

COOPERATION OF THE EESC WITH THE CYPRIOT PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

1 January – 30 June 2026



European Economic
and Social Committee



CY2026.EU

CYPRUS PRESIDENCY
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

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A word from the President



The Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union took place at a time when Europe continued to navigate an increasingly challenging geopolitical landscape. Guided by the motto "An Autonomous Union. Open to the World", Cyprus demonstrated that strategic autonomy and openness are complementary ambitions, while promoting a Presidency firmly anchored in European values, solidarity and resilience. Throughout these six months, the European Economic and Social Committee enjoyed an exceptionally close and constructive partnership with the Cypriot Presidency. Our cooperation began well before the official start of the Presidency and was built on mutual trust, openness and a shared conviction that organised civil society has an essential role to play in shaping Europe's future. A defining moment of

this partnership was the extraordinary meeting of the EESC Bureau, held at the Presidential Palace in Nicosia in November 2025. The warm welcome extended by President Nikos Christodoulides and Deputy Minister for European Affairs Marilena Raouna reflected Cyprus's commitment to dialogue and demonstrated the importance it attaches to cooperation with the EESC and organised civil society.

This spirit of cooperation translated into tangible results. At the request of the Cypriot Presidency, the EESC prepared thirteen exploratory opinions covering issues of direct relevance to Europe's citizens: from affordable housing, energy poverty and water resilience to social inclusion and support for persons with disabilities. These contributions reflect the Committee's unique ability to bring the experience and expertise of organised civil society into the European policymaking process. Our dialogue was further strengthened by the participation of Deputy Minister Raouna in the EESC plenary session, where she presented the Presidency's priorities, reaffirming our common commitment to placing citizens at the heart of European decision-making.

Beyond our institutional cooperation, the Cypriot Presidency also highlighted the importance of Europe's rich cultural heritage in bringing people together. The cultural initiatives organised throughout the Presidency, including the Cypriot Evening hosted at the EESC, reminded us that the European project is built not only on policies and legislation, but also on our traditions and values.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to the successful partnership during the Cypriot Presidency. The achievements presented in this publication testify to what can be accomplished when European institutions and organised civil society work hand in hand. I am confident that the excellent cooperation established will continue to inspire our common efforts to build a stronger, more resilient and more inclusive Europe.

Exploratory opinions requested by the Cypriot Presidency

Opinion	Section	Rapporteur	Adoption in plenary session
1. Civil Society's Role in Supporting Reform under the Growth Plans for the Western Balkans and Moldova, as well as in Ukraine's Reform Path	REX/612	Mr. Oleg ROIBU (Employers – GR I Romania) Mr. Andrej ZORKO (Workers – GR II Slovenia)	EESC Plenary: 29-30 April 2026 <u>REX/612-EESC-2026</u>
Landing zones: 29 May 2026 – Vienna, EESC's <u>EU-Western Balkans Civil Society High-Level Conference "Trust and Partnership at the Heart of EU Enlargement"</u> organised under the auspices of the Cypriot Presidency. EESC Co-rapporteur, Andrej Zorko, presented the opinion. The recommendations were also used as a basis for the conclusions of the conference that were shared by the Presidency, as the contribution of the organised civil society, with the relevant stakeholders in view of the <u>EU-Western Balkans Summit</u> held on 5 June 2026. 22 June 2026 – presentation in the Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the EU in Brussels. EESC Rapporteur Oleg Roibu, and co-rapporteur, Andrej Zorko, together with his advisor, presented and discussed the opinion with the delegates of the EU Member States from a number of Council's working parties (COELA, COWEB, COEST). - April – June 2026 – EU-Moldova and EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platforms. EESC rapporteur Oleg Roibu presented the opinion. 16 July 2026 – EESC's <u>High-level Forum on Enlargement</u> in the framework of the plenary session – the opinion was featured in the panel on socio-economic convergence with the EU.			
2. The Role of the Private Sector and Civil Society in Strengthening Economic Cooperation within the Pact for the Mediterranean	REX/613	Mr. Thomas Josef Burkhard WAGNSONNER (Workers – GR II Austria) Ms. Lidija PAVIĆ-ROGOŠIĆ (Civil Society Organizations – GR III Croatia)	EESC Plenary: 29-30 April 2026 <u>REX/613-EESC-2025</u>
Landing zones: 13 May 2026 – <u>virtual meeting with ASCAME</u>, the Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry. EESC Rapporteur Thomas Wagnsonner presented the opinion to eight Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry and discussed potential joint follow-up activities with ASCAME. 9 June 2026 – EESC-EP meeting in Brussels. EESC Rapporteur Thomas Wagnsonner presented the opinion to Nicola Zingaretti, EP rapporteur for the draft report on a new co-ownership for the future of Euro-Mediterranean relations. 10 July 2026 – <u>MedCat Days</u> in Barcelona. Euromed Follow-Up Committee Vice-President Wagnsonner opened the second day and presented the opinion.			

