

Brussels, 23 December 2020

DRAFT MINUTES

of the 36th meeting
of the
Liaison Group with European civil society organisations and networks
held virtually
on **10 December 2020**

The Liaison Group with European civil society organisations and networks held its 36th meeting virtually, **from 10.30 a.m. to 12.20 p.m. on Thursday 10 December 2020.**

ATTENDANCE LIST (see appendix)

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Approval of the minutes of the 35th meeting

The minutes were approved.

3. Introductory statements by the EESC president, **Christa Schweng, and the Liaison Group co-chair, **Brikena Xhomaqi****

Christa Schweng congratulated Brikena Xhomaqi on her election as co-chair of the Liaison Group (LG) and welcomed new EESC members to the group. She briefly introduced herself as the recently elected president of the EESC, with 22 years of experience at the Committee, including as president of the SOC section and, before that, of the Labour Market Observatory. She went on to acknowledge the challenge that our societies face due to the ongoing pandemic, which has triggered the worst recession since the Second World War. Companies, and especially SMEs, were closing down or struggling to survive, and people were losing their jobs and sources of revenue. The crisis had deepened inequalities and worsened pre-existing vulnerabilities. In the near future, Member States would be trying to recover and be more resilient. Ms Schweng highlighted the fact that this was also an opportunity to build a more sustainable and digital economy, in which new jobs are created and the economic prosperity and social inclusion are ensured. Her motto for this presidency is *United for the Future of Europe*, which also represents how Ms Schweng wants to overcome the challenges of the pandemic: united at the levels of the EU and the Member States, institutions and civil society organisations; unity between EESC bodies and members and the civil society organisations in the Liaison Group. Ms Schweng concluded by reflecting on the future and expressed her willingness to provide opportunities for the member CSOs (civil society organisations) to contribute, in a meaningful and tangible way, to the Committee's work. She believed that the role of the LG needed to be further recognised and supported because, at the end of the day, both CSOs and the EESC work for better policy-making and better governance that is bottom up and responds to people's needs.

Brikena Xhomaqi welcomed all those attending the last LG virtual meeting of the year and congratulated the EESC president and the new members on their election and appointment. The meeting was, she said, a good opportunity to get to know one another and to find ways of working together and creating synergies. She highlighted the fact that this was an historic moment for the LG, as two women were co-chairs for the first time, which was an important accomplishment. She then summarised the LG's work over the past year. It had been quite active despite the pandemic and having to work online, and had managed to have meetings in which its challenges and needs had been mapped. At those

meetings the LG had also outlined topics to work on in the future, such as civic dialogue, digitalisation and sustainable development. The LG was looking forward to working with EESC members.

4. Getting to know one another: introduction of EESC members and civil society organisations

EESC members briefly introduced themselves and stated their main topics of interest:

Oliver Röpke, president of Group II, started by saying that the EESC workers group was looking forward to participating actively in the work and activities of the Liaison Group. As he had to leave the meeting early, he took the opportunity to provide his input into the agenda items. An increasing number of countries were questioning democracy, he said, which made it a matter of urgency to involve large numbers of stakeholders in consultation and decision-making processes. He stressed that this was a decisive moment for the EU, and hence for civil society organisations, because of two key events: the Conference on the Future of Europe and the Green Deal. He also spoke of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which he argued was one of the biggest achievements for the EU in the field of social policy, and had become even more essential due to the pandemic crisis and the rise in the poverty rates. In his view, the upcoming Portuguese EU Presidency would provide an excellent opportunity for the EESC and civil society organisations to work closely with the presidency in the implementation of the Pillar of Social Rights.

Cillian Lohan, Vice-President of Communication, said it was a great pleasure for him to be part of the Liaison Group. With a view to his function, his focus was very much on connecting the EESC members with the Communication Directorate and, as a part of that, also connecting them with the wider group of civil society. The Liaison Group was a wonderful instrument for doing this. He briefly described his background, explaining that he had taken an Environmental Science Degree and a Master's in the same field, and had worked in both business and the NGO sector. He had been nominated to the committee through the Irish Environmental Network, so some of the topics that Mr Röpke had mentioned were close to his heart.

