



# The **EESC's** activities during the **Czech Presidency**

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European Economic  
and Social Committee



# A word from the President

*Christa Schweng, EESC President*

The Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union will have to cope not only with the humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine but also with the lingering economic consequences of this war, such as rising fuel and energy prices. The fact that Europe has not yet fully recovered from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic only makes the challenge greater.

In these particularly difficult circumstances, it is reassuring to see the focus of the upcoming presidency on energy security, on building the strategic resilience of the EU economy and on boosting Europe's defence capacity and cyberspace security – these are key issues for our Union.

The same applies to the management of the refugee crisis and Ukraine's recovery, which Prague is addressing. It is our European duty to help both Ukrainians who have fled and those who have stayed in the country. The EESC stands with Ukraine and its people and we have demonstrated this by opening up part of our premises to Ukrainian civil society.

The tragic events of recent months have provided us with a brutal reminder of the original purpose of the EU's creation – maintaining long-standing peace on the continent. Our Union was created on the basis of the power of law not the law of power. What makes us strong is our unity. We share common European values, which are non-negotiable under any circumstances: respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law. Therefore, I am also pleased that the upcoming presidency has placed the rule of law and resilience of the democratic institutions at the heart of its priorities.

The upcoming Czech presidency will also have another important role to play: to properly, transparently and substantively follow up the Conference on the Future of Europe. Although the conference has now ended, the work continues and what happens next is crucial. We have raised citizens' expectations and we must not disappoint them.

The EESC is committed to working closely with the Czech presidency on our common goals, while moving Europe's strategic agenda towards a secure, economically prosperous, socially inclusive and more resilient EU. We will deliver our contribution through our exploratory opinions on issues such as data sovereignty, social dialogue on the green transition, energy poverty or gender equality. We are committed to making the voice of European civil society organisations heard throughout the presidency.

# The EESC's activities during the Czech Presidency



## Economic and Monetary Union, Economic and Social Cohesion – ECO

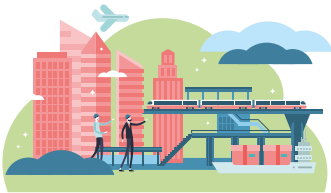
- Actively working on the involvement of Organised Civil Society in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of National Recovery and Resilience Plans and the reshaping of the European Semester process in order to optimise the economic recovery. This includes work on the Annual sustainable growth strategy and recommendations on the economic policy of the euro area, also building on national contributions
- Reaping the benefits of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, with the recovery plan embedded in it, to contribute to economic recovery, and introducing additional genuine own resources
- Ensuring the stability, integration and resilience of European financial markets, and redirecting investment flows to support sustainable growth
- Developing a social taxonomy for sustainable investment
- Reaping the benefits and harnessing risks associated with crypto assets, and contributing to the discussion on designing a digital euro
- Contributing to the revision of the EU fiscal framework for a sustainable recovery and a just transition
- Implementing the new territorial and urban agenda. Explore how the changes of the Leipzig Charter could impact on the creation of new Thematic Partnerships
- Cohesion policy as a driving force in the post-COVID-19 period and its connection and synergy with the recovery and resilience plans but also in relation to the crisis in Ukraine. Cohesion policy will again be at the forefront of mitigating the effects of the flows of migrants
- EESC contribution towards a more effective approach to tackle the climate crisis through cohesion funds
- Combating tax fraud, tax avoidance, money laundering and tax havens
- EESC policy proposals on the reallocation of taxing rights
- Contributing to the review of the Central Securities Depositories Regulation as part of the Capital Markets Union Action Plan
- Delivering recommendations for the recapitalisation of EU businesses, especially SMEs, to ensure an inclusive and sustained recovery





## Single Market, Production and Consumption – INT

- Industrial policy and SMEs, with a focus on business transfers and the impact of Fit for 55 on SMEs, social economy enterprises, crafts and liberal professions and business transfers
- The social economy as an important pillar of the European economy
- Consumer policy and empowering consumers for the green transition through better protection against unfair practices and better information
- Digital Economy and Society, in particular digital sovereignty as a pillar for digitalisation and growth and the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+)
- Circular Economy, with a focus on substantiating environmental claims using the Product/ Organisation Environmental Footprint methods (green claims)
- The advantages of the Single Market and the cost of non-Europe, e.g. the need to address fiscal or environmental dumping that distorts competition and the need to strengthen Europe's strategic autonomy to safeguard the EU's economic and financial stability



## Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society – TEN

- Building an efficient, integrated and green European transport system
- Creating an energy union that enables EU consumers to access safe, clean and affordable energy
- Conveying grass root civil society proposals for an European strategy to fight energy poverty
- A comprehensive and consistent European political strategy to tackle energy poverty needs
- Supporting the renovation of the EU's building stock
- Protecting citizens through cybersecurity and resilience of critical entities
- A global and secure strategy for space communications



