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**New European Bauhaus: a call to work together to improve living conditions in Europe**

**At the March plenary session, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) discussed the Commission's proposal on this new European lifestyle combining** **sustainability, aesthetics and inclusion and highlighted the importance of its participatory approach.**

The New European Bauhaus puts a cultural and creative dimension at the heart of the European Green Deal and the renovation wave, providing a springboard for the green transition. With these words EESC President **Christa Schweng** summed up the EESC's position on this new Commission initiative when meeting Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth **Mariya Gabriel** at the EESC plenary session on 23 March 2022.

"We fully agree with the aim of providing all citizens with access to goods that are circular and less carbon-intensive in their places of living, work, public buildings and housing through practical experiences," said **Ms Schweng**. Stressing the importance of involving civil society organisations and looking to the future, she added: "The EESC is ready to be actively involved in the participatory approach of the New European Bauhaus movement in order to ensure a fruitful dialogue with citizens and civil society, providing solutions for and improving their daily lives."

Referring to the severe consequences of the pandemic and the outbreak of war in Ukraine, **Ms Gabriel** underlined the importance of such projects today: "I think it is more important than ever to be able to see hope in our future, to continue to work together for this. And that is exactly what the New European Bauhaus represents. The EESC is an essential partner for its success. Together, we will make sure that it is put into practice in a way that is as close as possible to local communities, European citizens and their homes."

She judged the participatory approach to be "crucial for maintaining dialogue with citizens. It is precisely this idea of co-creation and cooperation that inspired our initiative" and praised the EESC's proposals, such as the suggestion to set up a civil society platform to provide support at local level and the intention to organise a specific conference in connection with the New European Bauhaus annual festival on 9-12 June 2022. Another important step will be the launch in April 2022 of the New European Bauhaus Lab, a reflection and action group in charge of co-creation, prototyping and testing.

**Building a sustainable and inclusive future together**

The New European Bauhaus seeks to create a new European lifestyle combining sustainability, aesthetics and inclusion and is inspired by the original Bauhaus movement founded in 1919. Through a holistic and interdisciplinary approach, the initiative aims to build a greener and fairer future together for Europe, bringing the EU closer to citizens.

In its opinion on the [*New European Bauhaus*](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/new-european-bauhaus), drawn up by **Pierre Jean Coulon** and **Rudolf Kolbe** and adopted at the February plenary, the EESC emphasises that it is vital to ensure wide access to financing, providing opportunities and special support measures for those without the means to apply for funding themselves and involving in the process small businesses, craftspeople and associations in particular.

Likewise, in last year's opinion on [*A Renovation Wave for Europe*](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/renovation-wave-europe), drafted by **Pierre Jean Coulon** and **Aurel Laurenţiu Plosceanu**, the Committee points out that homes and other buildings across the EU account for 40% of total energy consumption and need to be renovated. This renovation requires long‑term investment in the general interest and in favour of sustainable development, health protection, the green transition and the effective implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights with regard to sustainable and affordable housing.

This is also the focus of the 2020 own-initiative opinion on [*Universal access to housing that is decent, sustainable and affordable over the long term*](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/universal-access-housing-decent-sustainable-and-affordable-over-long-term), put together by **Raymond Hencks** and **András Edelényi**, where the EESC calls for equality for all and universal access to decent, sustainable and affordable housing in the future.

**Civil society's expectations**

During the plenary debate, the president of the EESC's Employers' Group, **Stefano Mallia,** gave his full support to the Commission's initiative, stressing that innovation was the real driver of growth and was key to creating employment. At the same time, he warned that it was fundamental to make sure that the new funding opportunities reached SMEs.

On behalf of the EESC's Workers' Group, **Pierre Jean Coulon**, rapporteur of the opinion on the *New European Bauhaus*, maintained that the Committee could truly be at the forefront of the new project, as it was a model of participatory democracy where all EU citizens had to be involved to build a better future for everyone.

Finally, **Rudolf Kolbe**, co-rapporteur of the opinion on the *New European Bauhaus* and vice‑president of the EESC's Diversity Europe Group, said that meeting the New Bauhaus objectives on a daily basis required procurement procedures solely based on quality rather than price. The EESC would act as a multiplier to take the initiative forward in the interest of organised civil society, without whose participation the initiative could not be successful.

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*The European Economic and Social Committee represents the various economic and social components of organised civil society. It is an institutional consultative body established by the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Its consultative role enables its members, and hence the organisations they represent, to participate in the EU decision-making process.*

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