



European Economic and Social Committee | Comité économique et social européen

PERIOD **END OF MANDATE**
2023 **REPORT**
2025 **Consultative Commission**
on Industrial Change
(CCMI)

**DIRECTORATE C – LEGISLATIVE
WORK**

**PRESIDENT: PIETRO FRANCESCO DE
LOTTO**

Introduction

Industry is undergoing major changes, with green and digital transitions underpinning them, notably through the decarbonisation of European industry and the acceleration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) uptake. The Russian war against Ukraine underlined the importance of strengthening European strategic autonomy, putting this dimension on a par with the twin transitions in the new geopolitical order. The CCMI also proposed in 2023 and since then leads the EESC's flagship initiative for a new water policy for Europe — the call for an EU Blue Deal. This new approach should integrate water considerations in the design of all EU policies and their implementation, based on a long-term strategic vision and supported by dedicated funding to ensure a water-secure future for all. The EESC's leading role in advocating the EU Blue Deal has been recognised by the EU institutions and stakeholders, and led to the recent adoption of the new European Water Resilience Strategy, aiming at addressing water challenges at EU level with a

more comprehensive approach.

In the second-half of the mandate (April 2023 - September 2025), building on the lessons of previous mandates and responding to emerging challenges, the CCMI structured its work around four key pillars:

- 1. A green transition for European industry;*
- 2. A comprehensive effort to digitalise Europe's productive sectors;*
- 3. Enhancing the global competitiveness and strategic autonomy of EU industry;*
- 4. The EESC's call for an EU Blue Deal.*

CCMI continues to cover the areas of the coal and steel industries, together with the raw materials that are critical and/or strategic for the industrial ecosystems.

Sectoral industrial policies have a growing importance, hence the CCMI cornerstone role in feeding into EU policies. The CCMI draws on its sectoral expertise to participate in the Draghi and Letta reports follow-ups and address the sectoral initiatives announced in the Clean Industrial Deal, concerning for instance the automotive sector or the chemical sector. Therefore, the CCMI addresses the impact of the new geopolitical order from an industrial angle, notably through its opinions on defence, cybersecurity, resource (energy and water) intensive industry or critical medicines.

Since all sectors are impacted by all industrial changes at stake, yet at a different pace and with a different intensity, CCMI proposes consolidated sectoral approaches, taking into account circular economy principles, proposing decarbonisation management schemes, promoting digital, blue and energy transitions, and ensuring that security and strategic autonomy are also taken into account.

Now, more than ever, the CCMI focuses on how to predict changes in the economic and social environment and find ways of keeping pace with these and tackling them in a way consistent with the values of economic, social and environmental sustainability that underpin the European social model and dialogue. Preparedness is part of the CCMI's DNA, with its mission grounded in foresight and anticipation.

To conclude, the CCMI participates in the overall effort to shape EU industrial policies enabling to achieve a strong European industry, ensuring sustainability, resilience, competitiveness and strategic autonomy.

Pietro Francesco De Lotto

President of Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI)

Contents

A GREEN TRANSITION FOR EUROPEAN INDUSTRY	3
A COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT TO DIGITALISE EUROPE'S PRODUCTIVE SECTORS	4
STRATEGIC AUTONOMY	5
THE EESC'S CALL FOR A BLUE DEAL	8
COOPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES OF OPINIONS/STUDIES ..	10
Communication achievements.....	12
Perspective/outlook.....	12

First priority of the CCMI

A GREEN TRANSITION FOR EUROPEAN INDUSTRY

Industry continues to play a central role in Europe's prosperity and global leadership, yet it faces urgent climate and environmental challenges. The target of reducing EU greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 remains a major milestone, driving fundamental shifts in production methods, resource use and energy systems. However, the transition to a carbon-neutral EU economy largely depends on industry's ability to decarbonise, while being locally and globally competitive. Therefore, during this mandate, the CCMI has continued to support efforts towards a just and inclusive transition for energy-intensive industries and related supply chains. It has developed policy recommendations to promote decarbonisation, circularity, low-carbon technologies and carbon removal, clean-tech sector, while ensuring competitiveness and safeguarding quality jobs. In its opinion on the Clean Transition Dialogues, the CCMI emphasised that climate objectives must be matched by a comprehensive industrial strategy to support EU industries through the transition.