Javier Doz Orrit president of the European Semester group (ESG), introduced himself as a Spanish member representing trade unions in the Committee. He worked in the REX and ECO sections, and believed that the ESG to be is a very important group at this time, especially when it comes to recovery plans. He argued that the European Semester group and the Liaison Group should work together closely when dealing with recovery plans.

Alain Coheur, president of the Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT), spoke of his activities outside the Committee, explaining that he was the director of European policy in an organisation called Solidaris, in Belgium. He was active in the NGO sector, being involved in the International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies, which brings together all compulsory and complementary sickness insurance schemes in Europe. He was also president of the International Forum on Social and Solidarity Economy. His training lay in the area of health economics, and he was an administrator in the sector of economic and social policy in Belgium.

Lutz Ribbe, president of the Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO), introduced himself as a German landscape architect. He had worked for German NGOs for thirty-seven years and had recently

retired. He joined the Committee in 1998 and said he was looking forward to working with the Liaison Group and together facing challenges such as the pandemic crisis and the Social and Green Deal.

Dimitris Dimitriadis, president of the External Relations Section (REX), had been at the Committee for more than twenty years and had been co-chair of the Liaison Group in the past, so he was not new to it. He said he was very happy to work in the Liaison Group and hoped that this would be a good term of office.

Pietro Francesco de Lotto, president of the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI), stated that he had been at the Committee since 2010. He was an economist and had a career as a university professor and senior researcher in economics, as well as having been CEO of several companies. He said the CCMI aimed to work closely with the Liaison Group.

Louise Grabo, president of the Digital Transition and Single Market Observatory (DSMO), explained that at the EESC she represented the National Youth Council in Sweden. She was very involved with civil society and was the president of a Swedish NGO for gender equality. She also worked with technology and was secretary-general of the Swedish Fintech Association.

Peter Schmidt, president of the Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment Section (NAT), explained that he had been at the Committee for six years. He was also the predecessor of Mr Ribbe in the presidency of the Sustainable Development Observatory, and so the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as social justice, were very close to his heart.

Aurel Laurentiu Plosceanu, president of the Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC), referred to his background in technological engineering, economic development, law and defence in Romania. He had been in the Romanian employers' movement for the last twenty years, as chair of the Construction Entrepreneurs' Association and the Insurance Employers Association. For the last year, he had been the vice-president of the General Union of Romanian Industrialists (UGIR). He expressed his intention of making an active contribution to the Liaison Group in these unpredictable times.

Lech Pilawski, president of the Labour Market Observatory (LMO), began by expressing his disapproval of the behaviour of the Polish coalition government concerning the European budget. He agreed with Ms Schweng's statement about the need to have a European budget as quickly as possible, as well as new funds for recovery plans. He also underlined the importance of European common values and the rule of law. He went on to speak of his professional life as an adviser to the board of the Polish Confederation Lewiatan, an employers' organisation member of Business Europe, and concluded by underscoring his commitment to women's rights in the Polish Congress.

Representatives of CSOs briefly introduced themselves and referred to their main topics of interest:

Diego Naranjo, from **European Digital Rights (EDRi)**, briefly explained the work of the organisation he represents. EDRi is a network of forty-four NGOs who defend rights and freedoms online. Lately, they have been focused on fighting against surveillance capitalism, addressing issues such as the use of facial recognition technology on protesters, or the case of Amazon's surveillance of workers.

Dirk Jarré, president of the **European Federation of Older People (EURAG)**, pointed out that his organisation was the oldest NGO in the area of ageing, as it had been in existence for sixty years. He

was a sociologist, lawyer and a senior lecturer at the University of Linz in the fields of social policy and European integration. He was also a delegate in the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change.

Emmanuelle Causse, director of the **International Union of Property Owners (UIPI)**, explained that her umbrella organisation represented thirty-one associations of private property owners, ranging from homeowners to small and large real estate landlords and companies. They were particularly interested in the topic of sustainability.

Furkan Sorkuncuk, representing **Volonteurop**, explained that his organisation promoted social justice through active citizenship and volunteering.

