

SUIVI ACCORDÉ PAR LA COMMISSION AUX AVIS DU

COMITÉ ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL EUROPÉEN

**RENDUS AU COURS DES SESSIONS PLENIERES DE SEPTEMBRE,
OCTOBRE ET DECEMBRE 2013**

c.c. Membres de la Commission
Directeurs généraux

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N°	Titre	Références	Mois plénière
SG			
1.	<p>Adaptation d'actes PRAC à l'article 290 TFUE</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil adaptant à l'article 290 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne une série d'actes juridiques prévoyant le recours à la procédure de réglementation avec contrôle</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil adaptant à l'article 290 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne une série d'actes juridiques dans le domaine de la justice prévoyant le recours à la procédure de réglementation avec contrôle</p> <p>Rapporteur général: M. Jorge PEGADO LIZ (GRIII-PT)</p>	<p>CESE 5530/2013 fin - 2013/0218 COD, - 2013/0220 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 452 final - 2013/0220 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 451 final - 2013/0218 COD</p> <p>INT/719-720</p>	octobre
DG ENER			
2.	<p>Pour une action européenne coordonnée pour prévenir et combattre la pauvreté énergétique Rapporteur: M. Pierre Jean COULON (GRII-FR)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. Bernardo HERNÁNDEZ BATALLER (GRIII-ES)</p>	<p>CESE 2517/2013 fin TEN/516</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	septembre
3.	<p>L'avenir du captage et du stockage du carbone en Europe (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions sur l'avenir du captage et du stockage du carbone en Europe</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Richard ADAMS (GRIII-UK)</p>	<p>CESE 3273/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 180 final</p> <p>TEN/522</p>	septembre

4.	<p>Révision de la directive sur la sûreté nucléaire</p> <p>Projet de proposition d'une directive du Conseil modifiant la directive 2009/71/Euratom du Conseil du 25 juin 2009 établissant un cadre communautaire pour la sûreté nucléaire des installations nucléaires. Projet présenté en application de l'article 31 du traité Euratom pour avis du Conseil économique et social</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Richard ADAMS (GRIII-UK)</p>	<p>CESE 4368/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 343 final</p> <p>TEN/529</p>	septembre
5.	<p>Technologies et innovation énergétiques (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions: "Technologies et innovation énergétiques"</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Gerd WOLF (GRIII-DE)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. Pierre Jean COULON (GRII-FR)</p>	<p>CESE 3996/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 253 final</p> <p>TEN/528</p>	octobre
DG ENTR			
6.	<p>La politique industrielle spatiale de l'UE (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions, sur la politique industrielle spatiale de l'UE - Libérer le potentiel de croissance économique dans le secteur spatial</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Joost VAN IERSEL (GRI-NL)</p>	<p>CESE 2837/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 108 final</p> <p>INT/689</p>	septembre
7. DG MOVE co-lead	<p>Le service eCall</p> <p>Proposition de décision du Parlement européen et du Conseil concernant le déploiement du service eCall interopérable dans toute l'Union européenne</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil concernant les exigences en matière de réception par type pour le déploiement du système eCall embarqué et modifiant la directive 2007/46/CE</p> <p>Rapporteur Général: M. Thomas MCDONOGH (GRI-IE)</p> <p>DG MOVE associé</p>	<p>CESE 5038/2013 fin</p> <p>2013/0165 COD, -</p> <p>2013/0166 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 316 final</p> <p>-2013/0165 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 315 final</p> <p>-2013/0166 COD</p> <p>INT/714-715</p>	septembre

