Our featured news

Thematic debate on the EESC carbon footprint

For EU climate policy to be credible, it is important that the EU institutions and bodies lead by example and design and implement strategies for reducing the carbon footprint of their activities. The vast majority (89%) of NAT members agree that "the EESC should start working on its own pathway to climate neutrality by 2030 to secure political credibility and regain leadership". This is what came out of a poll held at the NAT section meeting of 8 March during a debate on the EESC carbon footprint. The EESC has been for years at the forefront of advocating for strong EU climate action and ambitious targets for GHG emission reductions and has continuously stressed that civil society and citizens are crucial partners in the fight against climate change. Read more here and here.

Sustainable Development Observatory ? work programme 2020-2023

"The Sustainable development goals (SDGs), the European Green Deal (EGD) and the European Pillar of Social Rights are the best blueprints we have to pave the way towards a sustainable recovery from the COVID crisis" says Lutz RIBBE, president of the EESC’s Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO). The SDO will act on the international level by following and engaging in the international processes on Agenda 2030 and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations, amongst others, but it will also act internally by enhancing sustainable working methods to reduce carbon emissions across the EESC. Read more EN FR DE

Thematic Study Group on Sustainable Food Systems ?
work programme 2020-2023
The Thematic Study Group on Sustainable Food Systems will, among others, contribute to the first Working Priority of the NAT work programme on Fostering a Comprehensive Food Policy ? Towards a More Sustainable CAP. This is part of the overarching objective of delivering on the European Green and Social Deal, achieving climate neutrality and sustainable recovery, and implementing the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. Close cooperation with the Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO) will be ensured. Read more

Meet our members | Josep Puxeu Rocamora: his work on a comprehensive strategy for sustainable urban and rural development
"European territories do not evolve evenly. There is a disconnect between the urban and rural areas, which, on the other hand, need each other. It is essential to curb this trend and promote population rebalancing, by enhancing the digitalisation of rural environments and combating the loss of biodiversity" says Josep Puxeu Rocamora. To develop these areas, we need a territorial contract? between urban society and the rural world, which should be participatory, adapted to the characteristics of the territories and preserving their historical, cultural and natural heritage. Read more

ALSO ON THE AGENDA
Your Europe, Your Say | COP | 18-19 March 2021
The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) held the 12th edition of its yearly event Your Europe, Your Say (YEYS) on 18-19 March 2021, on the topic of climate change, in the form of an online model COP (Conference of the Parties) in which more than 100 students from 33 countries took part. On 18-19 March students were asked to represent a sector and negotiate with each other, in order to come up with recommendations to stop climate change. These recommendations will be submitted to international environment policy-makers and discussed at conferences around Europe throughout the year. Read more

IEEP report on Mental health and the environment: Bringing nature back into people's lives
Access to nature can have positive effects on people?s mental health, according to a growing body of evidence. Likewise, environmental degradation, including climate change and pollution, poses a serious threat to our emotional state and well-being. This briefing by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) and the Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal) provides decision-makers with
recommendations for how to reflect the links between mental health and the state of the natural environment in policies, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.  

**UNEP report | Making Peace With Nature**
The first United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) synthesis report — Making Peace With Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies? is based on evidence from global environmental assessments and communicates how climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution can be tackled jointly within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. The report serves to translate the current state of scientific knowledge into clear and digestible facts-based messages that the world can relate to and follow up on. It first provides an Earth diagnosis of current and projected human-induced environmental change, by putting facts and interlinkages in perspective, including by using smart infographics.  

**EEA-Eionet strategy 2021-2030**
Europe will need to tackle unprecedented environmental and climate challenges, and at the same time stimulate a recovery from the economic and social impacts of COVID-19. The European Green Deal shows the ambitions the European Union has to meet these challenges and the choices made by policy makers, companies and citizens over the coming decade will determine when and how Europe will achieve them. The strategy presented by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet) for 2021-2030 delivers actionable knowledge on trends, prospects and solutions for a sustainable Europe.  

**ADOPTED OPINIONS**
The opinions of the NAT section are currently under preparation. You can see here the opinions adopted by other sections at the last EESC plenary session of February.

**OUR RECENT EVENTS**
Towards a holistic strategy on sustainable rural & urban development
A thematic debate on the importance of a holistic strategy for the sustainable development of rural and urban areas was held on 8 March as part of the meeting of the EESC Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT). The presentations of the speakers are now available on the [website](#). A recording of the debate is available. [Watch again](#)

**The future of work in the wellbeing economy**
Organised by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), the European Youth Forum (YFJ), the EESC section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT) and the EESC Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO), this workshop held as part of the Civil Society Days 2021 focused on the different pathways needed for the future of work in a wellbeing economy. [Watch again](#)

**Youth activism, systemic change and recovery in Europe**
Organised by Volonteurope, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) and the EESC Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO), this workshop held as part of the Civil Society Days 2021 debated on three key themes for the reconstruction of our societies in the wake of the crisis engaging, among others, young activists. [Watch again](#)

### OTHER LINKS AND NEWSLETTERS

- European Environment Agency - [news](#)
- European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC) - [newsletter](#)
- FAO - [newsletter](#)
- ECOLISE - [newsletter](#)
- Via Campesina - [press releases](#) - [newsletter](#)
- Copa Cogeca - [press releases](#)
- The European Network for Rural Development - [home](#) - [events](#)
- Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) - [latest news](#)
- Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) - [newsletter](#)
- International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) - [updates](#)
- Meta - the news channel of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) - [news](#)
- European Parliament - Envi Committee - [newsletter](#)
- EESC - Liaison Group - [newsletter](#)