Opinion	Section	Rapporteur	Adoption in plenary session
3. EU Competitiveness and Youth Entrepreneurship	SOC/852	Mr. Giuseppe GUERINI (Civil Society Organizations – GR III Italy)	EESC Plenary: 29-30 April 2026 <u>SOC/852-EESC-2025</u>
Landing zones: 1st study group meeting – input session with the presentation of the request of the Cypriot Presidency, by the Cypriot Presidency representatives. 14 April 2026 – SOC Section meeting. Participation of the Cypriot Presidency representatives, thanking the EESC Rapporteur Giuseppe Guerini for the opinion.			
4. Tackling housing scarcity through affordable, sustainable and family-oriented housing policies	TEN/866	Mr. Thomas KATTNIG (Workers – GR II Austria)	EESC Plenary: 18-19 March 2026 <u>TEN/866-EESC-2025</u>
Landing zone: 12 May 2026 – <u>Informal Ministerial Meeting on Housing in Nicosia</u>. EESC Rapporteur Thomas Kattnig presented the recommendations included in the exploratory opinion, accompanied by TEN section president Marcin Nowacki and EESC member Krzysztof Balon.			
5. Energy connectivity, electricity grids	TEN/865	Mr. Christophe BÉGUINET (Workers – GR II France)	EESC Plenary: 18-19 February 2026 <u>TEN/865-EESC-2025</u>
Landing zone: 26 June 2026 – Adoption of the Council position on the Acceleration of Permit Granting Procedures and TEN-E Revision, which was informed by the EESC opinion on the EU Grids Package and the exploratory opinion.			
6. Over-tourism, Short-Term Rentals and the Crowding-Out of Local Populations – Finding the Right Balance	INT/1113	Mr. Marinel Dănuț MURESAN (Employers – GR I Romania)	EESC Plenary: 29-30 April 2026 <u>INT/1113-EESC-2025-03939-00-00-AC-TRA</u>
Landing zone: 23 January 2026 – exchange between EESC Rapporteur Marinel Dănuț MURESAN and Cypriot Presidency representatives, Messrs Mavroyannis, Achilleos, Roussis and Theocharous.			