8.	<p>Promouvoir le potentiel de croissance de l'industrie européenne de la bière</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Ludvík JÍROVEC (GRIII-CZ)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. Edwin CALLEJA (MT)</p>	<p>CESE 2391/2013 fin</p> <p>CCMI/114</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	octobre
9.	<p>Programme Copernicus</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil établissant le programme Copernicus et abrogeant le règlement (UE) n° 911/2010</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Edgardo Maria IOZIA (GRII-IT)</p>	<p>CESE 5084/2013 fin - 2013/0164 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 312 final -2013/0164 COD</p> <p>INT/709</p>	octobre
10.	<p>Stratégie visant à renforcer le secteur européen de la défense (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions vers un secteur de la défense et de la sécurité plus compétitif et plus efficace</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Joost VAN IERSEL (GRI-NL)</p> <p>Corapporteuse: M^{me} Monika HRUŠECKÁ (SK)</p>	<p>CESE 4413/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 542 final</p> <p>CCMI/116</p>	octobre
11.	<p>Équipements sous pression</p> <p>Proposition de directive du Parlement européen et du Conseil relative à l'harmonisation des législations des États membres concernant la mise à disposition sur le marché des équipements sous pression (Refonte)</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Antonello PEZZINI (GRI-IT)</p>	<p>CESE 5475/2013 fin - 2013/0221 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 471 final -2013/0221 COD</p> <p>INT/716</p>	octobre
12.	<p>Plan d'action pour l'industrie sidérurgique européenne (Communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions - Plan d'action pour une industrie sidérurgique compétitive et durable en Europe</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Claude ROLIN (GRII-BE)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. Zbigniew KOTOWSKI (Cat. 3-PL)</p>	<p>CESE 4522/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 407 final</p> <p>CCMI/117</p>	décembre

13.	<p>Les défis du secteur européen de l'ingénierie (industries de la construction mécanique, de l'électrotechnique, de l'électronique et de la métallurgie dans une économie mondiale en mutation)</p> <p>CESE 1907/2013 fin</p> <p>Rapporteuse: Mme Lucie STUDNIČNÁ (GR II-CZ)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. Rumen ATANASOV (Cat. 1-BG)</p>	<p>CESE 1907/2013 fin</p> <p>CCMI/110</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	décembre
14.	<p>Le secteur européen de l'entretien, de la réparation et de la transformation de navires: industrie résistante, compétitivité au niveau mondial et adhésion aux politiques de l'UE pour une croissance durable</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Marian KRZAKLEWSKI (GR II-PL)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. Enrique CALVET CHAMBON (Cat. 1-ES)</p>	<p>CESE 2301/2013 fin</p> <p>CCMI/111</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	décembre
DG RTD			
15.	<p>État de l'Union de l'innovation 2012 (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions - État de l'Union de l'innovation 2012 – Accélérer le changement</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Cveto STANTIČ (GR I-SI)</p>	<p>CESE 3251/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 149 final</p> <p>INT/695</p>	septembre

16.	<p>Train de mesures en faveur des investissements dans l'innovation</p> <p>DG ENTR, DG CNECT, DG MOVE associé</p>	<p>CESE 4572/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 506 final -2013/0245 NLE</p> <p>COM(2013) 505 final -2013/0244 NLE</p> <p>COM(2013) 503 final -2013/0237 NLE</p> <p>COM(2013) 501 final -2013/0234 NLE</p> <p>COM(2013) 500 final -2013/0233 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 498 final -2013/0243 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 497 final -2013/0242 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 496 final -2013/0241</p> <p>NLECOM(2013) 495 final -2013/0240 NLE</p> <p>COM(2013) 494 final</p> <p>COM(2013) 493 final -2013/0232 COD</p> <p>INT/704</p>	
DG EMPL			
17.	<p>L'emploi des femmes et la croissance (avis exploratoire à la demande de la Présidence lituanienne)</p> <p>Rapporteuse: Mme Indrė VAREIKYTĖ (GRIII-LT)</p> <p>DG JUST associé</p>	<p>CESE 3611/2013 fin</p> <p>SOC/486</p> <p>avis exploratoire à la demande de la Présidence lituanienne</p>	septembre
18.	<p>Libre circulation: exercice des droits des travailleurs</p> <p>Proposition de directive du Parlement européen et du Conseil relative à des mesures facilitant l'exercice des droits conférés aux travailleurs dans le contexte de la libre circulation des travailleurs</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Luis Miguel PARIZA CASTAÑOS (GRII-ES)</p> <p>Corapporteuse: Mme Vladimíra DRBALOVÁ (GRI-CZ)</p>	<p>CESE 3905/2013 fin - 2013/0124 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 236 final - 2013/0124 COD</p> <p>SOC/487</p>	septembre