As a consequence, the CCMI welcomed the proposal of the Clean Industrial Deal, adopted already within the first 100 days of the new mandate of the Commission and is looking forward to address the new proposals stemming from it. A new Competitiveness Deal must also ensure faster permitting times, safeguard a level playing field, promote a technology-neutral energy policy, stimulate investments in distribution and transmission grids, and provide dedicated financing to support the industrial transformation. This approach aligns with the EESC's position and reflects the recognition that European industries face increasing pressure from unfair global competition, high energy prices, shortages of skilled labour and challenges in accessing capital.

In the current context, it is crucial to decarbonise the economy, while simultaneously ensuring the energy transition and bringing down energy costs, by investing more decisively in clean and strategic technologies and supporting energy-intensive industries. These industries face rising costs due to high energy prices, carbon pricing, and regulatory changes. The current situation underscores the necessity for tailored policy measures that address the unique challenges of each sector. There is an

urgent need for a balanced approach to decarbonisation that maintains the competitiveness of these sectors, as recommended by the Draghi report.

While continued support for energy-intensive industries remains essential, the EU also has the opportunity to become a global leader in clean technologies. The CCMI has put forward an opinion containing concrete proposals to enhance the development and deployment of clean energy and water technologies, calling for specific transition roadmaps, continuous monitoring of skills shortages, and measures to create lead markets for green products.

Moreover, also as a way to speed-up decarbonisation of the economy in its initial stage, the CCMI recognises the key role of the Industrial Carbon Management Strategy of the European Commission, covering many elements that are crucial for deploying Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) at industrial scale in the EU. This approach to establishing storage, logistics and transport, infrastructure and regulation/market rules for carbon management during this decade in order to build the foundations for a single market in carbon is fully justified.

Therefore, the CCMI calls for affordable and sustainable energy, as well as fair support for affected companies, workers and regions.

The EU's focus on green energy and circular economy models can create new markets and job opportunities. The EESC believes it is imperative to prioritise EU-level discussions on waste management and to implement a revised strategy to embrace pioneering projects aimed at enhancing recycling and resource recovery, while also diminishing the prevalence of dumpsites.

[CCMI/241](#) - Building blocks for strengthening Europe's manufacturing base in cleantech

[CCMI/238](#) - The future of EU energy-intensive (EIs) industries in the face of high energy prices and transition costs

[CCMI/234](#) – A European Liquid Fuels Strategy

[CCMI/237](#) - The Clean Transition Dialogues – stocktaking a strong European industry for a sustainable Europe

[CCMI/231](#) - Professional services in the green transition

[CCMI/229](#) - Low-carbon and renewable fuels: building the capacity of European industry to decarbonize the aviation and maritime sectors in a spirit of European autonomy

[CCMI/228](#) - From Waste plants to Resource plants

[CCMI/225](#) - Communication on industrial carbon management

[CCMI/201](#) – Review of the Co2 emission standards of heavy-duty vehicles

[CCMI/199](#) – Development of post-Euro 6/VI emission standards for cars, vans, lorries and buses

[Clean Industrial Deal Debate](#) – CCMI Section meeting, 11/03/2025

Second priority of the CCMI

A COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT TO DIGITALISE EUROPE'S PRODUCTIVE SECTORS

The digital transition remains a key driver for the competitiveness and resilience of European industry. Building on the momentum gained during the COVID-19 crisis, the CCMI has continued to explore the impacts of digitalisation across industrial ecosystems, SMEs and services.

The CCMI's work has focused on accelerating the adoption of advanced digital technologies, strengthening Europe's semiconductor ecosystem, addressing skills gaps for the workforce, and promoting a human-centered, inclusive approach to the digital transformation. CCMI has proposed to analyse the opportunities and challenges of the metaverse as a new digital ecosystem for industry and services before the adoption of the initiative on virtual worlds. It thus managed to impact its content. The metaverse could potentially have a positive impact on the environment and climate change by enabling remote working on a new level, reducing the need for physical travel and reducing carbon emissions. In addition, the metaverse can be used to simulate and test sustainable practices, such as renewable energy systems and smart cities, before implementing them in the physical world. However, the energy consumption and carbon footprint of the technology that powers the metaverse must also be addressed.

