



**European Economic
and Social Committee**

Civil Society Organisations' Group

**Presentation of the European Commission's Work Programme by Valdis Dombrovskis,
European Commissioner for Economy and Productivity, and for Implementation and
Simplification**

Speech by Civil Society Organisations' Group Vice-President Rudolf Kolbe

EESC plenary session, 27 March 2025

Dear Commissioner,

- The Commission work programme is indeed **ambitious** and it will certainly be a **challenge to implement** it in the very turbulent and politically charged times we are living in;
- I do agree with the work programme that we need to be: "*...a Union that uses its **size, power and values**... and boost **competitiveness**, enhance **security** and bolster **economic resilience** in the EU*";
- But only as long as we take a **balanced approach** between the economic and the **social**, as well as an **inclusive** approach regarding the role and contribution of **CSOs** and **citizens**.

- To illustrate this point, I would like to speak about the **Preparedness Union Strategy**, that the EC adopted yesterday;
- The release of this Strategy is **perfectly timed** - just a few days after last week's **EU Summit** on defence and competitiveness;
- Not coincidentally, at this plenary we will adopt an **Exploratory Opinion** on the topic of **crises and crisis phenomena** in the EU;

- This new **proactive and comprehensive approach** by the European Commission, makes clear that **security and crisis preparedness go hand in hand**;
- Every Euro that governments cut from democracy-building, **costs much more in military spending**;
- On the contrary, the Preparedness Union Strategy rightly takes a **whole-of society approach** and a **whole of government approach**.

- **Individual citizens** do want to be more involved – a Eurobarometer study published last September revealed that **2/3 of respondents** would like to be better informed on **what to do in disaster and emergency situations**;
- I am pleased that the Strategy aims to build **enabling societies of resilience and self-organisation**;
- And it is about involving **local communities** and **developing a culture of preparedness**, at the same time as respecting the principle of **subsidiarity**.

- Earlier this morning, we discussed with **Commissioner Michael McGrath** about the forthcoming **EU Civil Society Strategy**;

- Arguably, both the EU Preparedness Strategy and the forthcoming EU Civil Society Strategy must work in close **coordination and complementarity**;
- The EESC, with its vast outreach to national and local CSOs, is at your **full disposal** to make both of these ambitions a **reality**.
- Thank you for your attention.