



EU-Japan cooperation

The EESC EU-Japan Follow-up Committee's Mission to Japan (Tokyo and Kobe)

Following the signature of the [EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement \(EPA\)](#) on 17 July this year, the EESC EU-Japan Follow-up Committee will organise a mission to Japan (Tokyo and Kobe) from 13 to 15 November, with the aim to continue to strengthen cooperation and ties between the EESC and its main partners in Japan, and to prepare for the establishment of Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) and the Joint Dialogue with the civil society in the framework of the Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter of the EU-Japan EPA.

In the framework of this mission, a high-level conference on "**EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) – Additional Opportunities for Trade, Investment and Cooperation**" will be organised on 13-14 November in Tokyo. With focus on the EPA, discussions will cover *the role of the civil society in monitoring the EU-Japan EPA as well as opportunities for trade, investment and cooperation* following the signature of the agreement. A second part of the conference will be dedicated to *opportunities and challenges associated with technological change*.

On 15 November in Kobe, a seminar will take place on "**Technological change and its impact on the labour market**", organised in cooperation with Kobe University.

Both in Tokyo and Kobe, the EU-Japan Follow-up Committee members will have bilateral meetings with the EESC's main partner organisations in Japan.

[EESC EU-Japan Follow-Up Committee](#)



Ms Eve Päärendson

Member of the [EESC, Employers' Group](#), since 2004

Director of International Relations, [Estonian Employers' Confederation](#) – Estonia

Current functions in the EESC:

- President of the [EU-Japan Follow-up Committee](#) (2018-2020)

Former functions in the EESC:

- President of the EU-Japan Follow-up Committee (2009-2012)

Professional experience: Active in promoting EU-Japan relations since 2005

- Rapporteur for the EESC opinion "EU-Japan relations: the role of civil society" (2007), co-rapporteur for the EESC opinion "The Role for civil society in the EU-Japan FTA/EPA" (2014)
- Fields of expertise: international relations, trade, macro-regional policies, labour market, education, skills
- Represents Estonian businesses in [BusinessEurope](#), [IOE](#) (International Employers Organisation), [BIAC](#) (Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD) and [ILO](#) (International Labour Organisation)
- Member of the Governing Board of the European [Foundation](#) for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions



Mr Georgi Stoev (replaces Mr Mazzola)

Member of the [EESC, Employers' Group](#), since 2010

Vice-president of the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Bulgaria

Current functions in the EESC:

- Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption
- Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society
- Consultative Commission on Industrial Change

Former functions in the EESC:

- Member of the [EU-Japan Follow-up Committee](#) (2015-2018)

Professional experience:

- Chairman of the Trade and Investment Committee and Member of the Budgetary Committee of [EUROCHAMBERS](#)
- Representative of Idea Society at UN ECOSOC, Geneva and president of Bulgarian [AOTS](#)



Ms Laure Batut

Member of the [EESC, Workers' Group](#), since 2004

Member of the International and European Affairs Department, General Confederation of Labour - Workers' Power (CGT-FO) – France

Current functions in the EESC:

- Member of the [EU-Japan Follow-up Committee](#)

Former functions in the EESC:

- President of the EU-Japan Follow-up Committee (2013-2015)

Professional experience:

- Rapporteur for the EESC opinion "The Role for civil society in the EU-Japan FTA/EPA" (2014)



Ms Erika Koller

Member of [the EESC, Workers' Group](#), since 2004

International secretary at the [Forum for the Co-operation of Trade Unions](#) – Hungary

Current functions in the EESC:

- Member of the [EU-Japan Follow-up Committee](#)
- Member of the EESC Bureau

Former functions in the EESC:

- Member of the EU-Japan Contact Group (2009-2010)
- Member of the Labour Market Observatory



Mr Michael McLoughlin

Member of the [EESC, Diversity Europe Group](#), since 2015

Head of advocacy and communications at [Youth Work Ireland](#) – Ireland

Current functions in the EESC:

- Member of the [EU-Japan Follow-up Committee](#)
- Member of the EU-China Round Table

Former functions in the EESC:

- Member of the Labour Market Observatory

Professional experience:

- Head of Advocacy and Communications with Ireland's largest youth organisation
- Chairperson of the [ERASMUS+](#) National Agency in Ireland
- Board member of the [National Youth Council of Ireland](#)
- Former board member of the [Children's Rights Alliance](#)



Mr Krzysztof Pater

Member of the [EESC, Diversity Europe Group](#), since 2006

President of the [National Scout and Guide Court of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association \(ZHP\)](#) – Poland

