



TRANSITION TO POST-2020 EUROPE



Conference conclusions



European Economic and Social Committee



This conference was organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), with the support of the Hungarian Economic Association, the Hungarian Ministry of Human Capacities, the National Economic and Social Council of Hungary, the Hungarian National Council for Sustainable Development and the European Commission.

The event gathered together current and former members of the EESC, national Economic and Social Councils (ESCs), European Union institutions, representatives of the Hungarian government and representatives of Hungarian civil society. Over 150 participants attended the event, including 30 speakers and panellists. The event was web-streamed and one speaker attended via Skype. The audience contributed to the conference's findings by filling in specially designed surveys.

CONCLUSIONS

- Participatory democracy should be strengthened and the EESC, with its network of national economic and social councils and similar organisations, could act as a civil society focal point. In other words, an EESC “one-stop shop” could be set up that could monitor and collect feedback from civil society with a focus on the European Semester. That feedback would be consolidated, analysed, assessed and communicated to the relevant EU institutions.
- The **objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy are still relevant**. The aim should be to **improve governance** and **further strengthen objectives** for a smart, inclusive and sustainable Europe. **Continuity** is a key element in long-term, development-oriented governance.
- Instruments for data collection, information exchange and coordination between the European Commission and Member States, in other words the Annual Growth Survey and the **European Semester**, are very useful and efficient mechanisms which **should be maintained beyond 2020**.
- **Better European Commission coordination** of policies, funding, planning processes and budget was requested. Participants concluded that “we have a tool box but tools need to be coordinated”.
- There was a call during the conference for a new institutional set-up for sustainable development implementation. However, the Commission already has an organisation in place, a **multi-stakeholder platform on the implementation of the SDGs in the EU** and civil society is participating via the EESC and Committee of the Regions.
- Participatory democracy could be implemented - there is only a need for political will. However, **there is a risk that we will lose momentum during the period of the European Parliamentary elections** (in June 2019) and **the appointment of the new Commission**. There is also the uncertainty brought about by **Brexit** and the numerous national elections taking place during that period.

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- The EESC will continue to contribute to shaping the strategy for the future. The key findings of the conference will **feed into the work of the EESC** and especially into the programme of the EESC Europe 2020 Steering Committee, or that of a similar future body (still to be determined). In any case, there will be an increased focus on the **semester** and the **contribution of civil society**.

The EESC might **further develop the already close cooperation with national ESCs and similar organisations** in the course of the development of a new post-2020 strategy.

For a detailed programme of the conference, conference presentations and related EESC opinions, please visit the event website:

www.eesc.europa.eu/en/agenda/our-events/events/transition-post-2020-europe



I wish to underline the importance of continuity and the still relevant objectives of the EU 2020 strategy in choosing the best scenario for 2030. The aim must be to improve governance and to further strengthen the objectives for a smart, inclusive and sustainable Europe.

Etele Baráth, EESC, Europe 2020 Steering Committee President



The post 2020 Europe will have to be designed and delivered through a new governance, working transparently and in partnership, driven by bottom-up initiatives. Sustainability should be at the very heart of the new strategy.

Luca Jahier, president of the Various Interests Group (October 2010 - April 2018), president of the EESC (term of office April 2018 - October 2020)



The European Commission needs to focus more on integrating the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement fully into the European policy framework with the objective of setting out a vision for a fair and competitive Europe to the year 2050.

Brenda King, EESC, Sustainable Development Observatory President



It is important to strike the proper future balance concerning division of labour between EU institutions and member states, in order to create the flexibility needed to respond and adapt to future shocks.

Enrico Giovannini, Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development



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