

**Conference of the Civil Society Organisations' Group
of the European Economic and Social Committee
in the framework of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union
Larnaca, 22 April 2026**

*Island of resilience -
Cyprus' perspective on climate, sustainability and food security*

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



CONFERENCE

**Island of resilience –
Cyprus' perspective on climate,
sustainability and food security**

22/04/2026 | 10:00 – 15:15 | Larnaca, Cyprus

Centre for Social Activities and Welfare of the Municipality of Larnaca,
Faneromenis 62, Larnaca 6025

#CY2026EU

*Under the Patronage of the Cyprus Presidency
of the Council of the EU*



Introduction

- Islands and remote regions are key strategic areas, often experiencing Europe’s major challenges – such as climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss and food insecurity – earlier, faster and more intensely than mainland regions. These territories act as living laboratories for resilience, offering practical insights into adaptation, sustainability and crisis response.
- Islands such as Cyprus are frequently among the first to be affected by global challenges but also play a key role in sharing solutions and strengthening cooperation across all governance levels.
- Resilience is not only about infrastructure and policy design, but primarily about people. Strong cooperation between stakeholders – farmers, researchers, local authorities, cooperatives, consumers and civil society organisations – is essential for communities to adapt, transform and thrive.
- The effective involvement of all stakeholders, including civil society organisations, is crucial for the success of policies at local, national and EU level. In particular, the EESC plays a unique role in helping to shape EU policies that are not only more effective, but also capable of being successfully implemented.
- Global challenges such as climate change, water management, biodiversity protection and food security are interconnected and cannot be addressed in isolation. No single Member State can tackle them alone. Dialogue and cooperation across local, national and European levels are a strategic necessity.
- The EU needs a long-term vision that better reflects specific geographic realities. The “island dimension” must be fully integrated into EU policy-making, alongside strengthened solidarity among Member States.
- Strengthened EU policies must also reflect the specific realities of island and water-scarce regions, while promoting sustainable resource management and biodiversity. Building resilient agri-food systems is essential not only for sustainability, but also for ensuring long-term security and stability across the European Union.

Towards an Integrated EU Water Resilience Strategy

The EESC's Civil Society Organisations' Group:

- calls for an integrated European water strategy aligned with climate adaptation policies, ensuring foresight-based measures to strengthen water resilience and secure stable, long-term water resources in regions at risk of drought. Strong coordination with stakeholders is required, together with investment in recycling water and influence on the future Multiannual Financial Framework;

- requests support for farmers and the agricultural sector, particularly in Cyprus, to deal with challenges caused by climate change by providing immediate financial support, adapting and investing for solutions and focusing on long-term resilience;
- welcomes the use of tools within the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to protect the agricultural sector from climate-related risks;
- welcomes forthcoming studies that will help implement 10-year national food security actions plan as a cohesive policy framework;
- presses the European Commission to propose an urgent regulation establishing a hierarchy of water use, as outlined in the EESC's opinion NAT/973 on Water Resilience Strategy and the European Climate Adaptation Plan;
- demands that the next Multiannual Financial Framework include water resilience as a priority and proposes the establishment of the Blue Transition Fund as a single access point for water investments to address funding obstacles for water resilience;

Integrating the Island Dimension into EU Policies

The EESC's Civil Society Organisations' Group:

- stresses the need for a shift from fragmented management of islands to holistic management. In this context, calls for islands to move from dependence on fuel imports to independence in clean energy, thus ensuring food sufficiency;
- calls for the establishment of a dedicated Union strategy for islands (Islands Pact), supported by a specific legislative framework (Islands Act), as outlined in the EESC opinion ECO/689 on the Island Dimension in European Cohesion, Competitiveness and Sustainable Development Policies;
- stresses that this framework should be accompanied by a formal strategy and ensure the effective implementation of an ‘insularity clause’, with a view to systematically integrating the specific needs and constraints of islands into EU policies on cohesion, transport, energy, state aid, the environment and maritime affairs;
- calls for an adjustment to the EU's Islands Strategy, which mistakenly connects coastal areas and islands;
- calls for future EU strategies on islands to have a structured, balanced approach when dealing with stakeholders and integration of islands with political functions in every area of life and in dealing with challenges of being an island and isolation;
- supports incentives to live on islands, such as higher salaries, as a strategy that will benefit national defence, resilient communities, the agricultural sector and the overall economy;

Biodiversity, Agriculture and Food Security

The EESC's Civil Society Organisations' Group:

- recommends the use of the Common Agricultural Policy to simultaneously protect natural resources and strengthen the farming workforce, marking the importance of including farmers' experiences in policymaking and implementation;
- calls for an increase in funding allocated to biodiversity in European national budgets, with policymaker-stakeholder collaboration and a focus on competitiveness to achieve this;
- calls for a shift from 'Farm to Fork' to 'Fork to Farm' policy that focuses on the influence of consumer choices on the agri-food sector. Consumers choices are influenced by health concerns: if diverse diets are promoted, such as the Mediterranean diet, varied diets are consumed, which in turn promotes biodiversity;
- advocates policies that recognise biodiversity and agriculture as intrinsically interconnected, rather than treating them separately, in order to effectively address food security.

Brussels, 4 May 2026