

Our leadership is made up of experienced members, elected democratically every two-and-a-half years.

Our Presidency for the 2020-2023 term of office:



Séamus BOLAND
(Ireland)
President



Pietro Vittorio BARBIERI
(Italy)
Vice-President



Jan DIRX
(Netherlands)
Vice-President



Kinga JOÓ
(Hungary)
Vice-President



Rudolf KOLBE
(Austria)
Vice-President



Ariane RODERT
(Sweden)
Vice-President



Simo TIAINEN
(Finland)
Vice-President



Ioannis VARDAKASTANIS
(Greece)
Vice-President

The administration of the Group is ensured by an active and dynamic team which you can contact, should you be interested in finding out further information on our activities.

Secretariat of the Diversity Europe Group,
European Economic and Social Committee,
99 Rue Belliard, 1040 Brussels
Tel. +32 (0)2 546 9548
Fax +32 (0)2 546 9756
e-mail : gr3@eesc.europa.eu

Web: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.group-3>

@eescdiversityeurope @diversEESC



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EESC

The Diversity Europe Group (Group III) is one of three major groups that make up the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). The Committee, established as a consultative body to the Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament as part of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, gives representatives of organised civil society a formal platform to express their points of view on EU issues and to participate in the Union's decision-making process. The EESC is a forum for consultation and representation that enables representatives of Member States' social, occupational, economic and cultural organisations to play an integral part in the process of shaping EU policies and preparing EU decisions.

The added value of the EESC's work includes:

- Considerable expertise under one roof, from the whole European civil society spectrum
- Through the opinions issued, the EESC's work ensures that the EU's legislation and programmes reflect the experiences, expectations and proposals of representative economic, social, occupational and civic organisations
- Divergent interests find a place for compromise and consensus for the benefit of a healthy participatory EU governance

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@DiversEESC

Diversity Europe Group

| GROUP III



European Economic
and Social Committee



Strengthening participatory democracy across the European Union

DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY

The presence of the Diversity Europe Group (Group III), alongside the Employers' Group and the Workers' Group, ensures that the Committee is a dynamic force and is empowered to give full voice to the concerns of the various economic, social, occupational and civic organisations that make up civil society in the Member States.

In line with the changes introduced in the Lisbon Treaty, our Group is made up of «other representatives and stakeholders of civil society, particularly in the economic, civic, professional and cultural field.»

Our members come from organisations representing the interests of:

- Academia (natural scientists, economists, sociologists, etc.)
- Citizens' Participation and Empowerment
- Civil Society Development
- Consumers
- Environment, Heritage & Sustainable Development
- Farming, Fisheries and Coastal Communities, Forestry
- Human Rights' Protection (Issues concerning children, elderly, families, gender equality, marginalised and underprivileged groups, migrants and refugees, minorities, persons with disability, women and youth)
- Liberal Professions (lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc.)
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Crafts
- Social Economy (charities, cooperatives, foundations, mutual societies and social enterprises)

CONSENSUS BUILDING

Building bridges that can facilitate a union of minds on contentious issues is extremely difficult, yet essential in the European Union. Our members represent many different and sometimes opposing sections in society. It is our choice to move forward, often slowly, or remain entrenched in our own positions. Yet progress cannot happen without some bridge building. We do that by:

- Listening to each other's perspective
- Working together to achieve common ground
- Reaching agreement
- Working in union to implement agreements

Our Group can influence the social partners, by bringing positive examples of the work of civil society organisations to the centre of attention. We can do this because, we are rooted in our communities and therefore can reflect the many issues that occur on a daily basis.



EUROPEAN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT - LOCAL ACTION

In democratic governance, it is the people who determine in which direction they want to go, and the role of their representatives and government in getting them there.

Our membership comprises much more than representatives of organisations with a presence in Brussels or at the EU level. This is the added value we bring to the EU policy-making process. We take pride in the fact that most of our members take discussions on EU legislative proposals home to their organisations and networks. Our members reach out to civil society organisations in their communities, regions and countries. They listen to their views and ideas and involve them in discussions.

Nevertheless, a regular exchange with all other European civil society organisations is particularly important to us. We cultivate a good and fruitful relationship with the members of the EESC Liaison Group and with other non-profit European civil society networks that have a broad representation at European level. We try to involve them in our activities and offer them logistic support for their meetings at our headquarters in Brussels.

Our overall aim is to truly strengthen participatory democracy across the European Union and to make sure that our opinions on EU legislative proposals reflect the interests of all Europeans.

The Diversity Europe Group consists of 106 members from all 27 Member States of the European Union. Members are nominated by their national governments and formally approved and appointed by the Council of the European Union for a renewable 5-year term of office. They work independently in the interests of all EU citizens.

CATEGORIES – OUR GROUP'S STRENGTH

Our Group supports, through its secretariat, the activities carried out by the Committee's categories. Categories bring together members who represent a particular sector or community and its interests. Their role is to add value to the EESC's consultative work, through the high level of expertise they offer in their respective fields.

**FARMERS | CONSUMERS & ENVIRONMENT | SOCIAL ECONOMY |
LIBERAL PROFESSIONS | ASSOCIATIONAL LIFE**