In parallel, cyber threats increase and they have gained importance in civil sectors, such hospitals and healthcare providers, where secure digital infrastructure is vital for public trust and patient safety. The CCMI proposed to address this topic during the Healthcare Cybersecurity Workshop on 4 October 2024 ahead of the announcement by the European Commission of the European action plan on the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers. Financial support for the implementation of the action plan is needed and should address investments in prevention, education, remediation and recovery. Improving cybersecurity in the health sector improves general security and resilience and contributes to the Preparedness Union.

Key cross-cutting topics recently covered by CCMI opinions include cybersecurity, data sovereignty, artificial intelligence, and the next stages of Industry 5.0, all supporting a resilient and innovative industrial fabric.

[CCMI/244](#) – European action plan on the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers

[CCMI/231](#) – The contribution of the robotics metaverse in the medical sector

[CCMI/217](#) – Cyber Solidarity Act

[CCMI/202](#) – Proposal for an EU Cyber Defence Policy

[CCMI/216](#) – Initiative on virtual worlds

[CCMI/206](#) – Initiative on virtual words, such as the metaverse

[CCMI/207](#) – Decarbonisation of European industry and the role of innovation and digitalisation driving it

Third priority of the CCMI

STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

The concept of strategic autonomy is now deeply embedded in EU industrial policy. The CCMI has continued to monitor and provide input on how Europe can maintain and strengthen its industrial competitiveness amid growing global uncertainty and disrupted supply chains. Given the emergence of a new geopolitical order, particular attention has been paid to securing the resilience of strategic sectors such as defence, health, automotive, steel and metals, critical raw materials and high-tech manufacturing.

The EESC has consistently advocated for robust and coordinated European security and defence policies, especially in response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine. It has underlined the urgent need for a genuine European defence industrial strategy to reinforce Europe's defence capabilities after years of underinvestment. The European defence industry is fundamental to the future of European strategic autonomy, not only due to the importance of defence itself but also because many defence companies are major players in Europe's critical space sector and provide trusted cybersecurity solutions to protect vital digital infrastructure and thus EU democracies.

As a consequence, the EESC adopted key opinions on the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP), the European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) and the broader European defence industry framework. The EDIS represents a significant step forward, moving from ad hoc measures to a long-term structural approach. However, the EESC has warned that the current EUR 1.5 billion budget for the EDIP is far from sufficient and recommends an increase in medium-term funding to address both immediate and long-term needs. A European Defence Union cannot succeed without adequate funding, and the EESC has called for a dedicated defence budget line under the next Multiannual Financial Framework. It has also proposed working with the European Investment Bank to adapt its lending policy and de-risk investments in defence projects. European sourcing for European needs must guide procurement. Common procurement and a genuine Single Market for defence products and services should be incentivised.

Furthermore, the EESC in its opinion highlights drone technology as a game-changer for European strategic autonomy, and advocates for a tight connection between the European Drone Strategy and the EDIS, fostering a domestic drone production industry through consistent procurement contracts. The EESC recommends a 'Strategic Drone Technology Roadmap' to guide advancements in critical drone technologies and dual-use drone systems. Moreover, the EESC in its opinion on Security Action for Europe (SAFE), supports the principle of European preference and recommends that participation in SAFE by non-EU countries should be limited to like-minded partners with a formal security and defence partnership with the EU.

What is important to emphasise, is that public perception can be a potential roadblock for Europe's defence plan. A strong defence strategy in a democratic society needs public understanding and support. Failure to address public concerns could be the Achilles' heel of the entire strategy. Therefore, the EU would need to step up communication efforts, as the success hinges on convincing citizens that a strong defence strategy is not just about foreign policy, but about protecting their way of life.

Following the COVID-19, the EESC has been closely monitoring the structural dependencies in EU's pharmaceutical supply chains, in particular as regards the overreliance on imports of active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) and finished medicines. As a result, the EESC has adopted several opinions, especially on Critical Medicines Act, underlining increasing shortages of critical medicines (but also medical devices), affecting almost all Member States and putting at risk the health and well-being of EU citizens. Therefore, in order to enhance the European open strategic autonomy, it is crucial to make medicines more rapidly available and to boost European manufacturing (addressing production, stockpiling, joint procurement). In this regard, the CCMI supports the member having an observer role in the European Critical Medicines Alliance (ECMA). Set up in January 2024, this stakeholder platform identifies solutions to strengthen the supply of critical medicines in the EU.