## **Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship – SOC**

- Economic and social recovery in the context of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and effective health policies
- Tackling the social impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine
- Addressing energy poverty
- Strengthening the rule of law and fundamental rights in the EU
- Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights
- Future of work, the platform economy and social dialogue
- Lifelong learning, employee training and skills
- Gender equality, equal opportunities and youth
- Socio- economic inclusion of migrants and refugees



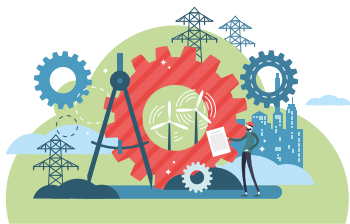
## **Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment – NAT**

- A sustainable agriculture and food strategy “From Farm to Fork”
- Sustainable rural/ urban development
- Climate: Climate neutrality, European Climate Pact
- Youth engagement in sustainability and climate
- Implementation of the SDGs in the EU
- Circular economy (European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, ECESP)
- Biodiversity as a key element of the European Green Deal
- The economy of wellbeing – post-COVID-19 sustainable reconstruction and recovery



## **External Relations – REX**

- Support to Ukrainian civil society struck by the war and, intensified dialogue with civil society from Moldova, Georgia and Armenia. Development of relations and specific support to independent civil society in Russia and Belarus
- Active contribution of civil society in the EU enlargement process in the Western Balkans, with a special focus on Youth Policy. Organisation of a High Level Western Balkans Civil Society Conference in Prague
- Enhanced involvement of civil society in the EU Partnership with the African Union and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
- Managing institutional and non-institutional civil society dialogue with Southern Mediterranean countries; Analysing the geopolitical impact of energy policies with a specific focus on the Mediterranean region
- Trade policy, including multilateralism and the World Trade Organisation (WTO): continued support for civil society involvement in the EU trade policy and for structured involvement of civil society in the WTO
- Enhancing civil society dialogue with the UK and Transatlantic civil society to ensure promotion of democratic values and sustainable development
- Encouraging more effective regional and bilateral cooperation and modernised partnerships with Latin America with institutional involvement of civil society
- Reflecting on how civil society can develop partnerships contributing to an increased EU capacity to act independently in external relations



## **Consultative Commission on Industrial Change – CCMI**

- Post-COVID-19 recovery plan and the EU's industrial sectors
- Updated EU Industrial Strategy
- Enhancing the global competitiveness of EU industry
- A green and digital transition for European industry
- Analysing and mitigating the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on EU industrial sectors, notably for Resource and Energy Intensive Industries and from a Critical Raw Materials perspective
- Strategic autonomy and semiconductors
- Roadmap on critical technologies for security and defence
- Space-based secure connectivity and new space
- An industrial strategy for the maritime technology sector
- Role of carbon removal technologies in decarbonising European industry
- A sustainable strategy for textile
- Circularity and Just Transition in the metal industry
- Digital innovations hubs and SMEs
- Marketing of construction products
- The European furniture industry



# A word from the Czech Presidency

*Mikuláš Bek, Minister for European Affairs*



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Let me first express my immense joy at being able to be at the historic second Presidency of the Czech Republic in the Council of the EU as Minister for European Affairs.

The Czech Republic will take over the presidency of the Council of the European Union at a particularly difficult time. We had endured two years of pandemic and we all wished that we could move forward while working on our economic and social recovery. However, this situation has abruptly shifted due to Russian military aggression against Ukraine and has presented the EU with new and unprecedented economic and security challenges not only for its Member States, but also for the EU as a whole, requiring decisive and comprehensive action.

During our presidency we will work to strengthen Europe's ability to act globally in order to defend European interests and to live up to its responsibility in the world. We will strengthen it from within and protect it against outside threats to protect and nurture our model of peaceful democratic governance, and its central tenets of dialogue and diplomacy. Past and pre-crisis policies, past and pre-crisis formats, past reflexes, the return to nationalism or the dissolution of our identities will not be the answers to the world that is emerging.

Crises have always been an opportunity for the EU to call things that are considered a given into question and to be even better prepared to face the challenges of the future. I am confident that during our presidency we will have the strength and capacity to turn these challenges into opportunities and I am honoured to be part of it.





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## EESC opinions requested by the Czech Presidency

1. The role of nuclear energy in the stability of EU energy prices
2. Social dialogue within the green transition
3. Gender equality
4. Energy poverty
5. The cost of non-Europe – the benefits of the single market
6. Digital rights and principles
7. Digital taxation
8. Thematic partnerships under the Ljubljana Agreement







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