



European Economic  
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# Diversity Europe Newsletter



Pascal Segretain / Staff - Getty Images Europe

**CIVIL SOCIETY VIEWS ON THE  
FRENCH PRESIDENCY OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE EU**

# FOREWORD

**Séamus BOLAND (IE)**

*President, Diversity Europe Group*

## 2022: An opportunity to begin again.



Firstly, may I wish all the readers of Diversity Europe Newsletter a Happy New Year. As always, beginnings are seen as times to dream with

the hope that the things we wish for will happen and that we and our various communities are stronger as a result. For the EU, 2022 started with the passing away of a committed and inspiring leader, David Sassoli, who was President of the European Parliament since July 2019. The EU has lost a true European and the EESC will honour the memory of Mr Sassoli during the January plenary. 2022 will begin for the EU with the **French Presidency of the Council of the EU**. In its priorities, the Presidency clearly maps out the progress which it believes we should be aiming at. Using the three **overarching headings**, Climate, Social and Digital, it sets the direction that the EU needs to take.

The French Presidency aims to negotiate and adopt many European laws. Under **Digital Technology** it states: “Our priority will be the economic regulation and accountability of platforms, especially with regard to hate speech, with legislation on digital services and markets ([DSA](#)<sup>1</sup> and [DMA](#)<sup>2</sup>)”.

Under **Ecological transition** the Presidency says: “Our priority will be the establishment of carbon pricing at the EU borders for imported products. It is a matter of economic and ecological efficiency”. Whilst regarding the **social priorities**, the Presidency has stated that “Our priority will be to establish European legislation on minimum wages”.

We in the Diversity Europe Group welcome these as essential priorities. They clearly point to major challenges facing the citizens of Europe; challenges that our Group addresses in its work programme for 2022; challenges that will force our governments across the Union to deliver their own legislation necessary to prepare people of all ages so they can adapt to the necessary and unavoidable changes that are coming.

Following the UN Climate Change Conference ([COP26](#)<sup>3</sup>) in Glasgow, which in many ways failed to address the serious consequences of climate change, it looks like the EU may be left trying to provide the necessary changes. As I write, citizens are already seeing the effects of increased energy pricing and the various national Economic and Social Councils, which met in Paris in November, made it clear that these prices will add considerably to the number of people experiencing poverty. Equally, transitioning to new types of energy will be extremely difficult for families to afford, unless these same governments, with the support of the EU, prioritise the financial instruments needed to bring about rapid change from fossil fuels to sustainable energy sources.

Linked to climate change is the coming of digital change. This technology, properly used, has the potential to revolutionise the way we live, work, manage our health and play. Meeting this challenge will put considerable strain on our education system. It also has the possibility of giving significant advantage to the most well off in our society. In turn, this outcome could have far reaching consequences to our democracy and our financial systems.

From a social perspective Europe is most at risk. The Conference of the Future of Europe is reaching out to citizens across the Union

as a means to narrowing the gap between the European institutions and the people. Using the citizen assembly model, the Conference is exploring many of the issues mentioned above. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to ignore the role of organised civil society. While this is dangerous, it will be very useful to see the citizen panel observations. And if, as I suspect, these observations are similar to the many policy positions outlined by civil society, it will be incumbent on the European legislators to establish the necessary legislation that will enable civil society to have a meaningful say in the recovery of Europe.

Séamus Boland

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1. Digital Services Act, <https://europa.eu/PP78nD>  
2. Digital Markets Act, <https://europa.eu/IRd39Mp>  
3. COP26, <https://ukcop26.org/>

# CIVIL SOCIETY VIEWS ON THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU



The Presidency of the Council rotates among the EU Member States every 6 months. France will hold the Presidency from 1 January to 30 June 2022. The motto of the Presidency is 'Recovery,

strength and a sense of belonging'. More information on the priorities and programme of the French Presidency are available at: <https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/>

## Civil societies rally round the European venture

Interview with Thierry Beudet, President of the French Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC<sup>1</sup>)

What are your expectations for the French Presidency?



Thierry Beudet © CESE -Katrin Baumann

A Presidency of the Council of the European Union is a very important opportunity for a Member State — and also for its civil society. The French Presidency of the Council will be aiming to reach compromises on the structural negotiations currently taking place, to find useful ways

of drawing new priorities into the European public debate and to consolidate the paths we are already taking. I think that at the heart of this Presidency's work is the idea of a Europe with greater influence on the international stage.

What does the ESEC propose for the French Presidency?

The French Economic, Social and Environmental Council has been working hard on European issues since the start of its term of office last May. Our [first resolution](#)<sup>2</sup> is called "2022: relaunching the European project?" and is our contribution to the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#)<sup>3</sup>. In it, we call on the EU to boost its social and environmental

ambitions by making greater use of the tools of the [recovery plan](#)<sup>4</sup>, while not hesitating to make payments conditional on respect for our fundamental values. We also want Europe to be more aggressive in defending its strategic interests vis-à-vis its major trading partners, without being naive. I am pleased to see that these guidelines are reflected in the

priorities announced by the French Presidency of the Council.



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What, in your view, will be the first challenges for the French Presidency?

The initial feedback from the Conference on the Future of Europe has shown that citizens expect tangible achievements, where they can see the "European added value" and European civil societies are fully aligned with this demand. This is what we concluded unanimously at the [Paris meeting](#)<sup>5</sup> of European Economic and Social Councils (ESECs<sup>6</sup>) and the European Economic and Social Committee in November. A

Europe of Health, ready to engage in efficient cooperation in the event of a health crisis, a Digital Europe that protects citizens from the excesses of a market solely in the hands of access providers, a Europe at the forefront of the fight against global warming that introduces a carbon tax at the borders... our organisations, which deal with the realities on the ground on a daily basis, have played their part in raising these expectations. It is now

up to the States and the institutions to develop, in conjunction with civil society organisations, public policies that provide solutions.

1. SEC, <https://www.lecese.fr/en>  
2. Resolution "2022: relaunching the European project?", ESEC, <https://www.lecese.fr/sites/default/files/FicheSynthétique.pdf>  
3. Conference on the Future of Europe, <https://futureu.europa.eu/?locale=en>  
4. Recovery plan for Europe, <https://europa.eu/jjQ38vf>  
5. EESC, PR, <https://europa.eu/!KDHRHR>  
6. EESC, ESCs, <https://europa.eu/!kwj9wF>

# The French Presidency should be an opportunity to reassert a social and inclusive European project that belongs to everyone

**Dominique GILLOT (FR)**

President, General Federation of Children in Care in Public Education (FGPEP)  
Vice-President, National Consultative Council of People with Disabilities (CNCPPH)



Dominique GilLOT © EESC

For six months, starting on 1 January, France will hold the Presidency of the European Union.