19.	La dimension sociale de l'Union économique et monétaire Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, et au Conseil sur le renforcement de la dimension sociale de l'Union économique et monétaire Rapporteur général: M. Georgios DASSIS (GR-II-EL)	CESE 6069/2013 fin COM(2013) 690 final SOC/494	octobre
20.	Services publics de l'emploi (SPE) Proposition de décision du Parlement européen et du Conseil relative à l'amélioration de la coopération entre les services publics de l'emploi (SPE) Rapporteuse: M ^{me} Vladimíra DRBALOVÁ (GR-I-CZ)	CESE 5207/2013 fin - 2013/0202 COD COM(2013) 430 final - 2013/0202 COD SOC/490	octobre
21.	Revenu européen minimum et indicateurs de pauvreté (avis d'initiative) Rapporteur: M. Georgios DASSIS (GR-II-EL) Corapporteur: M. Seamus BOLAND (GR-III-IE)	CESE 1960/2013 fin SOC/482	décembre
DG ENV			
22.	Produits biocides Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil modifiant le règlement (UE) n° 528/2012 concernant la mise à disposition sur le marché et l'utilisation des produits biocides, en ce qui concerne certaines conditions d'accès au marché Rapporteur: M. Pedro NARRO (GR-III-ES)	CESE 4753/2013 fin - 2013/0150 COD COM(2013) 288 final -2013/0150 COD INT/705	septembre
23.	Stratégie européenne en matière de déchets plastiques (Livre vert) Livre vert sur une stratégie européenne en matière de déchets plastiques Rapporteur: M. Josef ZBOŘIL (GR-I-CZ)	CESE 3036/2013 fin COM(2013) 123 final NAT/600	septembre
24.	Infrastructure verte (communication) Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions - Infrastructure verte - Renforcer le capital naturel de l'Europe Rapporteur: M. Adalbert KIENLE (GR-I-DE)	CESE 4135/2013 fin COM(2013) 249 final NAT/607	octobre

25.	<p>Pour une consommation plus durable: la durée de vie des produits de l'industrie et l'information du consommateur au service d'une confiance retrouvée (avis d'initiative)</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Thierry LIBAERT (GRIII-FR)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. Jean-Pierre HABER (FR)</p> <p>DG SANCO, DG ENV associé</p>	<p>CESE 1904/2013 fin CCMI/112</p>	octobre
26.	<p>Transferts de déchets</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil modifiant le règlement (CE) n° 1013/2006 concernant les transferts de déchets</p> <p>Rapporteur général: M. Stéphane BUFFETAUT (GRI-FR)</p>	<p>CESE 6241/2013 fin - 2013/0239 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 516 final -2013/0239 COD</p> <p>NAT/618</p>	décembre
DG REGIO			
27.	<p>Renforcer les partenariats de la société civile pour réaliser plus efficacement la stratégie en faveur de la région de la mer Baltique en 2014-2020</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Michael SMYTH (GRIII-UK)</p>	<p>CESE 4038/2013 fin ECO/349</p> <p>avis exploratoire à la demande de la Présidence lituanienne</p>	septembre
28.	<p>Gestion financière et règles de dégagement pour États membres en graves difficultés</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil modifiant le règlement (CE) n° 1083/2006 du Conseil en ce qui concerne certaines dispositions ayant trait à la gestion financière pour certains États membres qui connaissent ou risquent de connaître de graves difficultés quant à leur stabilité financière et aux règles de dégagement pour certains États membres</p> <p>Rapporteur général: M. Viliam PÁLENÍK (GRIII-SK)</p>	<p>CESE 5122/2013 fin - 2013/0156 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 301 final -2013/0156 COD</p> <p>ECO/352</p>	septembre
29.	<p>Évaluation des stratégies macrorégionales</p> <p>Rapport de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions concernant la valeur ajoutée des stratégies macrorégionales</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Etele BARÁTH (GRIII-HU)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. Stefano MALLIA (GRI-MT)</p>	<p>CESE 5146/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 468 final</p> <p>ECO/351</p>	octobre