Víctor Meseguer introduced **Social Economy Europe (SEE)**, an organisation comprising 2.8 million European social economy enterprises, which are people-centred and reinvest in local communities. He said that his organisation was confident the Liaison Group and the EESC would succeed in making the voice of civil society heard in European policy-making processes.

Petros Fassoulas explained that the **European Movement International (EMI)** was a pan-European network of organisations that had been around for seventy years. They constitute a forum in which diverse stakeholders can come together and put aside differences to work together for a better Europe. They bring together civil society organisations, employers, trade unions, local authorities, environmental organisations and youth organisations, among others.

Gabriella Civico presented the **Centre for European Volunteering (CEV)**, a network of national and regional platforms that promote volunteering as an expression of European values and as a tool for active citizenship. Ms Civico took this opportunity to thank Mr Lohan for serving on the jury of the European Volunteering Capital competition, organised by CEV.

Philippe Seidel spoke about **AGE Platform Europe**, the European Union's largest network of organisations of and for older people.

Ian Pritchard, the secretary-general of **Architects' Council of Europe (ACE)**, explained that ACE was a pan-European organisation that brings together forty-five member organisations, comprised of architects and competent authorities, in thirty-one countries. He said that they were looking forward to the Civil Society Days 2021 and to working with the International Union of Property Owners in their shared workshop.

Ingeborg Niestroy introduced **SDG Watch Europe**, an EU-level, cross-sectoral CSO alliance of NGOs from development, environment, social, human rights and other sectors. Its goal is to hold governments to account for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs). She also commented that in the last three years they had improved their links to the national level by building alliances in at least eight countries.

Liva Vikmane explained that the **European Youth Forum (YFJ)** was a platform of more than five thousand youth organisations in Europe, reaching out to thirty-eight million young people. She gave an update on their plans for the coming year, which included activities concerning the pandemic crisis, as well as the rights of young people. They would also be launching the second edition of the Youth Progress Index. She said they were happy to see EESC members chosen from youth councils, as was the case of Ms Grabo.

Jeremy Wates presented the **European Environmental Bureau (EEB)**, the largest federation of environmental organisations in Europe, which brings together 167 member organisations from thirty-six countries. He spoke about the European Green Deal, which was a central preoccupation for his organisation at this time, saying it was not only about the environment, but also about democracy and social justice. They were very keen to see the mainstreaming of the European Green Deal principles into all policy areas, such as the CAP negotiations and the pandemic recovery plans.

Alexandrina Najmowicz explained that the **European Civic Forum** was a pan-European network of over a hundred associations from all across Europe. The profile of their members was very diverse, including NGOs, advocacy groups, and civic education groups. Since their creation, they had promoted meaningful civil dialogue at the European level between the institutions, citizens and their representative civil society organisations. For this to happen, she argued, there had to be an open and crowded democratic civic space. For the last year, they had been monitoring the civic space through a collaborative tool called Civic Space Watch.

Flavio Grazian spoke on behalf of the **European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)**, an association that had been active for nearly thirty years in the field of citizens' rights, promoting a more inclusive European Union.

Laura de Bonfils, policy and advocacy coordinator of **Social Platform**, stated that her organisation was the largest network of social civil society organisations in the European Union advocating for a social Europe. It was driven by a membership of European federations united in the fight for social justice, equality between all people, inclusion, sustainability and participatory democracy in the EU and beyond. She noted that many other CSOs who are members of the Liaison Group are also members of Social Platform.

Gabriele Rosana, the policy director of **Culture Action Europe (CAE)**, described his organisation as the major European network in the field of culture, representing all forms of cultural expression, including live performance, cultural heritage, art education, community centres and more. He explained that culture was one of the sectors that had been more affected by the pandemic crisis, so his organisation believed that it should be at the centre of European recovery plans. In this connection, he informed the meeting that Culture Action Europe had just launched a proposal for a European Cultural Deal, an overarching strategy that addresses challenges such as the recovery of Europe and the role of artists and cultural workers in the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Lisa Mashini, advocacy coordinator at **Cooperatives Europe**, explained that her organisation worked to promote and develop cooperative business models in Europe. They operate in several areas, such as housing, banking, industry and energy.