As our country provides leadership and impetus, it will be up to the

people of Europe to stand united and demonstrate their collective ability to tackle the many challenges we are facing, including the health crisis, combating climate change, and managing migration.

This [Presidency](#)<sup>1</sup> will be an **opportunity to assert the EU's political cohesion and strategic autonomy**, by regulating digital platforms, adopting a [carbon border adjustment mechanism](#)<sup>2</sup>, and by establishing a reference framework within each Member State for setting a minimum wage.

At **international level**, the French president has announced that a [summit](#)<sup>3</sup> will be held between the African Union and the European Union on 17 and 18 February to strengthen the links between our two continents

in terms of economic development, cultural and scientific exchange and deepening the security partnership.

The [Conference on the Future of Europe](#)<sup>4</sup>, launched last May, has been a pivotal moment for the EU, enabling individuals and civil society organisations to convey their expectations and share their views on the future of European integration. The conclusions from this conference will emerge in the spring and will help to reshape our Union's roadmap.

Finally, **I would like the French Presidency to be an opportunity seized to reassert the European project**, particularly when it comes to solidarity and health, with citizens encouraged to fully play their part, and support the autonomy and freedom of choice of people with disabilities.

## Designing social impact investments

**Giuseppe GUERINI (IT)**

Spokesperson, EESC Social Economy Category  
President, Cecop-Cicopa Europe, European confederation of industrial and service cooperatives  
Board Member, Confcooperative, Confederation of Italian Cooperatives  
President, Confcooperative Bergamo  
President, Ecosviluppo, the social cooperative for labour market integration

The French government's request to the EESC to draw up an **exploratory opinion** on [Innovative financial instruments as part of the development of social impact companies](#)<sup>5</sup> is very interesting and very topical. The request underscores the specific commitment of the French government and Ministry for the Economy and Finance to supporting the implementation of the [Social Economy Action Plan](#)<sup>6</sup> presented by the European Commission last 9 December. In this Action Plan, we



Giuseppe Guerini © EESC

found a determined commitment to proceed in the direction of deepening the **role that investments can play** in steering the economy towards being more geared to the common good and to social cohesion.

In recent years, the EU has taken many initiatives to support investments and measures aimed at promoting social innovation and boosting the entrepreneurial capacity of social economy organisations, from the [EaSI programme](#)<sup>7</sup> (EaSI Funded – Debt; EaSI Guarantee; EaSI Capacity Building; EFSI Equity Social Impact) to [InvestEU](#)<sup>8</sup>'s social strand. However, social investments have not been

funded by **public resources** alone. Many **private investors** have also taken an interest in this sector, making it increasingly necessary to introduce dedicated policies, as the request from the [French Presidency](#)<sup>9</sup> seems to confirm.

Our opinion highlights the importance of making certain that **social impact investments** are designed with a view to **striking a balance between the social impact** (i.e. positive changes generated by the investment), **the**

1. French Presidency of the Council of the EU, <https://europa.eu/ICFpCmW>
2. European Commission, CBAM, <https://europa.eu/IKFvRU>
3. Consilium, EU – Africa Union summit, <https://europa.eu/IKJCh8C>
4. Conference on the Future of Europe, <https://futureu.europa.eu/?locale=en>
5. EESC opinion INT/965, <https://europa.eu/IRU7KGg>
6. European Commission, Social Economy Action Plan, <https://europa.eu/lbchWVNX>
7. European Commission, EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation, <https://europa.eu/lwP89xN>
8. European Commission, InvestEU, <https://europa.eu/IKqmJTO>
9. French Presidency of the Council of the EU, <https://europa.eu/ICFpCmW>

**level of return for the investor** (returns must be responsible and sustainable) and **the level of risk for the social enterprise**. In pursuing this objective, there should be an

emphasis on strengthening social entrepreneurship through a new inflow of invested capital, on advocating improved rules on transparency and social responsibility,

and on making it easier to integrate social impact and social economy enterprises into the European economic system.

## Open Strategic Autonomy – questions for the French Presidency

**Christian MOOS (DE)**

*President, EESC EU-Transatlantic Relations Follow-Up Committee*

*Divisional Director, European and International Affairs, German Civil Servants Association (dbb)*

*Secretary-General, Europa-Union Germany Board Member, European Movement Germany (EBD)*

A novel idea has been running through Commission communications for some time now. Europe's **"open strategic autonomy"** is on everyone's lips in the Brussels bubble. While it is unlikely to mean much to the public, the term thrills the world of Brussels' experts. France in particular seems to be very interested in pursuing the concept of open strategic autonomy. What exactly is behind it?

The **underlying problem** is that no one knows precisely what is meant by open strategic autonomy. Those who use the term can define it in a more or less satisfactory manner. However, they do not share a common vision. For some, open strategic autonomy means that Europe needs to learn lessons from the pandemic, diversify



Christian Moos © EESC

its market access and, where one-sided dependencies exist, to shift production back to Europe. Others associate it with more European self-determination and the freedom to choose non-European partnerships.

The latter is strange in that **Europe is free and independent in its trade policy** and nobody is calling this into question. Exceptions such as US sanctions against Iran and against European companies trading with Iran confirm the rule. For example, should these significant exceptions be the target? Is it also about the US, Europe's main trading partner and most important ally?

Proponents of open strategic autonomy seem to view Europe as an island and want to protect it from other powers. **China** is the elephant

in the room, and it is true that China's influence in Europe, based on trade, investment and credit, has grown considerably. The transition from a purely trade and economic dimension of the open European strategy to a foreign and security policy and geopolitical dimension, is fluid.

The **French Presidency**<sup>1</sup> raised the subject during its preparations. Here too, the question arises as to why Paris is pursuing this. **Globalisation** has certainly entered a critical phase. Authoritarian powers call for multilateralism that rejects the application of fundamental values, almost all of which are internationally binding standards. Change through trade is not desirable. So is Europe now closing up shop too? It would be disastrous for the free world order, and not in Europe's long-term interest, if open strategic autonomy were to be an enigmatic formula for protectionism, if autonomy were to take the place of innovation and competitiveness. The latter are also important for the survival of liberal democracy.

## The Green Deal and agriculture French Presidency: alternatives to reduced food production!

**Laurence SELLOS (FR)**

*President, Chambre d'Agriculture de Seine Maritime (Chamber of Agriculture)*

Whether carried out by the European Commission or the US Department of Agriculture, the **impact studies** on the **Green Deal**<sup>2</sup>, and particularly on the **Farm to Fork Strategy**<sup>3</sup>, consistently lead to the same conclusions: a reduction in agricultural land and in crop yields, a reduction in livestock numbers, higher food prices, a decline

in the agricultural trade surplus, and a significant drop in farmers' income.