30.	Fonds de solidarité de l'UE Règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil modifiant le règlement (CE) n° 2012/2002 du Conseil instituant le Fonds de solidarité de l'Union européenne Rapporteur: M. Dimitris DIMITRIADIS (GRI-EL)	CESE 6414/2013 fin - 2013/0248 COD COM(2013) 522 final -2013/0248 COD ECO/355	décembre
31.	Vers une stratégie macrorégionale de l'UE en faveur du développement de la cohésion économique, sociale et territoriale dans le bassin méditerranéen Rapporteur: M. Stefano MALLIA (GRI-MT) Corapporteur: M. Stefano PALMIERI (GRII-IT)	CESE 3017/2013 fin ECO/342 avis d'initiative	décembre
DG MARE			
32.	Planification de l'espace maritime et gestion intégrée des zones côtières Proposition de directive du Parlement européen et du Conseil établissant un cadre pour la planification de l'espace maritime et la gestion intégrée des zones côtières Rapporteur: M. Stéphane BUFFETAUT (GRI-FR) DG ENV associé	CESE 3176/2013 fin - 2013/0074 COD COM(2013) 133 final -2013/0074 COD NAT/601	septembre
33.	Assainissement budgétaire/Programmes relevant du Fonds européen pour la pêche Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil modifiant le règlement (CE) n° 1198/2006 du Conseil en ce qui concerne certaines dispositions ayant trait à la gestion financière pour certains États membres qui connaissent ou risquent de connaître de graves difficultés quant à leur stabilité financière Rapporteur: M. Gabriel SARRÓ IPARRAGUIRRE (GRIII-ES)	CESE 5262/2013 fin - 2013/0200 COD COM(2013) 428 final -2013/0200 COD NAT/613	septembre
34.	Plan d'action pour une stratégie maritime dans la région atlantique (communication) Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions. Plan d'action pour une stratégie maritime dans la région atlantique - Pour une croissance intelligente, durable et inclusive Rapporteur: M. Luis Miguel PARIZA CASTAÑOS (GRII-ES)	CESE 3961/2013 fin COM(2013) 279 final NAT/614	septembre

35.	<p>Aquaculture durable (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions -Orientations stratégiques pour le développement durable de l'aquaculture</p> <p>dans l'Union européenne</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. José María ESPUNY MOYANO (GRI-ES)</p>	<p>CESE 4359/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 229 final</p> <p>NAT/605</p>	octobre
36.	<p>Plan de reconstitution des stocks de thon rouge</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil modifiant le règlement (CE) n° 302/2009 du Conseil relatif à un plan pluriannuel de reconstitution des stocks de thon rouge dans l'Atlantique Est et la Méditerranée</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Gabriel SARRÓ IPARRAGUIRRE (GRIII-ES)</p>	<p>CESE 4349/2013 fin - 2013/0133 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 250 final -2013/0133 COD</p> <p>NAT/608</p>	octobre
DG MARKT			
37.	<p>Comparabilité des frais/Comptes de paiement</p> <p>Proposition de directive du Parlement européen et du Conseil sur la comparabilité des frais liés aux comptes de paiement, le changement de compte de paiement et l'accès à un compte de paiement assorti de prestations de base</p> <p>Rapporteuse: Mme Reine-Claude MADER (GRIII-FR)</p> <p>DG SANCO associé</p>	<p>COM(2013) 266 final -2013/0139 COD</p> <p>CESE 3958/2013 fin - 2013/0139 COD</p> <p>INT/701</p>	septembre
38.	<p>Facturation électronique dans le cadre des marchés publics</p> <p>Proposition de directive du Parlement européen et du Conseil relative à la facturation électronique dans le cadre des marchés publics</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Paulo BARROS VALE (GRI-PT)</p>	<p>CESE 4392/2013 fin - 2013/0213 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 449 final -2013/0213 COD</p> <p>INT/703</p>	octobre