5. Presentation and discussion on decisions to be taken

Ms Schweng asked for the ratification of Brikena Xhomaqi as the CSO co-chair of the Liaison Group. Brikena Xhomaqi was unanimously ratified. **Ms Schweng** then gave the floor to Ms Xhomaqi.

Ms Xhomaqi asked for the ratification of the revised Liaison Group operating rules. The revised LG operating rules were ratified.

Ms Xhomaqi introduced the new membership requests, presented the proposal of the two co-chairs on these and asked for their ratification. The EESC VP for Communication Cillian Lohan had been accepted as a member of the LG, thus ratifying the decision of the EESC Bureau on 1 December; the European Federation of Retired and Elderly People (FERPA) had also been accepted as a member; the Council of European Dentists (CED) had not been accepted as a member, but all parties had reached an agreement for it to channel its voice through the LG member The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME). All of these decisions were ratified.

6. Civil Society Days 2021

Ms Xhomaqi gave an update on preparations for the Civil Society Days 2021. The following title for the event were proposed and approved: "A Sustainable Recovery for the Future of Europe's Citizens". The date for the event was set for 1-5 March. It will be an online event with 8 workshops (WS): WS 1 – Multilevel Sustainable Democracy in Europe; WS 2 – The social economy and youth entrepreneurship for a sustainable recovery; WS 3 – The role of education and culture in the sustainable recovery for Europe; WS 4 – The future of work in the necessary economic transition to a wellbeing economy; WS 5 – Youth activism to counter shrinking civic space and the impact of Covid-19 and contribute to the recovery of the youth sector and youth resilience; WS 6 – A Social Green Deal for a sustainable recovery; WS 7 – The role of the key civil society groups in the renovation wave; WS 8 – The role and economic value of volunteers in the Road to Recovery and beyond – for the future of Europe.

Ms Xhomaqi encouraged LG members who were not yet involved in the Civil Society Days 2021 to help in organising the event.

7. Cooperation and synergies within the Liaison Group

Ms Xhomaqi offered a brief overview of the existing forms of cooperation within the LG. She began by talking about meetings, reminding those present that there had been two full LG meetings this year and four meetings for CSOs. She went on to underline the importance of the Civil Society Days, as it was one of the best opportunities to strengthen cooperation within the LG. When it came to section and group meetings, Ms Xhomaqi had already participated in some meetings and would happily attend more. She encouraged EESC bodies to invite CSO representatives to these meetings so as to benefit from the wide range of expertise that the LG offers. She explained how, thanks to the initiative of the LG secretariat, CSOs were sporadically invited to section hearings. She also explained how, when new rapporteurs are appointed, the LG secretariat sends them emails recommending some LG-CSOs as experts. Lastly, she pointed out that traditional communication channels had been an effective cooperation tool.

Ms Schweng thanked Brikena for the overview and agreed on the importance of the LG and the cooperation between CSOs and EESC bodies. She stressed that the question was how to enhance this

cooperation and she made some suggestions to this end. Firstly, to encourage the sections, the CCMI, the observatories and other bodies to invite Ms Xhomaqi and CSOs to their meetings, as well as to other relevant events. She also suggested that EESC members request LG input into opinions, by inviting CSO members to speak at hearings held during the drafting of opinions. Rapporteurs could also meet CSO representatives or ask the LG for written contributions. Before giving the floor to the rest of the participants, the EESC president expressed her commitment to ensuring that the LG would be invited, whenever relevant, to EESC plenaries and to high-level horizontal EESC events.

Javier Doz Orrit, president of the European Semester Group, highlighted the importance of close cooperation within the Liaison Group, as it helped to promote the participation of civil society in European economic governance. This was especially important now, as we were facing the COVID-19 crisis. To address the consequences of the crisis, Recovery Plan NG EU is being implemented by the European Union. He argued that the input of civil society on these recovery instruments was vital. He informed those present that the European Semester Group would be drafting a draft resolution on the participation of civil society organisations in the implementation of the Recovery Plan at national and European level for the Committee and that they aimed to submit it to the European Spring Council meeting. Mr Doz Orrit invited the Liaison Group to work with them on the creation of this draft resolution, as the goal was to collect information on the topic at European, national and local level.