Throughout this mandate, the CCMI has continued to provide expertise on how to secure Europe's industrial base through resilient value chains, fair competition rules, innovation funding and strategic alliances. The EU should accelerate its research and technology development in advanced materials, scale up its innovation and manufacturing capacity and accelerate the industrial uptake of advanced materials. The European Raw Materials Alliance, in which the EESC has an observer role (CCMI support), aims to make Europe economically more resilient by diversifying its supply chains, creating jobs, attracting investments to the raw materials value chain, fostering innovation, training young talents and contributing to the best enabling framework for raw materials and the circular economy worldwide.

What is more, the EESC issued two opinions to the Commission's Action Plans, prepared as the result of sectoral industrial social dialogue: Action Plan for the European Automotive Industry, as well as EU Steel and Metals Action Plan. The European automotive sector is facing a critical turning point, with rapid technological changes and increasing competition posing significant challenges. In order to be globally competitive, the European automotive industry must urgently regain a leadership position in the transition towards smarter (AI-powered), cleaner, and more connected vehicles. The EU needs to secure its supply chains, to further ramp up its own industrial capacities for batteries and their components as well as the software and technology needed, notably for autonomous vehicles, in order to enhance its strategic autonomy. Moreover, the EESC expresses its deep concern over the crisis facing the EU steel industry and calls for urgent measures to restore competitiveness, maintain quality jobs and boost investment in the transition of the steel and metals sectors. These measures should address short-term criticalities and be closely monitored to allow adjustments where necessary. Last but not least, CCMI adopted an opinion on the chemical industry value chain, anticipating the Commission's Action Plan for the EU Chemicals Industry. The sector requires a unified industrial and energy strategy, swift Clean Industrial Deal implementation, and adjustments to the CBAM in order to reduce energy costs, raw material dependency, and simplify regulation

[CCMI/249](#) – Automotive industry Action Plan

[CCMI/248](#) - How to foster a resilient value chain for the EU chemical industry

[CCMI/245](#) – EU Steel and Metals Action Plan

[CCMI/243](#) – Security Action for Europe (SAFE) through the reinforcement of the European defence industry instrument

[CCMI/242](#) – Industrial Cooperatives: a tool for the challenge of inclusive and sustainable competitiveness

[CCMI/240](#) – Critical medicines Act

[CCMI/239](#) - Reindustrialization of Europe – opportunity for businesses, employees and citizens in the context of the cost-of-living crisis

[CCMI/227](#) – Advanced materials for industrial leadership – a coordinated plan with Member States

[CCMI/230](#) – Industry 5.0 – How to make it happen? + [public hearing](#)

[CCMI/236](#) - Sectoral initiatives and overall competitiveness of the EU

[CCMI/235](#) - Industrial changes in the health sector in the face of multiplying crises

[CCMI/233](#) - Sector-specific industrial policies supporting greater strategic autonomy

[CCMI/226](#) – EU biotech and biomanufacturing initiative

[CCMI/222](#) – European defence industrial strategy

[CCMI/221](#) – Communication on availability of medicines

[CCMI/214](#) – Drone industry: a case study to assess the outcome in a strategic sector of the different policies in place to enhance European strategic autonomy

[CCMI/213](#) - Towards a comprehensive strategy for the EU wood industry

[CCMI/220](#) – Towards a more resilient, competitive and sustainable Europe

[CCMI/218](#) – Strategic technologies as a driver for European sovereignty and resilience

[CCMI/215](#) – EU space strategy for security and defence

[CCMI/211](#) – Critical Raw Materials Act

[CCMI/219](#) – European Innovation Stress Test for an innovative and forward-looking industrial policy: the example of the pharmaceutical sector

[CCMI/212](#) – Securing Europe's medicine supply: envisioning a Critical Medicines Act

[CCMI/210](#) – Industrial policy as an instrument to reduce dependencies and boost an EU market for green products in the resource and energy intensive industries (REEIs)

[CCMI/203](#) – European defence industry programme

Fourth priority of the CCMI

THE EESC'S CALL FOR A BLUE DEAL

The EU Blue Deal, as a flagship initiative of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), urges the EU to commit to harnessing and protecting Europe's water resources for a sustainable and resilient future. Recognizing water as a vital resource for the wellbeing of citizens, for agriculture, industry, and ecosystems, the EESC has been a pioneering advocate for elevating water policy on the EU agenda to the same level of importance as the EU Green Deal. This push for a comprehensive, standalone water strategy aims to integrate water considerations into all core EU policies, supported by dedicated funding and long-term strategic planning.