39.	<p>Passation électronique des marchés publics</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions sur la passation électronique "de bout en bout" des marchés publics comme moyen de modernisation de l'administration publique</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Paulo BARROS VALE (GRI-PT)</p>	<p>CESE 5037/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 453 final</p> <p>INT/713</p>	octobre
40.	<p>Fonds européens d'investissement à long terme</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil relatif aux fonds européens d'investissement à long terme</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Michael SMYTH (GRII-UK)</p>	<p>CESE 5189/2013 fin - 2013/0214 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 462 final -2013/0214 COD</p> <p>ECO/354</p>	octobre
41.	<p>L'Acte pour le marché unique - Déterminer les mesures manquantes</p> <p>Rapporteuse: M^{me} Bénédicte FEDERSPIEL (GRII-DK)</p> <p>Corapporteurs: M. Ivan VOLEŠ (GRI-CZ)</p> <p>M. Martin SIECKER (GRII-NL)</p>	<p>CESE 3154/2013 fin</p> <p>INT/688</p> <p>supplément d'avis</p>	octobre
42.	<p>Mécanisme de résolution unique</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil établissant des règles et une procédure uniformes pour la résolution des établissements de crédit et de certaines entreprises d'investissement dans le cadre d'un mécanisme de résolution unique et d'un Fonds de résolution bancaire unique, et modifiant le règlement (UE) n° 1093/2010 du Parlement européen et du Conseil</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Daniel MAREELS (GRI-BE)</p>	<p>CESE 5008/2013 fin - 2013/0253 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 520 final -2013/0253 COD</p> <p>ECO/350</p>	octobre
43.	<p>Fonds monétaires</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil sur les fonds monétaires</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Edgardo Maria IOZIA (GRII-IT)</p>	<p>CESE 5988/2013 fin - 2013/0306 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 615 final -2013/0306 COD</p> <p>INT/690</p>	décembre

44.	<p>Système bancaire parallèle - Suivi du livre vert (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Conseil et au Parlement européen sur</p> <p>"Le système bancaire parallèle - Remédier aux nouvelles sources de risques dans le secteur financier"</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Christos POLYZOGOPOULOS (GRII-EL)</p>	<p>CESE 4179/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 614 final</p> <p>INT/691</p>	décembre
45.	<p>La mesure de l'incidence sociale</p> <p>Rapporteuse: Mme Ariane RODERT (GRIII-SE)</p>	<p>CESE 6135/2013 fin</p> <p>INT/721</p> <p>(avis d'initiative)</p>	décembre
46.	<p>Services de paiement</p> <p>Proposition de Directive du Parlement européen et du Conseil concernant les services de paiement dans le marché intérieur, modifiant les directives 2002/65/CE, 2013/36/UE et 2009/110/CE et abrogeant la directive 2007/64/CE</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil relatif aux commissions d'interchange pour les opérations de paiement liées à une carte</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Vincent FARRUGIA (GRI-MT)</p>	<p>CESE 5238/2013 fin - 2013/0265 COD, 2013/0264 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 550 final – 2013/0265 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 547 final – 2013/0264 COD</p> <p>INT/711</p>	décembre
DG CNECT			
47.	<p>Préparation à la convergence totale dans le monde audiovisuel (livre vert)</p> <p>Se préparer à un monde audiovisuel totalement convergent: croissance, création et valeurs (Livre vert)</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Jorge PEGADO LIZ (GRIII-PT)</p>	<p>CESE 4163/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 231 final</p> <p>TEN/524</p>	septembre
48.	<p>Orientations pour les réseaux transeuropéens de télécommunications</p> <p>Proposition modifiée de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil concernant des orientations pour les réseaux transeuropéens de télécommunications et abrogeant la décision n° 1336/97/CE</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Jacques LEMERCIER (GRII-FR)</p>	<p>CESE 5315/2013 fin - 2011/0299 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 329 final -2011/0299 COD</p> <p>TEN/531</p>	octobre
49.	<p>Stratégie en matière de composants et systèmes micro-nanoélectroniques (communication)</p>	<p>CESE 4345/2013 fin</p>	octobre