8. Conference on the Future of Europe

Ms Schweng opened the discussion on the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) by outlining its current state of play. The Conference on the Future of Europe was intended to be a discussion on the functioning of the EU with its citizens. All the institutions had issued their position on the scope and the objectives of the Conference. However, Ms Schweng underlined the fact that the three institutions (Commission, Parliament and Council) still needed to sign a joint memorandum agreeing on certain aspects, such as how exactly it would be organised and which high-profile individual would be leading it. Common ground should be found in the coming weeks.

After these remarks, Ms Schweng addressed the question of the EESC's role in the conference. This was still to be clarified, but it was clear that it would have an active role. To demonstrate this, she explained that Charles Michel, president of the European Council, whom she had met a few days earlier, had confirmed his full support for the EESC's participation at the conference. Similarly, Dubravka Šuica, European Commission vice-president in charge of the CoFoE, whom Ms Schweng had met the day prior to the meeting, said that EESC's input was important and needed more than ever. In terms of the topics, the conference aimed to be a wide, participative and bottom-up process, with no a pre-determined outcome. The EESC would therefore be able to contribute to deciding the topics by holding discussions with civil society organisations and citizens on the ground and then bringing that up to the European level.

Ms Schweng went on to inform the Group that the EESC Bureau had already started preparations and created an ad hoc group to explore possible contributions from the Committee to the conference. In September, the Bureau agreed on a roadmap of actions, which included debates to be held in each Member State. For these debates, it would be useful have the collaboration of the Liaison Group civil society organisations. Finally, Ms Schweng added that this was an initial discussion on the conference and that there would be more in the future.

Ms Xhomaqi began her statement by thanking Ms Schweng for her recap. She supported the idea put forward by Ms Schweng that there was a desire for the conference to have a bottom-up approach, noting that in an event held by the Commission that same week, the Citizen Engagement and Deliberative Democracy Festival, several Commissioners had expressed the belief that deliberative and participatory democracy should also be at the heart of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Ms Xhomaqi also noted that Commissioner Dubravka Šuica had mentioned that a new digital platform would be launched that would enable citizens to raise their concerns on the future of Europe and determine their priorities. Its specific features were yet to be clarified.

Liva Vikmane, **European Youth Forum**, gave an update on how they were preparing for the Conference on the Future of Europe. They had been very active and recently obtained a grant from the European Parliament which would allow them to gather inputs from young people in several Member States, and then channel these into the political architecture. She said they would come back to the Liaison Group to get feedback and create synergies when the project was launched. Ms Vikmane also explained that the Civil Society Europe network had launched a proposal for a Civil Society Convention to take place alongside the Conference on the Future of Europe, to compensate for the fact that there did not seem to be any formalised space for civil society at the conference. She was keen to hear what other members of the LG thought about this parallel convention.

Replying to Ms Schweng, who asked in which countries they would be running the project, Ms Vikmane said that they did not yet have a clear answer, as they were also working with international youth organisations and other platforms, such as the European Disability Forum. So far, the project would be taking place in five Member States, including Ireland, Spain and Bulgaria.

Javier Doz Orrit, president of the European Semester Group, reflected on the European Union's current situation, pointing out that the European project had already been facing serious challenges, such as Brexit and the rise of far-right parties, before the pandemic. He wanted to see a European social front being built to achieve better integration and more democracy, and argued that the Conference on the Future of Europe was an opportunity to do this. The conference should therefore have first and foremost a political rather than institutional focus.

Ian Pritchard, **Architects' Council of Europe**, provided an example of bottom-up cooperation, the movement for a new European Bauhaus, which they were part of. The project aimed at a renovation wave in architecture that was green and cultural. Mr Pritchard explained that they had established a coalition of organisations, interior designers, spatial planners, and art schools, among others, to work with them in conducting interviews with the public. This was an example of a bottom-up approach that involved synergies.

Jeremy Wates, **European Environmental Bureau**, followed up on the point raised by Ms Vikmane in relation to the Civil Society Convention launched by Civil Society Europe, arguing that this initiative was a response to a lack of direct participation of civil society organisations in the Conference on the Future of Europe. The participation of the EESC was important and welcomed by civil society organisations, but direct participation of organised civil society was also needed.