The EU Blue Deal was chosen as the EESC's cross-cutting flagship initiative in 2022. The works were launched in February 2023 with a high-level stakeholder conference. During the following months, the CCMI coordinated the work of all Sections on a package of own-initiative opinions addressing the water crisis in its various dimensions. Altogether, eight opinions on water were adopted by the EESC

in 2023, covering the social, economic, environmental and geopolitical aspects of water as well as water challenges concerning agriculture, industries, infrastructures and sustainable consumption.

The Committee joined forces with the European Parliament's MEP Water Group and the Committee of Regions to urge EU leaders to endorse the initiative. This work gained substantial political momentum in September 2023 when the EESC, along with 35 Members of the European Parliament, jointly urged EU heads of state and government to support the EU Blue Deal, as described in the interinstitutional echo section.

In October 2023, the EESC presented its landmark Call for an EU Blue Deal, urging the EU to adopt a comprehensive and ambitious water strategy equal in scale and priority to the Green Deal. The EESC's Declaration for an EU Blue Deal contains 15 principles and 21 concrete actions, which the EESC believes should be adopted as a matter of urgency. The call was presented during an institutional debate and a high-level conference that brought together prominent voices such as Oliver Röpke, President of the EESC; Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries; Pernille Weiss, Chair of the MEP Water Group; Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to water and sanitation; and Professor Mariana Mazzucato, Co-Chair of the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, as well as representatives of key stakeholder organisations across Europe. Discussions highlighted the need to secure access to water and ensure resilient water infrastructures, sustainable consumption and stronger financing instruments, combined with global blue diplomacy.

In 2024, the EESC continued its push for a strong EU Blue Deal: The Committee issued two further opinions on water and organised eight events involving MEPs, Council Presidencies, the UN and many key stakeholders. EESC speakers participated in close to 40 external events in 2024 to present the EU Blue Deal. Overall, around 20 Members and 6 Delegates were actively involved as Study group members, (co)rapporteurs and speakers on the EU Blue Deal in 2024.

The EESC's call led to the inclusion of water in the European Commission President's Letter of Intent for 2024 and in its work programme for 2024 through a non-legislative initiative on Water Resilience aimed at ensuring access to water for citizens, nature and the economy, while also tackling catastrophic flooding and water shortages. The proposal, originally planned for March 2024, was postponed in March 2024. Following this postponement, a joint letter signed by MEP Water Group Chair, CoR rapporteur and CCMI President was sent in March 2024 to EC VP Šefčovič, urging the EC to continue work on water resilience.

In July 2024, twenty-one Member States also echoed the need to boost water security and resilience in the European Union and called on the Commission to ensure that water will be a top priority in the next mandate.

Water was reintroduced as a priority topic in the Political Priorities of the new European Commission as the European Water Resilience Strategy, which was published in June 2025. Water resilience was also reflected in the Niinistö and Letta reports. While welcoming the Water Resilience Strategy, the EESC urges the EU to address water as a fundamental element of other top policy initiatives, such as the new Clean Industrial Deal, the Vision for Agriculture and Food, the Preparedness Union and the

next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post-2027 to address the water crisis in all its dimensions. This calls for efficient coordination between the different policy areas and Commissioners, and political commitment to placing water at the heart of policymaking. The EESC is convinced that water resilience and competitiveness go hand in hand, and that more ambition, increased funding and better coordination are needed to embed the water dimension into all EU policies, in line with the EESC's recommendations.

In addition to a referral opinion on the Water Resilience Strategy, published by the European Commission undoubtedly as a result of the EESC Call for an EU Blue Deal, further own-initiative opinions on water were adopted in 2025 by CCMI and REX, and debates, events and other actions were organised on the EU Blue Deal, recalling the EESC's key messages on the need for a comprehensive and strategic approach to water.