	<p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions sur la stratégie européenne en matière de composants et systèmes micro-nanoélectroniques</p> <p>Rapporteure: M^{me} Laure BATUT (GRII-FR)</p>	<p>COM(2013) 298 final</p> <p>TEN/526</p>	
DG DEVCO			
50. DG ENV co-lead	<p>Établir des objectifs de développement durable - La contribution de la société civile européenne à la position de l'UE (avis exploratoire à la demande de la Commission)</p> <p>Rapporteure: Mme An LE NOUAIL MARLIÈRE (GRII-FR)</p> <p>DG ENV associé</p>	<p>CESE 955/2013 fin</p> <p>NAT/594</p> <p>avis exploratoire à la demande de la Commission</p>	septembre
51.	<p>Participation du secteur privé au cadre de développement pour l'après 2015</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Ivan VOLEŠ (GRI-CZ)</p>	<p>CESE 4374/2013 fin</p> <p>REX/386</p> <p>avis exploratoire à la demande de la Commission</p>	octobre
52.	<p>Changements durables dans les sociétés en transition</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Andris GOBIŅŠ (GRIII-LV)</p>	<p>CESE 4534/2013 fin</p> <p>REX/387</p> <p>(avis exploratoire à la demande de la présidence lituanienne)</p>	octobre
53.	<p>Année européenne du développement (2015)</p> <p>Proposition de décision du Parlement européen et du Conseil relative à l'Année européenne du développement (2015)</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Andris GOBIŅŠ (GRIII-LV)</p>	<p>CESE 6639/2013 fin - 2013/0238 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 509 final - 2013/0238 COD</p> <p>REX/392</p>	décembre

DG AGRI			
54.	<p>Soutien au développement rural/Dispositions transitoires</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil portant certaines dispositions transitoires relatives au soutien au développement rural par le Fonds européen agricole pour le développement rural (Feader) et modifiant le règlement (UE) n° [...] [DR] en ce qui concerne les ressources et leur répartition pour l'exercice 2014 et modifiant le règlement (CE) n° 73/2009 du Conseil ainsi que les règlements (UE) n° [...] [PD], (UE) n° [...] [HZ] et (UE) n° [...] [OCM] en ce qui concerne leur application au cours de l'exercice 2014</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Seamus BOLAND (GRIII-IE)</p>	<p>CESE 4657/2013 fin - 2013/0117 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 226 final - 2013/0117 COD</p> <p>NAT/604</p>	septembre
55.	<p>Régime de cofinancement des programmes de développement rural</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil portant modification du règlement (CE) n° 1698/2005 du Conseil concernant le soutien au développement rural par le Fonds européen agricole pour le développement rural (Feader)</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Seamus BOLAND (GRIII-IE)</p>	<p>CESE 6571/2013 fin - 2013/0247 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 521 final - 2013/0247 COD</p> <p>NAT/619</p>	décembre
DG HOME			
56.	<p>Admission des ressortissants de pays tiers (refonte)</p> <p>Proposition de directive du Parlement européen et du Conseil relative aux conditions d'entrée et de séjour des ressortissants de pays tiers à des fins de recherche, d'études, d'échange d'élèves, de formation rémunérée et non rémunérée, de volontariat et de travail au pair (refonte)</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Cristian PÎRVULESCU (GRIII-RO)</p>	<p>CESE 3516/2013 fin - 2013/0081 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 151 final - 2013/0081 COD</p> <p>SOC/484</p>	septembre
57.	<p>Une citoyenneté plus inclusive ouverte aux immigrants</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Luis Miguel PARIZA CASTAÑOS (GRII-ES)</p>	<p>CESE 3210/2013 fin</p> <p>SOC/479</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	octobre
58.	<p>L'immigration irrégulière par voie maritime dans la région euro-méditerranéenne</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Panagiotis GKOFAS (GRIII-EL)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. Stefano MALLIA (GRI-MT)</p>	<p>CESE 2533/2012 fin</p> <p>REX/375</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	octobre