He then asked Ms Schweng if she knew whether there was already an agreement on the composition of the plenary at the conference.

Ms Schweng replied that this was still an open issue that needed to be clarified. She added that she thought the plenary would be much more open than the steering committee, which would be limited to the three institutions. However, she still had no confirmation of that.

Jeremy Wates, **European Environmental Bureau**, thanked Ms Schweng for her response. He explained that in one of the proposals for the composition of the plenary the trade union movement and the business community would be represented, which effectively reflected Groups I and II in the EESC structure. This, he argued, confirmed that there was a particular issue around Group III representation, and perhaps that was something the EESC needed to take into account. There should not, he added, be a lower level of civil society participation than there had been twenty years ago in the intergovernmental conference.

Ms Schweng thanked Mr Wates for his remarks. She said she thought the composition of the EESC reflected civil society organisations quite well and added that it would bring to the conference the important views of all of civil society.

Víctor Meseguer, **Social Economy Europe**, commented that it would be interesting to approach the conference as a shared initiative. All efforts needed to be coordinated and connected, but the Liaison Group could start organising activities on the topic before the three main institutions of the European Union reached a memorandum agreement or launched the online portal. Designing the future of Europe was to a certain extent a matter for everybody, so the Liaison Group could start working on their own initiatives coordinating synergies.

Ms Xhomaqi began by noting that the Civil Society Days 2021 could serve as an important input into the conference, as one of the aims was to discuss the future of Europe and so bring the recommendations and outcomes that emerged from its workshops to the EESC. This would be a doorway for civil society organisations to contribute to the process, although it should not be the only one. She then voiced her agreement with Mr Wates about civil society organisations not being directly included in the Conference. Ms Xhomaqi then expressed three concerns she herself had on how the conference was organised. The first had to do with inclusivity. She fully supported the bottom-up approach, but wondered how this approach would guarantee inclusivity and avoid reaching out only to the most privileged parts of society, who tend to be the ones who have more knowledge about Europe.

The second issue was how to be innovative when engaging with citizens, while at the same time building on the safe spaces that already existed. She highlighted the importance of looking to civil society organisations, which had many years of experience, expertise and knowledge, to better guarantee the existence of these safe spaces.

Lastly, she expressed her concerns about how timing can compromise the achievement of political change, and wondered to what extent change could be made in just a year and a half.

As a closing remark, she highlighted the fact that the conference was in itself a positive exercise, as it would enable people from different countries to engage with one another and come up with new ideas that were useful to Europe as a union and as a continent.

Ms Schweng addressed Ms Xhomaqi's concern about timing, saying she was rather optimistic about this, as it was not the first time a big challenge had been tackled in such a short time. She gave examples such as the reaction of civil society organisations to the migration crisis in 2015 and the success of the discussions on the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017.

Seamus Boland, president of Group III, began by saying he was aware of the concerns of civil society organisations about how they would be involved in the process. He also highlighted the fact that civil society organisations had been doing extraordinary work contending with the pandemic crisis, taking on the role of second line of defence. The first line of defenders had been the health care workers; the second line, community organisations and civil society groups helping people who were isolated or who suffered economic hardship. It would be concerning, therefore, if civil society organisations ended up being excluded from the conference to rethink Europe. He assured those present that Group III aimed to be there to represent civil society organisations and that it would have seats at the conference.

Ms Schweng thanked all participants for their interest and input, as well as the Liaison Group secretariat and the interpreters, and said she looked forward to the next meeting.