[CCMI/208](#) – **Water-intensive industries and water-efficient technologies**

[CCMI/209](#) – **Umbrella Opinion "A call for an EU Blue Deal"**

[CCMI/223](#) – **Water Resilience Strategy**

[CCMI/224](#) – **Industrial and technological approaches and best practices supporting a water resilient society**

[CCMI/247](#) – **Water resilience and the twin transition: Industrial approaches addressing the relationship between water, digitalisation and decarbonisation**

Interinstitutional echo

COOPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES OF OPINIONS/STUDIES

The CCMI President met at the beginning of 2025 with newly elected President of the European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), MEP Borys Budka, and exchanged on close cooperation between CCMI and ITRE. In this mandate, the CCMI has intensified its follow-up activities on the four pillars, with full recognition of its expertise, as the defence and Blue Deal files illustrate.

The CCMI's opinion on SAFE, addressing the proposed regulation on the manufacturing industry within the Commission's defence package, has been a catalyst for high-level engagement. The rapporteur of this opinion participated in the Council Working Party on Defence Industry in March 2025 at the invitation of the Polish Presidency, where he presented the Committee's work and engaged in an open exchange with Member State representatives. In parallel, in April 2025, CCMI President together with the rapporteurs met with the European Parliament co-rapporteur on the European Defence Industry Programme, MEP Raphaël Glucksmann, to exchange views on the Parliament's position and to share the CCMI's recent and ongoing contributions on EDIP, EDIS and SAFE. In May 2025, the co-rapporteur on SAFE also met with the Committee of the Regions rapporteur on European Defence Readiness 2030, strengthening interinstitutional dialogue on Europe's preparedness and industrial capacity in the defence sector. In Strasbourg in April 2025,

during the plenary of the Conference of Committee Chairs, MEP Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Security and Defence, spontaneously commended the cooperation with the CCMI as an example of robust collaboration, not only between Members and MEPs but also at the Secretariat level.

As a sign of recognition for its work, in the first half of 2025 CCMI rapporteurs were invited to participate in several Council Working Parties on Competitiveness and Industry: in January, to present the opinion on the future of EU energy-intensive industries, in June to present the opinion on the cybersecurity of hospitals action plan and in July, to present the opinion on the chemical industry value chain. Furthermore, the CCMI's rapporteur was also invited to present the EU Blue Deal at the Council Working Party on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in December 2024.

On the EU Blue Deal, CCMI President presented the EESC's work at an ENVI committee hearing in January 2025 and spoke at two further EP events on the topic in the first half of 2025, upon the invitation of ENVI Chair Antonio Decaro. The EESC has also fostered close collaboration with the MEP Water Group, during the previous mandate with the Group's Chair MEP Pernille Weiss, and during the new EP mandate since July 2024 with close contacts and joint activities organised with the Chair of the MEP Water Group, MEP Hildegard Bentele.

Support for the Blue Deal has received validation from multiple stakeholders, including several EU Member States, international organizations like the UN, civil society, and policymakers. As mentioned, in September 2023, the EESC, along with 35 Members of the European Parliament, [jointly urged](#) EU heads of state and government to support the EU Blue Deal, and in March 2024, the Committee, together with the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, issued an open letter to European Commission Executive Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič, calling for a holistic approach and the resumption of the postponed Water Resilience Initiative. Additionally, in July 2024, EESC President Oliver Röpké addressed European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, calling for an ambitious EU Blue Deal that would embed water resilience across policy frameworks, reinforced with dedicated funding and governance structures.

The EESC collaborated closely with the European Commission on the EU Blue Deal, and was invited to speak at key Commission events, such as the EU Green Week main launch event in 2024, with the participation of CCMI President, or the Commission Water Resilience stakeholder consultation closing session in March 2025, in which the EESC President participated.

The European Commission's Political Guidelines for 2024-2029 have echoed the EU Blue Deal call by proposing a European Water Resilience Strategy, further signifying water's prominent role in the EU's climate and environmental agenda. The appointment of a dedicated water commissioner within the European Commission's portfolio, reflecting the EESC's call, marks a significant institutional recognition of the importance of water.

The President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen has recognised the EESC's key role in pushing for a stronger role for water on the EU agenda in her reply to President Röpké's letter, dated 5 November 2024, welcoming all the work carried out by the EESC around the call for a Blue

Deal and announcing that EESC input will be duly taken into consideration by the next Commission in the development of the future Strategy.

