

The delegation of the European Economic and Social Committee to COP23:

- **Brenda King**, Member of the employers & business group, she is currently President of the Sustainable Development Observatory. From 2010 to 2013, Brenda chaired the EU-African Caribbean Pacific subcommittee where she successfully campaigned for 2015 to be the European Year for Development and Cooperation. Between 2006 and 2008, she was President of the EESC's specialised section in employment focusing on job growth and quality employment. For over 10 years, Brenda has overseen the successful delivery of a youth development programme that has been recognised and awarded in the UK.
- **Isabel Caño Aguilar**, Member for the trade unions' constituency, vice-chair of the EESC's Sustainable Development Observatory and a Member of the EESC since 2010. A teacher by profession, she is a member of the education section of the Spanish General Workers Union (UGT) and head of the UGT office in Brussels. Her areas of interest are: employment, adaptation to climate change, new skills for new jobs, 'fair transition' and renewable energies.
- **Lutz Ribbe**, Member for the various interests' constituency, has been active in the European Economic and Social Committee since 1998. He was one of the main drivers of the EESC's work on environmental issues and sustainable development areas, contributing as a rapporteur of opinions on the EU action programmes in the field of the environment, biodiversity, resource efficiency, to name but a few. He has been the Director of the Environmental Policy Section of EURONATUR and of its office in Bonn for over 20 years and is vice-chair of the EESC's Sustainable Development Observatory.

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Contacts:

- **Jean-François Bence**, *director for legislative works*:
Jean-Francois.Bence@eesc.europa.eu
+32 477 88 02 48/ +32 2 546 93 99
- **Eric Ponthieu**, *head of unit*:
Eric.Ponthieu@eesc.europa.eu
+ 32 473 94 48 92/ +32 2 546 8771
- **Stella Brozek-Everaert**, *administrator*:
Stella.BrozekEveraert@eesc.europa.eu
+32 484 799 121/ +32 2 546 92 02

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The European Economic and Social Committee at COP23



European Economic and Social Committee

Introduction

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has been advocating for organised civil society and citizens at global, national and subnational levels to be fully involved in the development, review and, above all, implementation of the Paris Agreement. With the general framework agreed at the COP21 in Paris, it is now also the role of non-state actors, including civil society, to work together to implement it. Multi-level and multi-stakeholder climate governance is the strong focus of our work in 2017 and beyond. We are concentrating our efforts on the identification of the mechanisms and measures for organised civil society to be truly involved and for climate action to deliver massively while proposing elements of a new climate governance framework, emphasising the role of citizens and grassroots organisations.

The European Economic and Social Committee in a nutshell



European Economic and Social Committee

The EESC is an advisory body in the institutional set-up of the European Union, representing the organised civil society. With 350 Members distributed among three groups (employers, workers and various interests), the EESC acts as a vibrant forum for European civil society dialogue – hence, ensuring a broader democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the European Union.

The EESC has been and continues to be very active on climate- and development-related issues closely following international negotiations linked to sustainable development in a broad perspective, in cooperation with other Economic and Social Councils and representatives of the United Nations' Major Groups.



Key positions

The European Economic and Social Committee has formulated a series of key messages for decision-makers:

- The Paris Agreement is a welcome global commitment to mitigate climate change. The task ahead is to ensure that the agreement is **implemented** and developed further. It is particularly critical to raise the ambition level of national commitments in order to comply with the long-term goal of limiting global warming “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C”.
- The concept of **Climate Justice** frames global climate change as a political and ethical issue and not just a strictly environmental one. It recognises that the **most vulnerable and poorest in society** often have to suffer the greatest impact of the effects of climate change. All citizens have a right to a healthy clean environment, and to expect governments to take responsibility for their national commitments and NDCs, with recognition of **not only the more obvious environmental and economic aspects but also the social impact**.
- Production and consumption systems must change to adapt to and to mitigate climate change. This transition will have to take place globally and in the sectorial context and the EU can play a leadership role to make sure that it happens in a **just and controlled way**. The most vulnerable business sectors and workers need to be identified and adequately supported.
- It is civil society partners that will bring about the shift to a carbon-neutral economy through their action on the ground, while the role of political decision-makers is to provide them with an **enabling environment and funding**, including awareness-raising on all available funding opportunities. A **multi-level governance approach** has to be developed to facilitate civil society climate action and to remove obstacles to it.
- Scaling up and mainstreaming of climate initiatives at local level are an essential part of the solution to the climate challenge. In 2016, the EESC and its partners¹ decided to work together to create a new **international climate governance coalition**. A collaborative approach and bottom-up actions with the support of top-down measures are central to this work.
- Subsidies for the drivers of climate change should be phased out urgently, and exemptions should be applied in a more just manner, explicitly not to those who can most afford to pay, and not to those profiting from the pollutant.

¹ European Committee of the Regions (CoR), the French Committee for Sustainable Development (Comité21) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)