Opinion	Section	Rapporteur	Adoption in plenary session
7. The Island Dimension in European Cohesion, Competitiveness and Sustainable Development Policies	ECO/689	Mr. Ioannis VARDAKASTANIS (Civil Society Organizations – GR III Greece)	EESC Plenary: 18–19 February 2026 <u>ECO/689-EESC-2025-03598</u>
Landing zones: 16 January 2026 – public hearing "<u>Strengthening cohesion and connectivity: Policy solutions for EU islands</u>". 12 March 2026 – meeting with the cabinet of Commissioner Fitto. EESC Rapporteur Ioannis Vardakastanis presented the opinion. 21 April 2026 – implementation dialogue on the Challenges faced by Businesses in the EU's Outermost Regions. Speaker: EESC member of the study group ECO/689 Stéphane Bijoux. 29 April 2026 – meeting between the President of the Confederación de Empresarios de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and EESC member Stéphane Bijoux. 07 May 2026 – Interreg Leaders Forum. Speakers: EESC rapporteur Ioannis Vardakastanis and ECO section president Elena Calistru. 04–05 June 2026 – Nicosia, Informal Ministerial meeting on cohesion. ECO section president Elena Calistru presented the opinion. 26 June 2026 – Paphos, High-level conference with theme "<u>Strategy for Islands</u>". Participation of ECO section president Elena Calistru.			
8. EU Water Resilience Strategy and European Climate Resilience and Risk Management Integrated Framework	NAT/973	Mr. Anastasis YIAPANIS (Civil Society Organizations – GR III Cyprus)	EESC Plenary: 18–19 March 2026 <u>NAT/973-EESC-2025</u>
9. Enhancing quality in employment and working conditions by introducing and promoting related tools (incl. AI) and strengthening social dialogue and collective bargaining	SOC/850	Ms. Nicoletta MERL (Workers – GR II Italy)	EESC Plenary: 18–19 March 2026 <u>SOC/850-EESC-2025</u>
Landing zones: 05 December 2025 – EESC Rapporteur Nicoletta Merl met representatives of the Cypriot Presidency in the framework of the opinion. 08 January 2026 – internal hearing organised in the context of the 1st study group with the participation of a representative from Cyprus. 12–13 February 2026 – EPSCO meeting: "<u>Fair Employment for Social Justice</u>". EESC President Boland presented the opinion.			

Opinion	Section	Rapporteur	Adoption in plenary session
10. Social inclusion and independent living for persons with disabilities through high quality and specialized social services	SOC/851	Mr. Pietro Vittorio BARBIERI (Civil Society Organizations – GR III Italy)	EESC Plenary: 18-19 March 2026 <u>SOC/851-EESC-2025</u>
Landing zones: 05 November 2025 – meeting between EESC Rapporteur Pietro Vittorio Barbieri and his advisor with four representatives of the Cypriot Permanent Representation. 25 November 2025 – expert hearing during the 1st study group meeting with the participation of a Cypriot representative.			
11. Developing a European Centre of Clinical Excellence for Pharmaceuticals	INT/1111	Mr. Veselin MITOV (Workers – GR II Bulgaria)	EESC Plenary: 29-30 April 2026 <u>INT/1111-EESC-2025-03937-00-00-AC-TRA</u>
Landing zones: 30 November 2025 – expert hearing in the context of the 1st study group meeting. 15 January 2026 – meeting between EESC Rapporteur Veselin Mitov and his advisor with Cypriot Presidency representatives Messrs Panayiotopoulou, Georgiou, Koukkoularidou. 24 June 2026 – Council Health Working Party. EESC president of the study group INT/1111 Danko Relić presented the opinion.			
12. EU Startups and scale up strategy – with a focus on European Innovation Act	INT/1112	Mr. Paul RÜBIG (Employers – GR I Austria)	EESC Plenary: 29-30 April 2026 <u>INT/1112-EESC-2025</u>
Landing zones: 17 February 2026 – meeting between EESC Rapporteur Paul Rübig and Cypriot Presidency representative Katrien Rommens. 26 February 2026 – expert hearing in the context of the 2nd study group meeting. 29 April 2026 – <u>High-level debate</u> at the EESC Plenary. 03 June 2026 – 9th STOA-STS forum Conference "<u>Start-ups and scale-ups: lessons from EU and Japan</u>". Speaker: EESC Rapporteur Paul Rübig.			