The EESC worked also closely with the European Committee of the Regions and was invited to present the EU Blue Deal at several meetings, stakeholder consultations as well as other key events addressing water, including the participation of President Röpke in a CoR Plenary debate in July 2025 on this topic.

Another milestone was the launch of a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) in October 2024 calling for a "Water-Smart and Resilient Europe". This initiative reflects an increasing societal demand for concrete action and strategic planning on water issues and support for the EESC's approach for a holistic EU water strategy.

All in all, the CCMI has enhanced its cooperation with all key EU institutions: the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission, as well as the European Committee of Regions.

Communication achievements

During this half mandate, the CCMI has dynamised its presence on social media, with an increased outreach on X and the opening of Blue Sky account and LinkedIn group. The EU Blue Deal has been a communication priority for the CCMI and for the entire EESC in 2023-2025. Throughout 2024, the CCMI actively engaged in activities on the EU Blue Deal, organizing eight events involving MEPs, Council Presidencies, the UN and many key stakeholders. EESC speakers participated in close to 40 external events in 2024 to present the EU Blue Deal. Recognizing the EESC's leadership on the topic, the European Commission invited the Committee to partner in the #WaterWiseEU awareness-raising campaign, launched during the EU Green Week in May 2024. This campaign underscored the need for a water strategy and highlight the political ambition required to address the water crisis effectively.

The EU Blue Deal flagship has significantly raised the EESC's profile among institutions and civil society. It has also delivered high communication impact: in 2024, over 1,600 media articles covering the EU Blue Deal appeared across 748 outlets, with major European media, including Politico and The Economist, reflecting the recognition of the EESC's leadership in the push for strong water policies at European level.

Perspective/outlook

The CCMI is the oldest EU body devoted solely to forecasting the future of industry, promoting coordination and consistency of EU action on industrial changes within the European Union and ensures the right balance between the need to make changes that are socially acceptable and maintaining a competitive edge for European industry.

While CCMI's core business is rooted in its historic mission, namely the analysis of industrial change in traditional sectors, it also deals with all the phenomena at work today to shape tomorrow's industrial sectors. Therefore, the CCMI's remit does not only cover the traditional coal and steel sectors, but has been extended to embrace all sectors of industry in both manufacturing and services. The presence of CCMI delegates stemming from different industrial sectors contribute to making concrete proposals for the different sectors.

The CCMI will therefore continue to focus on how to predict changes in the economic and social environment and find ways of keeping pace with these and tackling them in a way consistent with the values of economic, social and environmental sustainability that underpin the European social model and dialogue. Preparedness is part of CCMI's DNA, since its mission is to prepare for and accompany industrial changes, based on foresight and anticipation.

Bringing in the perspectives of organised civil society to the EU political decision-making process on water, the CCMI will continue to coordinate the EESC's work closely with the European institutions, the Member States and other stakeholders and organisations also in its new mandate to make sure that the recommendations and needs of European employers, workers and civil society actors are taken into account in the development and implementation of policies aiming to foster water resilience for all as a top political priority. At the global level, preparations for the 2026 UN Water Conference are underway and the EESC will seek to contribute to the EU's work for this important milestone event as part of the EU delegation.

Appendix – Key statistics

	As of 26 April 2023	2024	Until 18 September 2025	Total
Section meetings	4	7	5	16
Section Bureau meetings	5	9	6	20
Study Group meetings	14	31	26	71
Permanent Study Group meetings				
Observatory meetings			1	1
Opinions	15	20	12	47
Referrals	4	1	2	7
Exploratory opinions	3	2	1	6
Own-initiative opinions	4	9	4	17
Supplementary opinions	2	1	2	5
Optional opinions	2	7	3	12
Information reports	NA	NA	NA	NA
Evaluation reports	NA	NA	NA	NA
Studies	-	-	-	-
Fact-finding missions	NA	NA	NA	NA
Conferences and hearings organized by the Section	23	34	12	69
Participation of Members in meetings/events/conferences	14	33	39	86
Meetings between EESC/EP rapporteurs or Section/EP Committee presidents	4	4	8	16
Meetings of EESC members with Commissioners, members of Cabinet, Commission directors-general or directors	14	27	20	61
Meetings of EESC members with Council representatives, permanent representatives or EU presidency representatives	-	5	13	18
Meetings/events/conferences of EESC members with COR	-	4	2	6