There is no doubt that this will lead to a **greater dependency on imports** for our food supply, and specifically on imports from the USA, South America and Canada. This **reduced agricultural production** in Europe will clearly achieve a 29% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, but at what price? Sacrificing our food sovereignty, shifting our greenhouse



Laurence Sellos

1. French Presidency of the Council of the EU, <https://europa.eu/!CFpCmW>

2. European Commission, A European Green Deal, <https://europa.eu/!Tr74bn>

3. European Commission, Farm to Fork strategy, <https://europa.eu/!7DnHBT>

gas emissions to the other side of the world, importing food produced to standards that fall below our own?

**French farmers**, to whom we turned after the Second World War to feed our populations, cannot understand this strategy and are calling on the [French Presidency](#)<sup>1</sup> to return to “farmers’ common sense”. We are fortunate to

have fertile land that can feed us, and which provides many countries around the world with access to healthy food that is affordable. The message repeated by our agriculture minister Julien Denormandie stresses the need to “**launch a third agricultural revolution**”, after mechanisation and the use of chemicals, based

on digitalisation, robotics and genetics” as **a way of reducing our emissions and responding to societal challenges**. If rising prices for agricultural products and even the risk of a return to food riots are to be averted, he must make his voice heard loudly and clearly.

## Can France revive faith in the European project?

**Ioannis VARDAKASTANIS (EL)**

*Vice-President, Diversity Europe Group  
President, Greek National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP)  
President, European Disability Forum (EDF)  
President, International Disability Alliance (IDA)  
Member, Economic and Social Council of Greece (OKE)  
Member, Greek National Commission of Human Rights (EEDA)*

The [French Presidency](#)<sup>2</sup> of the Council of the EU comes at a pivotal time. One of the founding members of the Union, one of its greatest economic powers, and a bastion of civil rights and freedoms, can France be a beacon of light in a Europe where populism is on the rise?

**Strong EU leadership** in standing up to regimes who defy fundamental



Ioannis Vardakastanis © EESC

EU values has been hard to find in recent years. However, the French Presidency of the EU is not just any Presidency! It will be a six-month period in which the reins are being held by a Member State exerting possibly the most influence in the Council, with the platform to lead negotiations and outcomes in a way that few others can.

With a tight **presidential election** set to take place a mere four months into France’s EU Presidency, President Macron has a real interest in **showcasing the value of the**

**EU**, the way in which EU policies can improve citizens’ lives, and France’s strength within the bloc. With the discourse among the French presidential candidates so divided between pro- and anti-EU stances, Macron will be keen to hit the ground running in January 2022, bringing home to everyone just how strong and vital a role France plays in the EU.

This strategy could result in a Presidency that is ambitious on policy, such as with the ongoing work around the much-awaited Minimum Wage Directive. It could also result in a hard stance against Member States that seek to weaken EU values.

**A proactive and strongly pro-EU Presidency could be a game changer for the stability of the EU project**, and if any country has the potential to deliver on this, it is France.

## COMMENTS ON CURRENT AFFAIRS

### Stronger together

**A comment on the 2022 work programme of the European Commission by:**

**Jan DIRX (NL)**

*Vice-President, Diversity Europe Group  
Liaison Officer, Groene11 (Green11),  
Dutch nature and environmental organisations*

On 19 October 2021, the European Commission presented its [2022 work programme](#)<sup>3</sup>, entitled “Making Europe stronger together”. In 2021, as it does every year, the EESC



Jan Dirx © EESC

provided the Commission with timely recommendations and proposals for its new work programme. These

took the form of an [EESC resolution](#)<sup>4</sup>, which was adopted by the plenary on 9 June 2021. We then had to wait and see what the Commission would do with the recommendations and

1. French Presidency of the Council of the EU, <https://europa.eu/ICFpCmW>  
2. French Presidency of the Council of the EU, <https://europa.eu/ICFpCmW>  
3. European Commission, 22 work programme, <https://europa.eu/!3ybdP6>  
4. EESC resolution, <https://europa.eu/!kt64vFU>

proposals. Therefore, immediately after the work programme was presented, a list was drawn up of the points from the EESC resolution found in the work programme. We were not disappointed: **22 of the recommendations and proposals contained in the resolution are reflected** to a greater or lesser extent **in the Commission's work programme for 2022**. With regard to 16 of the Committee's proposals, the Commission has unfortunately done nothing (yet).

One of the subjects to which the Committee, and in particular the Diversity Europe Group, paid considerable attention last year was **freedom of the press**. In its resolution, the Committee drew the Commission's attention to this, so it is positive to read in the 2022 work programme that the Commission will be tabling a [European Media Freedom Act](#)<sup>1</sup>.

Unfortunately, there is little in the work programme about **strengthening the involvement**

**of civil society organisations in the Commission's work.**

This was indirectly confirmed by Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, in her speech at the EESC plenary session in December 2021. She spoke about consultation with the social partners, but did not mention other sectors of broad-based institutionalised civil society. This is a pity and means that **there is still a lot of work to be done**, especially for the Diversity Europe Group.

## Combating misleading environmental claims

*A comment on the issue of "Greenwashing" by:*

**Thierry LIBAERT (FR)**

*Spokesperson, EESC Environment and Consumers Category*

*Representative, Foundation for Nature and Mankind NGO*

*Research Associate, Catholic University of Leuven*



Thierry Libaert

The meeting of the [Consumers and Environment Category](#)<sup>2</sup>, Thursday 16 December 2021, provided an opportunity to better understand the issue of greenwashing. It once again highlighted the importance of common topics, and the consequent need for regular communication between environmental NGOs and consumer associations.

This issue is important because **greenwashing misleads consumers** as to the reality of a product's environmental characteristics. More fundamentally, by emphasising a few piecemeal actions, often of minor importance, it leads to a wholly erroneous understanding of detrimental

results, minimising awareness of the need for real behavioural change. It misleads the consumer by sending an oversimplified message: "Buy our products and you will be a good citizen".

Greenwashing **typically uses four techniques**: (a) false or disproportionate promises, (b) a lack of evidence or precision, (c) suggestive visual presentation (for example evocation of nature, green colouring, self-congratulatory labelling) and (d) trivialisation or denigration of environmentally responsible behaviour.

While greenwashing has been relatively well countered on traditional media platforms, **it flourishes within the digital sphere**. The European Commission published a survey (28 January 2021) indicating that 42% of ecommerce websites contained misleading environmental claims.

