preparing for enlargement and reforms

- **Partially including candidate countries in the daily work of the EU** through stronger partnerships.
- Ensuring that **cohesion policy corresponds to future needs** with balanced, fair redistributive measures among regions and citizens both in the candidate countries and in the regions that are more exposed to change as a result of enlargement; notably by maintaining the portfolio of the dedicated Commissioner for cohesion.
- Introducing **qualified majority voting in the EU accession process**, at least for all intermediary stages, and for decisions to be open, transparent and accessible to the larger public.

4) Secure the EU's sustainable and inclusive growth, competitiveness and investment

- Protecting the **planet**, investing for **sustainable economic growth and competitiveness**, and boosting **EU sovereignty** in strategic areas, for the well-being of future generations and aligned with intergenerational fairness.
- Allowing **new own resources for the EU budget**, with an EU investment tool that could enable certain critical and strategic technologies to fall under public governance, while protecting all investors, both public and private.
- Promoting the **European social market economy model** by: supporting entrepreneurship and innovation; investing in quality education, training and skills; ensuring the right to lifelong learning, including reskilling and upskilling; nurturing high quality professional qualifications; creating sustainable and quality jobs, including in new forms of work; fostering collaboration between education and training institutions; and ensuring effective access to quality training for all.
- **Reinforcing the single market rules to foster** cross-border mobility of people, goods, services, capital and data, through the development of an integrated **Capital Markets Union**, a fully-fledged **Banking Union** and a robust **European Industrial Strategy** aligned with the EU's climate goals in order to maintain high quality jobs in Europe.

- **Making the “think small first” principle a reality and support SMEs**, streamline administrative processes, provide a stable legislative framework, secure a level playing field in the single market.
- Taking steps to **reinvigorate the EU’s farming sector and foster rural development** by making it more attractive to young people, family-run, small and medium-sized farmers and enterprises, supported by a properly funded post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy.
- Developing a **strong social economy** by implementing the Social Economy Council recommendation to bolster socially responsible business practices and public benefit.
- Ensuring the implementation of interconnected green, social and blue deals to **alleviate the climate crisis**, accompanied by proper financing through the EU Social Fund, the EU Climate Adjustment Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the Recovery and Resilience Fund.
- **Advancing a European Just Transition Policy Framework** to enable a shift to a sustainable and decarbonised economy which benefits the broader population, leaves no-one behind and is based on intergenerational, territorial and social cohesion. A comprehensive action plan, with a Clean Industrial Deal, is needed as a strategic priority to ensure the EU’s sustainable competitiveness supporting enterprises in a fair way and accompanying the transition.
- **Consulting workers at all levels to support the transformative dimension of the EU strategy for security and sustainability, also anticipating the impact of breakthrough technologies such as artificial intelligence.**

5) The social dimension of security: employment, skills and a just transition

- Monitoring the implementation of all existing initiatives and where necessary presenting **new legislative and non-legislative initiatives, based on European and national social dialogue.**
- Using the **European Pillar of Social Rights to steer the work on improving social cohesion and working conditions**, in parallel with efforts to deliver the EPSR Action Plan and the 2030 targets on employment, education, skills and poverty.
- **Monitoring solutions already included in EU and national legislation on health and safety, work organisation and working conditions** during the process of adapting to the use of artificial intelligence and ensuring that a human-centred approach is taken.
- Recognising **CSOs as key actors in designing and delivering the just transition**, supporting the most vulnerable and those who are less able to adapt to change.
- Providing **adequate financial instruments for future-oriented social investments** linked to the need to ensure the provision of European public goods: security, health, education and well-being and evaluating the need for a financial instrument building on the experience of SURE to support social expenditure of Member States in the event of external economic shocks.
- Continue to build a **Union of Equality**, by assessing the **Gender Equality Strategy** which will come to an end in 2025, and begin to work on a new strategy as a matter of urgency, including setting up an Equality Directorate-General inside the European Commission.
- Improving the **Youth Guarantee** and similar programmes such as the ALMA initiative, that offer work opportunities to young people and assess the European Child Guarantee.

- Devising targeted measures to **increase the workforce** in order to cope with demographic challenges, with the aim of achieving stable employment supported by active labour market policies and social dialogue.
- Developing **occupational health and safety strategies** that seek to ensure zero death and accidents at work and enhance the fight against occupational illness.
- Implementing the **Directive on adequate minimum wage**, which also has the objective to mobilise social dialogue and collective bargaining, at all levels.
- Recognising the call from “Your Europe, Your Say!” (YEYS) for the introduction of **special taxation guidelines for goods and services that have a detrimental impact on the climate**, such as luxury goods.

6) Securing health and decent living conditions: a solid societal dimension

- Supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and for a **comprehensive EU Anti-Poverty Strategy** which must include coordinated efforts across the Member States to reduce poverty.
- Supporting the appointment of a **Commissioner responsible for housing**, with a dedicated portfolio and a proper Directorate-General, and adopting a holistic approach in the form of a European Action Plan on Social Housing to address the housing crisis.
- Classifying **energy supply** as a service of general interest.
- Developing a **Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, together with the strong disability rights agenda, to be implemented by the Commission during the new mandate.
- Establishing a **‘One Health’ approach** to safeguard citizens’ well-being and guarantee access to water, food safety and sovereignty, and access to sustainable healthcare and social services as public goods.
- Recognising the role played by **liberal professions, SMEs, other stakeholders and CSOs** in making local communities more resilient, equitable, healthy, sustainable and socially just.
- Stepping up investment in both prevention and guaranteeing the long-term **sustainability of healthcare** in line with the concept of the **‘Right to Health’**.
- Taking urgent action to deliver a **fully-fledged European Health Union** and to investing heavily in collaborative medical research projects and introducing an EU Action Plan on Rare Diseases.
- Building on the European Care Strategy by adopting a **European Care Guarantee** to be adopted, ensuring access to affordable and high-quality care for all those who need it, whilst also supporting caregivers.
- **Attracting new workers to the healthcare sector** and invest in an educated, skilled, gender-balanced and motivated workforce, which is held in high social esteem and adequately remunerated.
- Moving towards a strategy based **on dignified ageing and intergenerational solidarity** and calls for a **European Strategy for Older Persons**.
- Recognising the YEYS call for a **standardised common strategy on sexual and reproductive rights across the EU**.

7) Participation of citizens, robust civic space and meaningful civic dialogue

- Recognising the important **role played by civil society in implementing many key aspects of EU policy making and** structurally **supporting their role** in building resilient, equal and sustainable societies.
- Developing a **strategy for civil society**, with a clear action plan and applying standards to civil dialogue across EU institutions, in order to effectively implement Article 11 of the TEU.
- **Empowering young people** as drivers of a more sustainable future for the EU and acknowledges that challenges such as climate change, the digital transition and demographic shifts are priorities and opportunities for young people to drive change within the EU.
- Recognising **volunteering** as a crucial expression of active citizenship, not least by designating 2025 as the European Year of Volunteers.
- Recognising the **YEYS request for further youth engagement and representation in EU decision making**, as well as the establishment of a **youth quota** in European Parliament elections.
- Fully supporting the YEYS recommendation to have a **robust legal framework for social media** in order to address and mitigate polarisation and disinformation.



European Economic and Social Committee

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Printed by the EESC-CoR Printing and Distribution Unit, Belgium

EESC-2024-59-EN

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Publications Office
of the European Union



Print
QE-01-24-002-EN-C
ISBN 978-92-830-6600-2
doi:10.2864/8725820

PDF
QE-01-24-002-EN-N
ISBN 978-92-830-6599-9
doi:10.2864/7769344

EN