Opinion	Section	Rapporteur	Adoption in plenary session
13. The European Life Science Strategy along with the Strategy on Research and Technology infrastructures with focus on the treatment of rare diseases	TEN/867	Ms. Milena ANGELOVA (Employers – GR I Bulgaria)	EESC Plenary: 18-19 February 2026 <u>TEN/867-EESC-2025</u>
Landing zone: 16-17 June 2026 - EESC Rapporteur Milena Angelova participated in the “ <u>Advancement of Treatments for Rare Diseases</u> ” conference organised by the Cyprus Institute of Neurology & Genetics and the Cyprus Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy.			



Summary of events

Key events	
Date and Location	Event
19/11/2025 Nicosia, Cyprus	Extraordinary Bureau
22/01/2026 Brussels, Belgium	Presentation of the priorities of the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the EU by Marilena Raouna, Deputy Minister for European Affairs, at the Plenary Session. Bilateral meeting between Minister Raouna and EESC President Boland.

Cultural events organised by the EESC	
Date and Location	Event
17/06/2026 Brussels, Belgium	Coinciding with the closure of the Cypriot Presidency, and as is tradition, the EESC hosted a Cypriot Evening as a socio-cultural gathering to celebrate the country's rich traditions. Prior to the evening event, the official opening of the exhibition "<u>Cypriot Nama: Commandaria</u>" took place. Organised in cooperation with the Permanent Representation to the EU and the Press and Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus, the exhibition highlighted the rich heritage of Commandaria, Cyprus's historic sweet wine. The exhibition opening was complemented by a Michalis Kouloumis Quintet performance. The events included welcoming remarks by EESC President Boland, Vice-President Mastantuono and Cypriot EESC Members. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the European Union and approximately 250 participants attended the events on that day, along with a Press delegation from Cyprus.

Participation in Formal/Informal Council meetings	
Date and Location	Event
12-13/02/2026 Nicosia, Cyprus	EESC President's participation at the informal meeting of EPSCO.

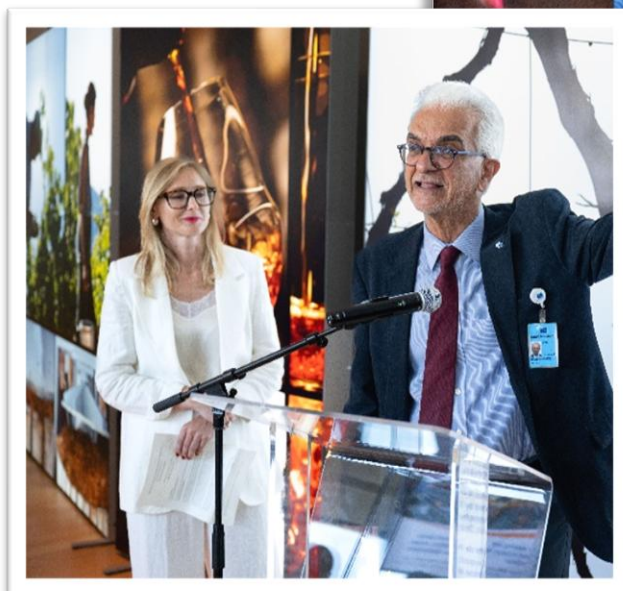
Participation of the EESC in events organised by the Cypriot Presidency or co-organisation of events	
Date and Location	Event
27/01/2026, Lefkosia (Nicosia), Cyprus	High-Level Conference on Mental Health & Inclusiveness, organised by the Cyprus Presidency. Speaker: EESC Rapporteur Pietro Barbieri of the EESC opinion on mental health community services (SOC/799).
29/05/2026, Vienna, Austria	The <u>EU-Western Balkans Civil Society High-Level Conference 'Trust and Partnership at the Heart of EU Enlargement'</u> , under the auspices of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and in cooperation with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST), the Open Society Foundation – Western Balkans, the Regional Cooperation Council and our partners from Austria's organised civil society. EESC President Séamus Boland participated with an opening speech.