**European institutions have been active in this regard**. The European Commission inserted guidelines concerning acceptable environmental claims as part of updating the [Unfair Commercial Practices Directive](#)<sup>3</sup>. It also improved consumer information, notably by focussing on the environmental

footprint; and reinforced transparency in the digital sphere. The European Parliament, in its [resolution](#)<sup>4</sup> "Towards a more sustainable single market for businesses and consumers" (adopted 3 November 2020) additionally called for improved monitoring to increase consumer confidence and build more sustainable consumption.

Our **Committee** has shown great interest in the matter, notably through its [expressed view](#)<sup>5</sup>, conveyed by Bernardo Hernández Bataller as early as 2015, **requesting greater clarification of environmental claims**. Another statement is currently being drawn up on the substantiation of such claims through use of environmental footprint methods.

Our Committee also issued an [opinion](#)<sup>6</sup> (20 October 2021) on **responsible advertising**. Following this we call for a genuine commitment from the entire advertising industry within Europe, to ensure that the sector plays its full part in the campaign to ensure successful ecological transition.

1. European Commission, for a European Media Freedom Act, <https://europa.eu/!Fw47kp>

2. EESC Consumers and Environment Category, <https://europa.eu/!Nf36rW>

3. European Commission, unfair commercial practices directive, <https://europa.eu/!GkdKGk>

4. European Parliament resolution, <https://europa.eu/!cguPGX>

5. EESC opinion INT/766, <https://europa.eu/!wkUFqx>

6. EESC opinion INT/948, <https://europa.eu/!8TuGvM>

# NEWS FROM THE DIVERSITY EUROPE GROUP

## *EESC study reveals mismatch between volunteer energy and volunteering opportunities*

*Support needed for volunteer organisations and individual volunteering initiatives*



**People in all European Member States are willing to volunteer, a recent EESC study on ‘[New trends in the development of volunteering in the European Union](#)’ confirms.** However, though there is plenty of ‘volunteer energy’, actual volunteering rates vary across Member States. The study suggests investing in the development of third-party involvement and removing barriers to spontaneous, individual volunteering. It also recommends helping volunteer organisations to better tailor volunteer activities to the preferences of potential volunteers.

The EESC commissioned the study at the request of the Diversity Europe Group, whose Members are in close contact with volunteers on a daily basis and play a crucial role in organising and sustaining volunteer energy. The study was carried out by the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. It combines a broad **review of literature** with focused **data gathering in five European Member States**

(Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Spain and the Netherlands). The study creates a classification of volunteers and volunteering opportunities and provides a qualitative overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that the sector is facing in the EU. In doing so, it reveals new processes and challenges that have been affecting the sector and will presumably continue to do so in the next 10 years. The study was published in December in the context of International Volunteer Day.

The Diversity Europe Group organised a **remote presentation of the study** on 15 December. The press event was moderated by the vice-president of the Diversity Europe Group, **Kinga Joó**; it featured an introduction by the president of the Diversity Europe Group, **Séamus Boland**, and a presentation by the lead author of the study and professor at the Erasmus University, **Dr Lucas Meijs**, and the rapporteur for the latest EESC opinion on [Volunteers – Citizens building the future of Europe](#)<sup>1</sup>, **Krzysztof Pater**.

**Séamus Boland** spoke about the value of the study for policy-making: “The study offers valuable insights into the different kinds of volunteers and volunteering activities, as well as into the major changes, challenges and opportunities of the sector. I hope that it will stimulate the debate and lay the ground for informed policy decisions, especially as volunteering has been less present in the European debate in recent years.”

Regarding the value of volunteering in the context of recent environmental disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic,

**Mr Boland** stressed that it had helped create social cohesion and was an example of active participation in shaping societies. Despite its enormous socio-economic potential, the Group president warned that “volunteering should not be used to replace basic services of national and local authorities”.

Presenting the main findings and recommendations of the EESC opinion SOC/688, the rapporteur **Krzysztof Pater**, who is also a Member of the EESC Diversity Europe Group, said: “Policy-makers must be aware that Europe’s future will be shaped not only by politicians and institutions, but also by millions of ordinary citizens, volunteers, acting in solidarity for the common good”. The opinion, which was adopted by the EESC plenary on 8 December 2021, therefore calls for **systematic and thoughtful support for volunteering** at European and national level. **Mr Pater** urged the European Commission to take action and to declare 2025 the European Year of Volunteers. It would be a way to pay tribute to the millions of volunteers who have demonstrated their significant social role and to reap the full potential of volunteering in the future.

The study and the executive summary can be download from the [EESC website](#)<sup>2</sup>. **Read on the next page an interview with Dr Lucas Meijs.**

1. EESC opinion SOC/688, <https://europa.eu/pyYGgQ>  
2. EESC study and executive summary, <https://europa.eu/VMHFxM>



## Interview with Lucas Meijs, main author of the EESC study on “New trends in the development of volunteering in the European Union” and professor at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University

### How did you prepare the study?

This study<sup>1</sup> on trends in volunteering in the EU combines a broad review of the literature with focused data gathering in five countries

that represent the diversity of Europe in volunteering – Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Finland and The Netherlands. This was combined

in a SWOT analysis focusing on Strengths-Weaknesses and Opportunities-Threats.

### What are the study's main findings?

Not surprisingly European countries are different in terms of the actual rate of volunteering. The study shows that these differences can be explained by a combination of volunteer energy, citizens that make themselves available to volunteer, and volunteering infrastructure – the systems that create volunteer opportunities. Volunteering activities happen when volunteer energy matches volunteer opportunities.

Interestingly, volunteer energy is present in all countries. Especially in the younger generations. This can be observed during emergencies like earthquakes and COVID-19 but also in

the growth of international volunteer days, such as *World Cleanup Day* and *72 Hours without Compromise*. It is much more the lack of a volunteering tradition and infrastructure that hinders this volunteer energy from becoming actual volunteering.

Turning to volunteering infrastructure, two European-wide trends can be seen. The first is the emergence of the “third party” involvement. This means that new organisations are getting involved in creating volunteer energy and matching people to volunteer opportunities. The main examples include companies that organise corporate volunteering, schools and

universities organising community service and service learning, and national organisations creating national days of service. The second trend is the rise of spontaneous volunteering. Driven by modern technology, all over Europe citizens are creating new ways to become active without the need for large organisations. In fact, the lockdowns seem to have speeded up this process.



Lucas Meijs © EESC

### Following the findings, what are the main recommendations?

The general recommendation is not to invest in developing more volunteer energy. The problem is not people's unwillingness to volunteer. The problem is much more that volunteering infrastructure is not capable of matching volunteer energy to volunteering opportunities. In many cases, the volunteering infrastructure

does not offer opportunities that people are willing to take on.

