

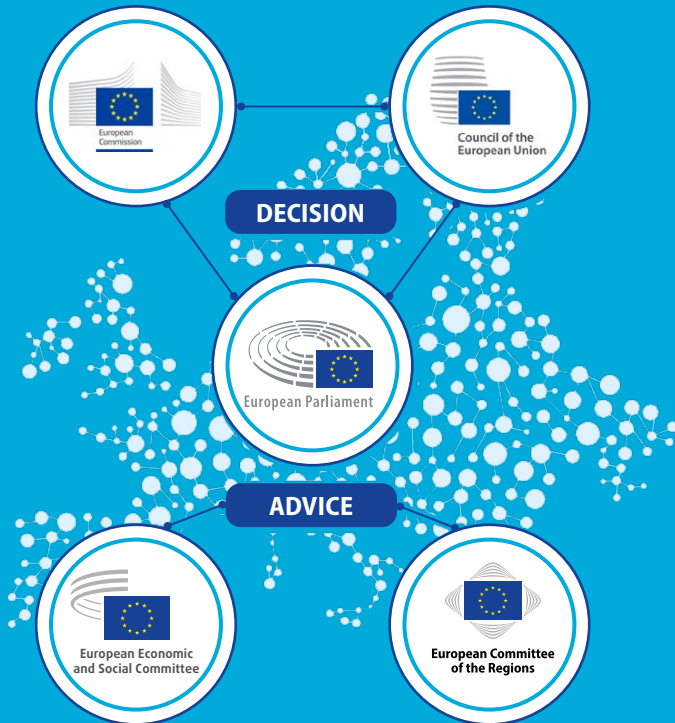


# Discover what the EESC can do for you

2026 Edition



European Economic  
and Social Committee



The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) represents the voice of civil society within the EU institutions and connects stakeholders with the EU.



# Get to know the European Economic and Social Committee

The EESC is not like other EU bodies. It is a unique forum for consultation, dialogue and consensus between representatives from all the different sectors of "organised civil society".

These organisations often act as intermediaries between decision-makers and the public, offering an avenue for people to play an active role in bringing about change or to support specific causes for the common good.

The EESC is an integral part of the EU: it was set up in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome to advise EU decision-makers and ensure that civil society organisations and networks across the continent have a say in Europe's development.

# The EESC's mission ...

The EESC's aim is to help ensure that **EU policy-making and legislation is more democratic** and more effective and genuinely **reflects the needs of EU citizens**.

## It has three key tasks:

- to **advise the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission;**
- to make sure the **views of civil society organisations are heard** in Brussels and to increase their awareness of the **impact of EU legislation on the lives of EU citizens;**
- to support and strengthen organised civil society both inside and outside the EU.

# ... and vision

The EESC is dedicated to promoting participatory democracy, alongside parliamentary democracy, in Europe. The EESC's vision of society is one in which everyone is included and actively involved. This means citizens having a meaningful say in their own future and in the future of their children. It means young people believing they have the hope of a job and a decent life and it means people feeling empowered, engaged, equally respected and safe and secure in their daily lives.





## The EESC's soul is its members

Based in Brussels, the EESC is made up of 329 members from all 27 EU Member States. The **members come from all social and professional backgrounds and have a vast range of knowledge and experience.** They represent **employers' associations, industry, chambers of commerce, associations of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), trade unions, consumers, farmers, disability campaigners, academia, women's rights groups, environmentalists, cooperatives, youth organisations, human rights organisations, etc.** In total, the EESC brings together around 250 organisations and networks at national level, representing millions of EU citizens.

EESC members are appointed by the Council for a term of five years on a proposal by Member States but they work independently for the EESC in the interests of all EU citizens.

Members are not based full-time in Brussels: most continue to do their own jobs in their home countries, ensuring that they maintain direct contact with their constituencies.

The EESC is made up of **three groups:** Employers' Group, Workers' Group and Civil Society Organisations' Group. The aim is to **build consensus** between these groups so that EESC opinions truly reflect the economic and social interests of EU citizens.

**Employers' Group**  
Group I

**Workers' Group**  
Group II

**Civil Society Organisations' Group**  
Group III

# How the EESC works

The **European Parliament, Council and Commission** are **legally obliged to consult the EESC** when passing **new laws on a wide range of topics**. The EESC examines the proposals and draws up **opinions** based on agreement reached between its members.

In addition, the EESC adopts **own-initiative opinions** on topics members believe to be important in the interests of EU citizens. It also produces **exploratory opinions**, requested by EU law-makers when they want civil society's views on specific policies. The EESC also reflects the demands of civil society by publishing declarations, resolutions, information reports and impact assessments of EU legislation.