Extraordinary Bureau





Cypriot Evening



Exhibition
"Cypriot Nama: Commandaria"

Other meetings	
Date and Location	Event
19/11/2025, Nicosia, Cyprus	EESC Extraordinary Bureau meeting. CCMI President Alain Coheur participated as speaker and moderator in the panel <u>"Water scarcity and preparedness"</u> .
02/03/2026, Nicosia, Cyprus	CCMI Extraordinary Bureau meeting.
02/03/2026, Nicosia, Cyprus	Presentation to the CCMI Bureau regarding the priorities of the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the EU by Constantinos Karageorgis, Director of Consumer Protection Service and EU Affairs Unit, Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry, Republic of Cyprus.
02/03/2026, Nicosia, Cyprus	<u>"Building EU's Preparedness: Resilient Solutions for Water and Defence challenges"</u> , roundtable with Cypriot civil society held by CCMI. Gerald Kreuzer, CCMI bureau member, moderated the panel "Water Security: creative solutions to prepare for today's and tomorrow's water challenges".
02/03/2026, Nicosia, Cyprus	<u>"Building EU's Preparedness: Resilient Solutions for Water and Defence challenges"</u> , roundtable with Cypriot civil society held by CCMI. Alberto Mazzola, CCMI bureau member, moderated the panel "Building EU's resilience: the future of defence industry and preparedness".
05/03/2026, Brussels, Belgium	The Permanent Group on Disability Rights organised a public hearing entitled <u>"Delivering full inclusion: which measures for the second half of the EU Disability Strategy"</u> with the participation of two representatives of the Cypriot Presidency.
11/05/2026, Varna, Bulgaria	<u>HEALTHXCHANGE SUMMIT 2026</u> , landmark European gathering dedicated to the Future of Sustainable Health Tourism. Keynote speaker: EESC Rapporteur Milena Angelova.
03/06/2026, Prague, Czech Republic	<u>13th European Conference on Rare Diseases & Orphan Products (ECDR 2026)</u> .TEN President Marcin Nowacki participated as keynote speaker on behalf of the EESC President.
22/06/2026, Brussels, Belgium	Invitation by the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union to the EESC Rapporteurs Oleg Roibu, Andrej Zorko and their advisor to present the exploratory opinion REX/612 to the delegates from EU Member States (working parties COELA, COWEB and COEST) on the premises of the Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the EU.

Groups' meetings in Cyprus during the Cypriot Presidency

Date and Location	Event
22/04/2026, Centre for Social Activities and Welfare of the Municipality of Larnaca, Larnaca	Civil Society Organisations' Group Extraordinary meeting took place in the form of a public conference entitled <u>"Island of resilience – Cyprus' perspective on climate, sustainability and food security"</u>. The conference focused on key Presidency priorities, including water resilience, the island dimension in EU policies, food security, and biodiversity. The event brought together senior representatives of the Cypriot authorities, including Annita Demetriou, President of the House of Representatives, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, senior officials from the Water Development Department, the Ministry of Finance and the Environment Department and the Mayor of Larnaca, alongside academics, civil society representatives and EESC members. It provided a structured forum for dialogue between the EESC and national stakeholders on policy issues of strategic importance to Cyprus and the EU. The meeting provided an opportunity to present and discuss the two exploratory opinions requested by the Cypriot Presidency: NAT/973 Water Resilience Strategy and European Climate Adaptation Plan and ECO/689 The Island Dimension in European Cohesion, Competitiveness and Sustainable Development Policies. Presented by their respective rapporteurs and Group III members, Anastasis Yiapanis and Ioannis Vardakastanis, the opinions served as the basis for dedicated panel discussions with Cypriot policymakers and helped frame exchanges on key Presidency priorities. They brought an organised civil society perspective to debates on drought, water scarcity, climate adaptation, food security, sustainable and resilient communities and the specific challenges facing island territories, while linking Cyprus' experience to wider EU policy discussions. At the request of the President of the House of Representatives during the conference, the Group III Cypriot delegation, composed of Anastasis Yiapanis and Panagiotis Champas, will present the conference outcomes to the Cypriot Parliament after the summer recess, further reinforcing the meeting's visibility and follow-up value.