Given the pan-European trends, it would be wiser to invest in the development of more third-party involvement and the creation of more examples of spontaneous, individual volunteering. Likewise, it would be

better to help volunteer organisations to make recruitable volunteer activities that are based on the preferences of potential volunteers, and not those of organisations.

1. EESC study and executive summary, <https://europa.eu/!VMHFxM>

## Food supply chains are of key importance for a sustainable future

**Strengthening local and regional food production and processing within the EU and guaranteeing decent working conditions for all workers in agriculture and the wider food sector are important**

**objectives in seeking to improve the sustainability of the European food supply chain.** Other aspects of key importance to sustainability are fair international trading practices, encouraging more women and young

people into the farming sector, and structured stakeholder involvement and dialogue.

These are some of the main conclusions from a [conference](#)<sup>1</sup> held by the Diversity Europe Group

in the framework of the [Slovenian Presidency](#)<sup>2</sup> of the Council of the EU and the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE<sup>3</sup>). The Diversity Europe Group president, **Séamus Boland**, and the Slovenian Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food, **Jože Podgoršek**, opened this event.



Séamus Boland © EESC

**Mr Boland** said: “We need fair, inclusive and sustainable food supply chains. This will allow our farmers,

consumers, workers and businesses to grow sustainably, within the planetary boundaries and without leaving anybody behind.” [The European Green Deal](#)<sup>4</sup>, the [Fit for 55 package](#)<sup>5</sup> and the [Farm to Fork strategy](#)<sup>6</sup> are essential elements that must guide ambitions and should be seen as opportunities to seize. The president of the Diversity Europe Group, who also represents a rural organisation and is himself a small-hold farmer, argued in favour of **food prices that reflect the true costs of production**: “Let us green the CAP<sup>7</sup> and invest in rural areas, but to ensure sustainability in the European food supply chain we also need fair food prices for farmers.”



Jože Podgoršek © Branko Ravnik

The Slovenian minister, **Mr Podgoršek**, called for EU measures to **redistribute income** in

favour of primary producers and farmers and to enhance farmers’ competitiveness. **Unfair trading practices** were an issue that required further attention in the context of the sustainability of food supply chains. **Mr Podgoršek** welcomed the EESC opinion entitled [Towards a fair food supply chain](#)<sup>8</sup> and the initiative to resolve unfair trading practices at EU level in this regard. Finally, he recommended “closer cooperation between primary producers, cooperatives, the processing industry and shops” to make chains more

resilient and ensure a redistribution of risk between stakeholders.

Key figures based in Slovenia and at EU level representing the institutional, agricultural, consumers and environmental perspective, as well as the research and business arenas, took part in the debate.

MEP **Franc Bogovič** spoke about challenges for small and medium-sized players in the food sector such as increased competition and imports from third countries and a high concentration of ownership. Technological development, cooperation in the form of cooperatives, short supply chains and the trend towards quality food could help the various stakeholders to cope with these challenges. **Mr Bogovič** said: “We need to exchange good experiences between Member States in order to be able to change the market for the better. The market will not do everything; we need to take action.”

**Annikka Ojala** from the cabinet of Commissioner Stella Kyriakides spoke about the **European Commission’s initiatives** to improve the sustainability of the food supply chain at European and global level. She said: “Transforming our food systems into sustainable ones is an important part of the solution to counter the global trends on climate, biodiversity and unhealthy diets. The Farm to Fork strategy is our transformative vision of food policy in Europe and in the world.”

Other speakers and participants agreed that a global view, a comprehensive systemic approach, and efforts by all stakeholders were needed in order to succeed. Civil society would be the stakeholder that needed to demand change, while making sure that solutions are feasible and non-bureaucratic.

**Roman Žveglič** from the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia spoke about the **situation of farmers in Slovenia**. “The recent increase in prices has been a burden to farmers,” he said. “Especially the prices for plant products, fertilisers, seeds, as well as

energy, oil and other production costs whose upward trend continues”. Prices of agricultural products could only increase with a delay of a few weeks. This affected the long-term stability of food production, he explained, as small farmers had no influence on retail prices and distribution of income.

Other participants also raised short-term investments, trade imbalances and unfair competition as **threats to the sustainability of the food supply chain**. In order to fulfil their economic, social and environmental functions farmers need financial support and **measures to tackle imbalances**.

**Andreas Thurner**, president of the [EESC thematic study group](#)<sup>9</sup> on Sustainable Food Systems, proposed different areas of action. “We need to reduce food losses and food waste, create an enabling framework for innovation and sustainability and support fair and responsible business practices.” The Diversity Europe Group Member also drew attention to the **role of consumers**: “education and information in combination with transparent labelling can be a key tool to empower consumers to make more informed choices, ideally towards healthy and more sustainable food products.”

**Anja Mager** of the Association of Slovenian Rural Youth spoke about the difficulty in **attracting young people** into farming. She said that one of the ways to achieve this was a good and functioning food supply chain. “A fair food supply chain represents an opportunity in which young people will see their future in agriculture.”

1. EESC, Conference on “Improving the sustainability of the European food supply chain”, <https://europa.eu/9fr9gB>  
 2. Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU, <https://europa.eu/178M7TU>  
 3. Conference on the Future of Europe, <https://futureu.europa.eu/?locale=en>  
 4. European Commission, A European Green Deal, <https://europa.eu/!Tr74bn>  
 5. European Commission, Delivering the European Green Deal, <https://europa.eu/!8mpyF3>  
 6. European Commission, Farm to Fork Strategy, <https://europa.eu/!7DnHBT>  
 7. The EU’s Common Agricultural Policy  
 8. EESC opinion NAT/823, <https://europa.eu/!bRkXc>  
 9. EESC Thematic Study Group on Sustainable Food Systems, <https://europa.eu/!yXyRGd>



Angela Frigo © EESC

The **activities of food banks** were essential for ensuring food security but also to improve the sustainability and efficiency of the food system and to reduce the impact of food waste on the environment, explained **Angela Frigo** of the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA). "Food banks are an integral part of the food system. They are a bridge between potential food

waste and a concrete need of food," she said. **Ms Frigo** believed that it was important to encourage governments to strengthen national legislative frameworks in order to facilitate and promote food donation for human consumption, to develop integrated urban food system policies, to promote digitalisation and innovation for food banks, and to support those who are already active in food redistribution.

Participants also called for **more local and diversified food systems** and

stressed the need for immediate action. The functioning of food supply chains could not be taken for granted. The role of farmers, especially small holders, needed to be recognised and farmers supported. This was considered a key aspect for achieving sustainability.

*The full set of [conclusions and recommendations](#)<sup>1</sup> from the conference is available on the website of the Diversity Europe Group. It will form part of the Group's contribution to the CoFoE.*

## Category discusses combating misleading environmental claims

The [Consumers and Environment Category](#)<sup>2</sup> held its third meeting on 16 December. It focused on misleading environmental claims and began with a welcome address from EESC vice-president, **Cillian Lohan**, who called for EU legislation targeting companies that greenwash and provide misleading information.