The EESC has **six sections** and one **consultative commission on industrial change**, plus several observatories and ad hoc groups. These bodies cover different EU policies, ranging from the economy to social affairs, from transport to the environment, from the internal market to external relations, from the rule of law to the European Semester. Members sit on one or more of these bodies, depending on their areas of expertise.

ECO	INT	TEN	SOC	NAT	REX	CCMI
Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion	Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption	Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society	Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship	Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment	Section for External Relations	Consultative Commission on Industrial Change

The opinions are debated and adopted by simple majority at the EESC's **plenary sessions**, which take place **nine times a year** in Brussels. The opinions are then sent to the EU law-makers in the Parliament and in the Council and contribute to the law-making process by influencing their thinking.

Each year, the EESC organises over 1000 meetings, both in Brussels and "back home" in the EU Member States, and publishes some 150 opinions in 24 languages.

To find an opinion go to:  
[www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions)



## Some success stories

### **The EESC ...**

#### **... empowers civil society on climate action**

The EESC's recommendations were taken on board in the European Commission's Communication on the European Climate Pact, including the establishment of an EU Climate Finance Forum.

#### **... has a say on the way EU money is spent**

The EESC takes part in the expert group set up by the European Commission on sustainable finance.

#### **... reduces waste**

The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, jointly set with the European Commission, links policy to practice on circular economy.

#### **... claims for the right to vote for disabled people**

800 000 EU citizens in 16 countries are denied the right to vote due to their disabilities. The EESC has launched a campaign to stop this discrimination.

### ... wants cleaner, greener batteries

Sustainable batteries depend on third country raw materials, alternative fuels, technological expertise and recycling capacity, including "urban mining". The EU Strategic Action Plan for Batteries has taken these recommendations on board.

### ... cares about migrants

The EESC and the European Commission organise jointly a European Migration Forum, in which policy makers and civil society monitor migration, asylum and integration issues.

### ... leaves no territory behind

The 2030 Territorial Agenda was delivered in 2020 with the contribution of the EESC: better links between urban and rural areas; decent living conditions for all; a healthy environment... No EU citizen should be left without access to public services simply because of the region they live in.

### ... provides a model for civil society supervision of international trade

The EESC participation model in policy making is now the standard in civil society advisory groups within international trade agreements.

### ... regrets Brexit, but keeps in touch with British civil society

Thanks to the EESC, the post-Brexit EU-UK agreement now includes a joint civil society advisory group, so that civil society monitoring of future relations is preserved.





## Young Europeans

As part of this mission, the EESC wants to hear what young people have to say. Young people are not just Europe's future workforce, activists and politicians – they also have a lot of ideas that are valuable right now.

The EESC has made working with young people one of its top priorities.

Specific initiatives include:

- Issuing opinions that address the specific needs and aspirations of young people
- Organising events for young people, such as the annual *Your Europe, Your Say!* (YEYS) debate with school pupils from all EU Member States and from the candidate countries
- Facilitating regular visits by EESC members to schools and universities "back home" to explain how the EU works, and to listen to young people's concerns and expectations.

# Civil society at the heart of Europe

## Delivering a Union of opportunities, security and resilience together

The current EESC President, Séamus Boland, was appointed in October 2025.



*With so many rapidly changing global challenges affecting us, the European Union must adapt, seize opportunities, build resilience and strategically embrace its own security. As the voice of organised civil society, the EESC plays an essential role, not only shaping that change, but in ensuring that this new Europe does not leave individuals or communities behind. My vision for this mandate is that, over the next few years, the EESC can and should play a pivotal role as a catalyst for civil society participation. The Committee has the responsibility to demonstrate why the EU is valuable and to sound the alarm where necessary. Together, let's work to deliver this, with civil society at the heart of Europe.*

**Séamus Boland**, EESC President  
Civil Society Organisations' Group, Ireland



*In these challenging times, the EESC is the most important and credible bridge between stakeholders and EU institutions. By working in a smarter way – cutting red tape and planning resources strategically – we can maximise impact and thereby boost growth, job creation and competitiveness. The EESC is an indispensable partner in shaping smarter, more effective EU policies that balance social and economic progress.*

**Alena Mastantuono**, EESC Vice-President for Budget Employers' Group, Czechia



*In an era of information overload, rapid technological change, social and economic challenges, armed conflicts and fake news, listening to citizens' views has never been more important. We represent citizens who are part of social partners and civil society organisations. To make sure their perspectives truly shape our core mission – advising the EU institutions – we must communicate with clarity, consistency and transparency.*

**Marija Hanževački**, EESC Vice-President for Communication Workers' Group, Croatia



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European Economic  
and Social Committee

Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 99  
1040 Bruxelles/Brussel  
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

[www.eesc.europa.eu](http://www.eesc.europa.eu)



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