Groups' meetings in Cyprus during the Cypriot Presidency

Date and Location	Event
07/05/2026, Employers Group Extraordinary meeting, Nicosia	In the framework of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU 2026, the EESC Employers' Group held a conference on <u>"Autonomy through competitiveness: SMEs at the core of Europe's strategic preparedness"</u>. The conference discussed how SMEs can be the key to Europe's strategic preparedness with Michael Damianos, Minister of Energy, Commerce & Industry of Cyprus; Professor Nikos Varsakelis from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; Demetris Georgiades, Chairman of the Cyprus Economy and Competitiveness Council; Michalis Persianis, President of the Fiscal Council of Cyprus; and Maria Heracleous, Former Representative of IMF in Cyprus, Former Board Member of Central Bank of Cyprus. The discussion examined how the EU's evolving focus on strategic autonomy and preparedness is reshaping the meaning of EU competitiveness, positioning it as a prerequisite for resilience, security, and sustainable growth. It was underlined that embedding preparedness into competitiveness policy requires enhancing SMEs' capacity not only to withstand shocks but to adjust and reposition quickly. Speakers highlighted that SMEs play a central role both as key drivers of employment, innovation, and value creation, and as actors exposed to structural constraints such as regulatory complexity, energy costs, financing gaps, and skills shortages. It was also noted that ensuring that they can invest and grow is essential to translate strategic autonomy into economic reality. At the same time, it was stressed that many Member States are approaching a critical moment on public debt, and therefore the debate should not focus only on how much governments spend, but on what they spend on. It was emphasized that investments that strengthen economic resilience, such as innovation, infrastructure and skills, should be incentivised. Access to finance was underlined as a core bottleneck. European venture capital lags far behind the US, pushing startups to relocate where funding is available. It was stressed that the Member States need to rethink incentives, including how taxation affects return on investment. It was also concluded that a single, unified capital market, with accessible retail entry points, could help redirect savings into European businesses. Press and Social media coverage: <i>Press:</i> 7 articles in Philenews (1), Cyprus Mail (1), Cyprus Inform (1), InBusiness News (2), Nomisma (1), and Innoserve Business Bulletin (1), in addition to the news item published by the member's organisation OEB and the press release by the Government of Cyprus. <i>Social media:</i> the event was promoted on all the Group's social media channels: <u>LinkedIn</u>, <u>X (post 1 and 2 with thread)</u>, <u>Facebook</u> and <u>Bluesky</u>, in addition to the web/newsletter <u>article</u>.

Groups' meetings in Cyprus during the Cypriot Presidency

Date and Location	Event
02-03/06/2026, Cyprus Workers' Confederation SEK, Nicosia	<u>Workers' Group Extraordinary meeting.</u> The Workers' Group reaffirmed that Europe's competitiveness and resilience can only be achieved through a strong social foundation, built on collective bargaining, quality jobs, and robust public services. Drawing on discussions with Cypriot trade union representatives, government representatives including from the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, and labour relations experts, the Workers' Group highlighted that recent progress in social legislation demonstrates that European policies can deliver for the many—not just the few. However, these gains remain fragile in the face of ongoing challenges, including austerity pressures, rising living costs, geopolitical instability, and rapid technological change. The discussions included the All-Cyprus Trade Union Forum, where union representatives of the Republic of Cyprus and of the areas under Turkish occupation discuss common challenges for workers in both communities to protect working rights, organise common industrial actions and support each other, and keep channels open despite the lack of communication between the two sides at the official level. Speakers stressed the urgent need for a new policy push that places working people at the centre of EU action. It was also underlined that strong social dialogue at all levels—particularly tripartite frameworks involving governments, employers and trade unions—is essential to achieving fair wages, decent working conditions and sustainable reforms. A major concern raised was the growing gap between economic growth and workers' living standards. In Cyprus, as elsewhere, rising energy prices and inflation have placed a disproportionate burden on workers, while wealth concentration continues to increase. Climate change was identified as a growing threat to workers, particularly through increased exposure to extreme heat and its impact on productivity and health. The costs of inaction far outweigh the investments required for mitigation and adaptation. A just transition to climate neutrality must therefore ensure protection for the most vulnerable workers and households, while creating quality jobs and strengthening economic resilience.