**Bernardo Hernández-Bataller**, spokesperson for the Category, presented the EESC's work on targeting these issues. The Category is working on empowering consumers and ensuring commercial actors have proof to back up their environmental claims.

**Blanca Rodriguez Galindo** from the European Commission spoke of planned legislative proposals to aid consumers in the green transition and amendments

to the **Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD)**<sup>3</sup>. She mentioned the **Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network**<sup>4</sup> in which the Commission plays a coordinating role in screening product claims.

**MEP David Cormand** said that for a sustainable economy, **product safety standards** needed to be improved and companies needed to **communicate more effectively** with buyers. He indicated that the European Parliament was looking into **introducing a scoring system** to indicate to consumers how eco-friendly products are as well as strengthening advertising regulations.

The second half of the meeting focused on **stakeholder responses to misleading claims**. **Jan Dirx**,

Diversity Europe Group vice-president, presented the views of environmental organisations and examples from the Netherlands on how to combat greenwashing, e.g. the [Dutch Advertising Code](#)<sup>5</sup> and [Milieu Centraal](#)<sup>6</sup>.

**Baiba Miltoviča**, EESC TEN Section president, presented consumers' views. She called for **more product testing and laboratory evidence** to find the truth behind misleading environmental claims.

**Thierry Libaert**, spokesperson for the Category, stressed that the EU has a lot to do to combat greenwashing in the **digital world** and encouraged the promotion of advertising to green startups and SMEs.

## MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### A road for citizens' ideas needs to be built

**Katrina LEITĀNE (LA)**  
*Representative, Latvian National Youth Council*

On **16 November 2021**, our EESC Diversity Europe Group member **Katrina Leitāne** took part in a debate with pupils who are members of the [European Parliament Ambassador School programme](#).<sup>7</sup> The debate was organised by the European Parliament

Office in Latvia, and the schools represented all of Latvia's regions. Pupils were presenting their **ideas for the future of Europe** in the following areas: climate; digital transformation; European Union values, justice and security; education, culture, youth and sports; social justice and employment. All the ideas presented by the young people were topical and the causes were very well defined, and the proposed

solutions provide an excellent basis for further initiatives to be implemented

1. EESC, conference conclusions and recommendations, <https://europa.eu/lcfMqNN>  
2. EESC Consumers and Environment Category, <https://europa.eu/lnf36rW>  
3. European Commission, UCPD, <https://europa.eu/GkdKGk>  
4. European Commission, CPC Network, <https://europa.eu/lymdrJ6>  
5. Dutch Advertising Code, <https://www.reclamecode.nl/english/>  
6. Milieu Centraal, <https://www.milieucentraal.nl/>  
7. European Parliament, Ambassador School Programme, <https://europa.eu/ln7VYUu>



and further elaborated so they could be included in policy making not only in Latvia, but also throughout the European Union. Thus, **Ms Leitāne** emphasised that **participation of young people at EU level must continue** beyond the lifetime of the Conference, and that young people's perspectives should be considered during the drafting of legislation in all policy fields to avoid short-sighted policies and to promote more ambitious targets. Youth sees a huge potential in the health sector where the European Union could play greater role in the future.

On **10 December 2021**, **Ms Leitāne** participated in an exchange of views on the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE)<sup>1</sup> organised by the European Affairs Committee of the national parliament of Latvia, the *Saeima*. It was a very active debate involving members of the parliament, social partners, and youth organisations. It provided a possibility to share ideas and to provide input in building the future together. The proposals presented will be compiled in the file for national delegates going to Strasbourg for the Conference on the Future of Europe. The debate was organised under **four topics**: digital transformation; education, culture, youth and sports; the European Union in the world; and health. Youth organisations expressed the need for greater involvement of youth

in policy designing and planning. **Ms Leitāne** emphasised that the **role of youth in policy making should be strengthened both at national and European Union level**. Examples could be taken from Austria and Germany's "Jugend-Check" and "La clause d'impact jeunesse" in France, where specific youth tests are introduced to ensure the involvement of youth in policy designing. As President Von der Leyen stated, **"young people must be able to shape Europe's future. Our Union needs a soul and a vision they can connect to**. Europe needs all of its youth." **Ms Katrīna Leitāne** believes that the CoFoE and the [European Year of Youth 2022](#)<sup>2</sup> will pave the way for a European Union where youth are shapers of Europe's future.

## Krzysztof Pater took part in the ceremony on the occasion of International Volunteer Day in Berlin

**Krzysztof PATER (PL)**

*Vice-President, EESC Labour Market Observatory*

*President, National Scout and Guide Court, Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHP)*

On 5 December, **International Volunteer Day** was celebrated for the 35th time all over the world. A very important **ceremony** was held in Berlin – the European Capital of Volunteering 2021. It was attended by **Krzysztof Pater**, rapporteur of the EESC opinion [SOC/688](#)<sup>3</sup> *Volunteers – citizens building the future of Europe*. Due to sanitary restrictions caused by COVID-19, many people could only participate in this celebration remotely.

The ceremony was an opportunity not only to summarise the experiences of Berlin in 2021, but also to convey the title of the **European Capital of Volunteering 2022** to the representatives of the Polish city of **Gdańsk**. Representatives of Gdańsk also received a very **symbolic gift** from the Berlin authorities – a **porcelain bear** – the symbol of this city, painted with various elements that are symbols of Gdańsk.

The results of the competition for the European Capital of Volunteering **2023** were also announced in Berlin – this time it will not be as big as it was last time – the title goes to **Trondheim**, Norway.



Krzysztof Pater (on the right) © Martyna Kowacka

**Krzysztof Pater**, one of the members of the jury evaluating the candidate cities for this competition, shared his impressions of the competition with the participants of the ceremony, and also **highlighted the most important elements of the EESC opinion SOC/688** adopted during the EESC plenary session in December.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST PLENARY SESSION

### Commissioner McGuinness discusses the sustainable finance and anti-money laundering ambitions of the European Commission

In December, the EESC held a plenary debate on sustainable finance and anti-money laundering measures, which was attended by **Mairead McGuinness**, Commissioner for

Financial Services, Financial Stability and the Capital Markets Union. **Ms McGuinness** spoke about the **renewed Sustainable Finance Strategy**<sup>1</sup> and the most recent

**Capital Markets Union Package**<sup>2</sup>.

1. Conference on the Future of Europe, <https://futureu.europa.eu/?locale=en>

2. European Commission, European Year of Youth 2022, <https://europa.eu/igWFjMC>

3. EESC opinion SOC/688, <https://europa.eu/pyYGgQ>

She explained that these initiatives were aimed at **mobilising private capital towards sustainable investment**. Private funding was crucial for achieving the objectives of the [European Green Deal](#)<sup>3</sup>, as public investment would not be enough. Commissioner McGuinness also called for the inclusion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the sustainable finance transition. Her objectives included a **common ground taxonomy at global level** that “would not limit ambition but set the bar” for companies and investors. She commented, moreover, on the Commission’s proposal for a voluntary [European Green Bond Standard](#)<sup>4</sup>. It would be fully aligned with the EU taxonomy, which would ensure that funds were spent on sustainable economic activities. The **European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA)**<sup>5</sup> would



Mairead McGuinness © EESC

supervise external reviewers and therefore enhance investor protection.