Current functions in the EESC:

- Member of the [EU-Japan Follow-up Committee](#)
- President of the EU-Korea Domestic Advisory Group

Former functions in the EESC:

- President of the Japan Follow-up Committee (2015-2018)
- President of the Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion Section (ECO)
- Vice president of the Labour Market Observatory in the EESC
- President of Labour Market Observatory in the EESC

Professional experience:

- Independent adviser on labour and policy issues
- Former [Minister of Social Policy](#) in Poland

EESC Secretariat:



Gunilla Fèvre-Burdy, Administrator, External Relations Unit, Directorate B, EESC
gunilla.sandberg@eesc.europa.eu

Back-up in Brussels:

Nadja Kačičnik, Assistant, External Relations Unit, Directorate B, EESC
nadja.kacicnik@eesc.europa.eu

Background information

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

The [EESC](#) is an official advisory body to the European Union, set up in 1958 by the Treaty of Rome. Its 350 members come from the 28 EU member states, and are divided into three equal groups: employers, employees and Diversity Europe (farmers, consumers, academics, environmentalists, social economy representatives, and other organized interests – NGOs).

The EESC and Japan

Our cooperation with Japan goes back to 2005.

In 2007, the Committee adopted its opinion on "EU-Japan Relations: The role of Civil Society", which sets out the framework for EESC co-operation with Japanese counterparts. Following one of its recommendations, a permanent Follow-up Committee with Japan was established in February 2009.

In 2014, the EESC adopted its opinion on "[The Role of Civil Society in the EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement](#)".

The main tasks of the EESC EU-Japan Follow-up Committee are

- to promote cooperation between the EESC and business-, workers'-, environmental-, consumer organizations and other major civil society organisations (NGOs, NPOs) in Japan,
- to monitor the civil society dimension of EU-Japan relations, including EU-Japan trade relations, and ensure that its recommendations are taken into account in the decision-making process,
- to prepare – in the framework of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) – for the establishment of Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) and the Joint Dialogue with the Civil Society Organisations which will monitor the implementation of the chapter on Trade and Sustainable Development,
- to keep an eye on the progress of the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA).

The EESC's partners in Japan are employers', employees', consumers', farmers' and environmental organisations, and other civil society organisations, as well as universities and respective Japanese authorities. Our cooperation network covers Tokyo, Kansai and Kyushu regions. We meet on regular basis both in the EU and in Japan and our joint activities include joint workshops and seminars, exchanges of best practices, and joint debates on issues of common interest.

The EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the role foreseen for civil society organisations

The [EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement \(EPA\)](#) signed on 17 July 2018 is of great importance. So far, it is the biggest trade deal negotiated by either side, increasing mutual trade and investments. Its influence extends to more than economy, as for the first time ever an EPA also includes references to the Paris Climate Agreement in its Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter. This is also the chapter of interest to the EESC and Japanese economic, social and environmental stakeholders, as Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) will be established on both sides, as well as a Joint Dialogue with civil society organisations. Each party is responsible for ensuring a balanced representation of independent economic, social and environmental stakeholders, including employers' and workers' organisations and environmental groups, in the advisory group(s) (EU-Japan EPA, article 16.15.2).

In the case of the Joint Dialogue with civil society organisations, the Parties will have to promote a balanced representation of relevant interests, including independent organisations that are representative of economic, environmental and social interests as well as other relevant stakeholders as appropriate. The Parties shall convene a Joint Dialogue with civil society organisations in their territories, including members of their domestic advisory groups, within one year after the date of entry into force of the EU-Japan EPA (articles 16.16.1 and 16.16.3). The role of these civil society structures will be to monitor the implementation and impact of the EPA, focusing on the Sustainable Development Chapter.

One of the tasks during the period 2018–2020 will be to prepare for the creation of DAGs on both sides. The Parties will need to determine the participating organisations in each DAG. Until the creation of such monitoring structures, the EU-Japan Follow-up Committee will continue with its regular meetings and discussions with its Japanese partners (potential parties to the future DAGs and Joint Dialogue with civil society organisations). This will ensure a good preparation for the work expected from the EU and Japan civil society organisations once they are part of the new monitoring mechanisms.

The main emphasis should be on the Sustainable Development Chapter and on finding the right balance between the various areas/topics it covers. Since both DAGs are primarily dealing with monitoring the application of the Sustainable Development Chapter, it is important to be pragmatic and open, and try to reach common positions through dialogue. For more info, please visit: www.eesc.europa.eu