Cypriot EESC Members

GROUP I



Mr Michalis ANTONIOU

Director-general of the Cyprus Employers' and Industrialists' Federation (OEB)

- Sections: TEN, SOC, NAT



Mr Manthos MAVROMMATIS

Co-president of the United Nations Bicomunal Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial matters in Cyprus

- Sections: ECO, INT, REX
- Member of EESC Bureau
- Member of Group I bureau

GROUP II



Mr Andreas MATSAS

Secretary-General of the Cyprus Workers Confederation (SEK)

- Sections: ECO, INT, SOC



Mr Pieris PIERI

Secretary of International Department of Pancyprian Labour Federation (PEO)

- Sections: ECO, REX, TEN

GROUP III



Mr Panagiotis CHAMPAS

General Secretary, Union of Cypriot Farmers (EKA)

- Sections: ECO, NAT, SOC



Mr Anastasis YIAPANIS

Secretary-General of the Panagrotikos Farmers' Union of Cyprus

- Sections: CCMI, INT, NAT, REX
- Member of Group III Bureau

A word from the Cypriot EESC Members

The Cypriot Members were honoured to contribute to the successful implementation of the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union and to work closely with the EESC throughout this important period. It was a privilege to showcase Cyprus' priorities and to highlight the values that shape our contribution to the European project: dialogue, solidarity, resilience and cooperation. We were particularly pleased to bring attention to issues that are of special importance to Cyprus, including the island dimension, water resilience, the Mediterranean partnership, enlargement and social cohesion.

For us, the Presidency was much more than a series of meetings and opinions. It was an opportunity to build bridges between European institutions, organised civil society and national stakeholders, while sharing our country's experience and perspective. We were especially proud to welcome colleagues to events organised both in Brussels and in Cyprus, where discussions with local authorities, social partners, civil society organisations and experts enriched the work of the Committee and demonstrated the value of direct engagement.

Preparing and coordinating the thirteen exploratory opinions requested by the Cypriot Presidency, together with the various conferences, Group meetings, cultural events and Presidency-related activities, required close cooperation between the Cypriot Members, the EESC administration, the Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the EU and many dedicated partners. The Presidency period was both demanding and rewarding, offering valuable experience and reaffirming the importance of teamwork, flexibility and careful preparation in delivering a successful programme.

Beyond the policy discussions, we were delighted to share a part of Cyprus' cultural heritage with our colleagues through the Cypriot Evening and the exhibition dedicated to Commandaria, creating opportunities to strengthen personal connections alongside our institutional cooperation. These moments reminded us that the European Union is built not only on common policies but also on mutual understanding and respect for our diverse cultures and traditions.

Looking back, we are grateful for the spirit of cooperation that characterised the entire Presidency. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the EESC Members, the Committee's staff, the rapporteurs, advisors and all those who contributed to the successful organisation of the Presidency activities. We are proud of the high-quality opinions adopted during this period and hope that they will continue to contribute to future European policies.

We believe that the EESC made a meaningful contribution to the objectives embodied in the Presidency's motto, "An Autonomous Union. Open to the World.", through its exploratory opinions, stakeholder engagement and policy dialogue.

Above all, we are pleased to have strengthened the bonds within our EESC family and to have shared the Cypriot perspective with colleagues from across Europe.



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