Regarding anti-money laundering measures, the Commissioner proposed a single rule book to combat the issue and the introduction of the **anti-money laundering authority (AMLA)**<sup>6</sup>, which would supervise the most risky cross-border financial institutions and close loopholes in supervision. The authority would also coordinate national supervisory authorities and help them improve enforcement of rules. It would also support financial intelligence units across Member States and effective cooperation between them.

Diversity Europe Group Member **Benjamin Rizzo** was co-rapporteur for the EESC opinion [ECO/555](#)<sup>7</sup> on the **Anti-Money Laundering Legislative Package**, which was presented during the debate. He said that the Committee wished for AMLA not to be diluted because certain Member States may decide to contribute less to the system. All Member States should follow the single rule book mentioned by Ms McGuinness. **Séamus Boland**, Diversity Europe Group president,



Séamus Boland © EESC

intervened in the general debate indicating that **sustainable finance must embrace social and environmental goals**. He called for civil society to be more involved in sustainable finance aims, such as the inclusion of SMEs. **Giuseppe Guerini**, Diversity Europe Group Member, stated that the **EU must lead global processes** to stop the deterioration of global finance and increasing inequalities. As Europe leads the fight against climate change, the same force is needed to support social and environmentally impactful investments.

**Commissioner McGuinness** said she was seeking to diversify the sources of funds available to SMEs and called for increased financial literacy.

The plenary debate is available at: <https://fb.watch/asdznsWFdD/>.

## EESC debates implementation of European Green Deal with Commissioner Kadri Simson

The [Fit for 55 package](#)<sup>8</sup> was a topic for debate at the latest EESC plenary. **EESC president Christa Schweng** opened the debate by stressing that the energy sector plays a vital role in the fight against climate change. The EU needs to decarbonise its energy sector, address its energy dependence and prevent energy poverty. The EESC stands behind the ambition towards climate neutrality as set out in the Fit for 55 package.

**Kadri Simson**, Commissioner for Energy, spoke about the **Energy Poverty Advisory Hub (EPAH)**<sup>9</sup> and the [Energy Efficiency](#)



Kadri Simson © EESC

[Directive](#)<sup>10</sup>. Both would be needed to achieve Europe’s decarbonisation objectives. Renewable energy is essential to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The [2021 revision of the Renewable Energy Directive](#)<sup>11</sup> would increase the EU’s target from at least 32% of renewable energy sources in the overall energy mix to at least 40% by 2030, doubling the current renewables share of 19.7% in just a decade. **Commissioner Simson** mentioned the importance of provisions concerning regional cooperation and allowing flexibility amongst Member States to adapt to renewables.

**Lutz Ribbe**, Diversity Europe Group Member and co-rapporteur of EESC opinion [TEN/748](#)<sup>12</sup> on the **Review of the Renewable Energy Directive**,

which was presented together with five other EESC opinions in the context of the plenary debate, welcomed that the Commission is further raising the



Lutz Ribbe © EESC

1. EUR-LEX, <https://europa.eu/!RvjpWQ>
2. EUR-LEX, <https://europa.eu/!RD7dTU>
3. European Commission, A European Green Deal, <https://europa.eu/!Tr74bn>
4. EUR-LEX, <https://europa.eu/!RhMfYH>
5. ESMA, <https://www.esma.europa.eu/>
6. EUR-LEX, <https://europa.eu/!DPpBMq>
7. EESC opinion ECO/555, <https://europa.eu/!74tDdw>
8. On Fit For 55, a set of proposals to revise and update EU legislation and to put in place new initiatives with the aim of ensuring that EU policies are in line with the agreed climate goals, <https://europa.eu/!Yxy44r>
9. European Commission, EPAH, <https://europa.eu/!3H8hD4>
10. EUR-LEX, <https://europa.eu/!w4jVHV>
11. European Commission, Renewable Energy Directive, <https://europa.eu/!fwBmbd>
12. EESC opinion TEN/748, <https://europa.eu/!37DuX8>



John Comer © EESC

level of ambition for the expansion of renewable energy. He recalled the **need for citizens to be placed at the centre of energy policy** and to ensure that they benefited from its advantages. **John Comer**, Rapporteur for EESC opinion [TEN/750](#)<sup>1</sup> on the **Revision of the Directive on deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure**, called for a quick rollout of alternative fuel infrastructure to reach the EU's climate targets.

He suggested **exploring green hydrogen** as a form of energy, as 98% of trucks on European roads are fuelled by fossil fuels, which needs to change.

Diversity Europe Group president **Séamus Boland** stated that "it is impossible to ignore that the Fit for 55 package will affect the lives of every European citizen". He stressed the need for the green transition to be just and for civil society organisations (CSOs) to be involved in the implementation of the legislative package.

In her closing remarks, **Commissioner Simson** thanked EESC Members for

their support of the Commission's proposal to introduce a social climate fund in the context of the revised EU emissions trading system (EU ETS) under the Fit for 55 package. She stressed the volatility of fossil fuels and stated that communications on **solar energy initiatives** would be published next year. As energy prices continue to rise, the Commissioner called for the setting up of an energy poverty coordination group amongst European Member States to help vulnerable households and SMEs.

The full debate can be watched here: <https://fb.watch/asdDrtdlEF/>.

## European Commission President and Vice-President participate in EESC plenary debate

The **EU's priorities** for recovery and the [European Commission's 2022 Work Programme](#)<sup>2</sup> were the topic of one of the debates during the December plenary session. The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the European Commission Vice-President for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight, Maroš Šefčovič, took part in this debate. The discussions highlighted the mutual desire to continue the excellent cooperation between the two institutions.



Ursula von der Leyen © EESC

**Ms von der Leyen** acknowledged the work done by the EESC and said: "the Committee has always been very supportive and very firm in its mission. We are and we will remain close partners, both in annual policy planning and for the building of our long-term vision." **Ms von der Leyen** said that fighting the pandemic remained the EU's top priority. Other important issues for Europe's future included the green transition, affordable energy and related supply chains, the digital transition and the future of work, and social dialogue.