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Appendix



Thursday 10 December 2020 at 10.30 a.m., room JDE 62

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

(in alphabetical order)

EESC members:

Mr	Seámus BOLAND	President of Group III
Mr	Alain COHEUR	President of the INT section
Mr	Pietro Francesco DE LOTTO	President CCMi
Mr	Dimitris DIMITRIADIS	President of the REX section
Mr	Javier DOZ ORRIT	President European Semester Group
Ms	Louise GRABO	President SMO
Mr	Cillian LOHAN	Vice-President Communication
Ms	Baiba MILTOVIČA	President of the TEN section
Mr	Lech PILAWSKI	President of LMO
Mr	Aurel Laurentiu PLOSCEANU	President of the SOC section
Mr	Lutz RIBBE	President of SDO
Mr	Oliver RÖPKE	President of Group II
Mr	Peter SCHMIDT	President of the NAT section
Ms	Christa SCHWENG	President of the European Economic and Social Committee, Co-chair of the Liaison Group

Members of civil society organisations:

Ms	Alejandra ALMARCHA	UEF (Union of European Federalists)
Ms	Maja BOBIC	EMI (European Movement International)
Mr	Dirk BOCHAR	FEANI (Federation of professional engineers)
Ms	Emmanuelle CAUSSE	UIPI (International Union of Property Owners)
Ms	Gabriella CIVICO	CEV (Centre for European Volunteering)
Ms	Laura DE BONFILS	Social Platform
Mr	Petros FASSOULAS	EMI (European Movement International)
Mr	Flavio GRAZIAN	ECAS (European Citizen Action Service)
Ms	Belén GUTIÉRREZ	UIPI (International Union of Property Owners)
Mr	Davyth HICKS	ELEN (European Language Equality Network)

Mr	Dirk JARRÉ	EURAG (European Federation of Older People)
Ms	Lisa MASHINI	Cooperatives Europe
Mr	Víctor MESEGUER	SEE (Social Economy Europe)
Ms	Alexandrina NAJMOWICZ	European Civic Forum
Mr	Diego NARANJO	EDRi (European Digital Rights)
Ms	Ingeborg NIESTROY	SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Watch Europe
Mr	Ian PRITCHARD	ACE (Architects' Council of Europe)
Mr	Gabriele ROSANA	CAE (Culture Action Europe)
Ms	Annabel SEEBOHM	CPME (Standing Committee of European Doctors)
Mr	Philippe SEIDEL	AGE Platform Europe (European Older People's Platform)
Mr	Furkan SORKUNCUK	Volonteuropé
Ms	Liva VIKMANE	YFJ (European Youth Forum)
Ms	Nataša VISTRÍČKA	UIPI (International Union of Property Owners)
Mr	Jeremy WATES	EEB (European Environmental Bureau)
Ms	Brikena XHOMAQI	LLLP (Lifelong Learning Platform), Co-chair of the Liaison Group
Mr	Luk ZELDERLOO	EASPD (European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities) – on behalf of Social Services Europe

EESC members – apologies received:

Mr Stefano MALLIA President of Group I

Members of Civil Society organisations – apologies received:

Ms Elisa BRIGA EFIL (European Federation for Intercultural Learning)
Ms Léa GAUDRON R.E.D. (International Association Rurality – Environment – Development)
Ms Liz GOSME COFACE (Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union)
Ms Barbara STEENBERGEN IUT (International Tenants' Union)
Mr Enrico TORMEN EUROCHILD

EESC staff:

Mr Pierluigi BROMBO Head of Unit "Relations with national ESCs and Civil Society"
Ms Sonia CALVY Unit "Relations with national ESCs and Civil Society"
Ms Eleonora DI NICOLANTONIO Director ad interim of Dir. D
Mr Bernhard KNOBLACH Dir. D
Mr Stefano MARTINELLI Dir. D

Ms	Jonna PEDERSEN	Dir. D
Ms	Sandra SCHWEDER	Unit "Relations with national ESCs and Civil Society"
Ms	Karen SERAFINI	Unit "Relations with national ESCs and Civil Society"
Ms	Rocío URÍAS MARTÍNEZ	Unit "Relations with national ESCs and Civil Society", trainee

Observers:

Ms	Bianca COZAR	President's private office
Ms	Ana DUMITRACHE	President's private office
Ms	Claudia HUSDUP	Group I
Ms	Susanne JOHANSSON	ECO/ESG (European Semester Group)
Mr	Sergio Victor LORENCIO MATALLANA	ECO
Mr	Gilbert MARCHLEWITZ	ECO
Ms	Fausta PALOMBELLI	Group III
Ms	Ellen PETERSÉN	ECO