Maroš Šefčovič © EESC

noted that the EESC Members are the best ambassadors for the European Union.



Svijetlana Marijon © EESC

Various Diversity Europe Group Members took the floor during the debate. **Séamus Boland**, president of the Diversity Europe Group, pointed out that it was vital to broaden EU competences in the field of health emergencies and cross-border threats to health, and that civil society players had to be allowed to play a key role in the implementation of the [European Health Union](#)<sup>3</sup>.

In the context of the upcoming European Year of Youth, **Svijetlana Marijon** wished to know how the Commission wanted to tackle the demographic issue and brain drain that is affecting many European regions.

**Mr Šefčovič** thanked the Committee for its close cooperation with the European Commission and

**Arnaud Schwartz** stressed that European Member States needed to respect and implement European law. He wanted to know how the Commission intended to ensure this in 2022.

**Krzysztof Pater** regretted that volunteering had been gradually disappearing from the EU agenda over the last 10 years. He said: "We call on the European Commission to take real action and to declare 2025 the European Year of Volunteers. It would be a way of paying tribute to the millions of volunteers and a starting point for a real EU policy in this area".

Finally, **Ágnes Cser** pointed out that the Work Programme of the Commission made little reference to the European Neighbourhood Policy and EU enlargement. The issue of enlargement to the Western Balkans countries needed to be taken seriously.

The full debate can be viewed here: <https://fb.watch/asdDrtdlEF/>.

1. EESC opinion TEN/750, <https://europa.eu/14Ct7VD>  
 2. European Commission, 22 work programme, <https://europa.eu/13ybdP6>  
 3. European Commission, European Health Union, <https://europa.eu/1JvXtR4>

# OVERVIEW OF RECENT WORK

The last EESC plenary session took place on 8 and 9 December 2021. The plenary adopted 36 opinions and information reports, 17 of which were drafted by Members of the Diversity Europe Group. A list of the recent work can be found below.

**Ákos TOPOLÁNSZKY (HU)**, co-rapporteur, [SOC/700](#)<sup>1</sup> Emerging stronger from the pandemic

**Anastasis YIAPANIS (CY)**, rapporteur, [NAT/836](#)<sup>2</sup> Revision of the LULUCF Regulation

**Andreas THURNER (AT)**, rapporteur, [NAT/821](#)<sup>3</sup> Aligning food business strategies and operations with the SDGs for a sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery

**Benjamin RIZZO (MT)**, co-rapporteur, [ECO/555](#)<sup>4</sup> Anti-Money Laundering Legislative Package

**Christian MOOS (DE)**, rapporteur, [REX/534](#)<sup>5</sup> A strong transatlantic partnership

**Cristian PÎRVULESCU (RO)**, rapporteur-general, [REX/546](#)<sup>6</sup> Restrictions for transport operators in Belarus

**Giuseppe GUERINI (IT)**, rapporteur, [CCMI/182](#)<sup>7</sup> Non-standard employment and platform cooperatives

**Giuseppe GUERINI (IT)**, rapporteur, [INT/959](#)<sup>8</sup> Report on Competition Policy 2020

**John COMER (IE)**, co-rapporteur, [NAT/834](#)<sup>9</sup> Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

**John COMER (IE)**, rapporteur, [TEN/750](#)<sup>10</sup> Regulation on deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure

**José Manuel ROCHE RAMO (ES)**, rapporteur, [NAT/825](#)<sup>11</sup> Benefits of extensive livestock farming and organic fertilizers in the context of the European Green Deal (Information report)

**Krzysztof PATER (PL)**, rapporteur, [SOC/68](#)<sup>12</sup> Volunteers – Citizens building the future of Europe

**Lutz RIBBE (DE)**, co-rapporteur, [TEN/748](#)<sup>13</sup> Review of the Renewable Energy Directive

**Michael Mc LOUGHLIN (IE)**, rapporteur-general, [SOC/706](#)<sup>14</sup> European Year of Youth 2022

**Pietro Vittorio BARBIERI (IT)**, co-rapporteur, [REX/538](#)<sup>15</sup> Trade relations between the EU and its Southern Mediterranean partners and their potential impact on sustainable development (Information report)

**Simo TIAINEN (FI)**, rapporteur, [NAT/831](#)<sup>16</sup> New EU Forest strategy for 2030

**Thierry LIBAERT (FR)**, rapporteur, [INT/955](#)<sup>17</sup> Guidance / Code of practice on disinformation

The **complete texts** of all EESC opinions are available in various language versions on the Committee's [website](#)<sup>18</sup>.

The **next EESC plenary session** will take place on **23 and 24 February 2022**. For more information on the upcoming plenary session please visit our [website](#)<sup>19</sup>.

A list including all **new work appointments** of Diversity Europe Group Members is available on the Committee's [website](#)<sup>20</sup>.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



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**07/02/2022** – Meeting of the Consumers and Environment Category

**17/02/2022** – Meeting of the Associational Life Category

1. EESC opinion SOC/700, <https://europa.eu/!bQOBpx>  
2. EESC opinion NAT/836, <https://europa.eu/!t3wrhr>  
3. EESC opinion NAT/821, <https://europa.eu/!Xc3Vb4>  
4. EESC opinion ECO/555, <https://europa.eu/!74tDdw>  
5. EESC opinion REX/534, <https://europa.eu/!cQyCDC>  
6. EESC opinion REX/546, <https://europa.eu/!693Tc3>  
7. EESC opinion CCMI/182, <https://europa.eu/!RVKTKw>  
8. EESC opinion INT/959, <https://europa.eu/!gm9Ujb>

9. EESC opinion NAT/834, <https://europa.eu/!Qj48QX>  
10. EESC opinion TEN/750, <https://europa.eu/!4Ct7VD>  
11. EESC information report NAT/825, <https://europa.eu/!UCPudM>  
12. EESC opinion SOC/688, <https://europa.eu/!pyYGqG>  
13. EESC opinion TEN/748, <https://europa.eu/!37DuX8>  
14. EESC opinion SOC/706, <https://europa.eu/!qvtBwn>  
15. EESC information report REX/538, <https://europa.eu/!f6Yhk6>

16. EESC opinion NAT/831, <https://europa.eu/!vHhPMK>  
17. EESC opinion INT/955, <https://europa.eu/!WkVwdc>  
18. EESC opinions, <https://europa.eu/!wF86wY>  
19. EESC plenary sessions, <https://europa.eu/!Dg84qG>  
20. EESC, New work appointments – December 2021, <https://europa.eu/!C89hMq>

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