DG ECHO			
59.	Corps volontaire européen d'aide humanitaire: permettre et encourager la participation des citoyens de tous les États membres de l'Union (avis exploratoire à la demande de la présidence lituanienne) Rapporteur: M. Giuseppe Antonio Maria IULIANO (GRII-IT)	CESE 4394/2013 fin REX/388 avis exploratoire à la demande de la présidence lituanienne	octobre
DG MOVE			
60.	"Ceinture bleue" pour le transport maritime à courte distance Communication de la Commission sur la "ceinture bleue", un espace unique pour le transport maritime Rapporteur: M. Jan SIMONS (GRI-NL)	CESE 5494/2013 fin COM(2013) 510 final TEN/533	octobre
61.	Refonte du règlement relatif au ciel unique européen Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil modifiant le règlement (CE) n° 216/2008 dans le domaine des aérodrômes, de la gestion du trafic aérien et des services de navigation aérienne COM(2013) 409 final -2013/0187 COD Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil relatif à la mise en œuvre du ciel unique européen (refonte) Rapporteur: M. Thomas MCDONOGH (GRI-IE)	CESE 5372/2013 fin - 2013/0186 COD, 2013/0187 COD COM(2013) 410 final - 2013/0186 COD TEN/530	décembre
DG CLIMA			
62.	Sécurité alimentaire et bioénergie Rapporteur: M. Franco CHIRIACO (GRII-IT)	CESE 2634/2013 fin NAT/595 avis d'initiative	septembre
DG ENER co-lead			
63.	L'accord international de 2015 sur le changement climatique (communication) Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions - L'accord international de 2015 sur le changement climatique: définition de la politique internationale en matière de climat après 2020. Communication consultative Rapporteur: M. Josef ZBOŘIL (GRI-CZ)	CESE 2638/2013 fin COM(2013) 167 final NAT/603	octobre

64.	<p>Stratégie de l'UE relative à l'adaptation au changement climatique (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions – Stratégie de l'UE relative à l'adaptation au changement climatique</p> <p>Rapporteuse: M^{me} Isabel CAÑO AGUILAR (GRII-ES)</p>	<p>CESE 4122/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 216 final</p> <p>NAT/609</p>	octobre
65.	<p>Émissions du secteur des transports maritimes</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil concernant la surveillance, la déclaration et la vérification des émissions de dioxyde de carbone du secteur des transports maritimes et modifiant le règlement (UE) n° 525/3013 (Texte présentant de l'intérêt pour l'EEE)</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Stefan BACK (GRI-SE)</p>	<p>CESE 5340/2013 fin - 2013/0224 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 480 final - 2013/0224 COD</p> <p>NAT/616</p>	octobre
DG SANCO			
66.	<p>Règlement relatif aux contrôles officiels</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. José María ESPUNY MOYANO (GRI-ES)</p>	<p>CESE 4014/2013 fin - 2013/0140 COD, - 2013/0169 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 327 final - 2013/0169 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 265 final – 2013/0140 COD</p> <p>NAT/611</p>	octobre
67.	<p>Redevances dues/Agence européenne des médicaments</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil relatif aux redevances dues à l'Agence européenne des médicaments pour la conduite d'activités de pharmacovigilance concernant des médicaments à usage humain</p> <p>Rapporteuse: M^{me} Renate HEINISCH (GRIII-DE)</p>	<p>CESE 5169/2013 fin - 2013/0222 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 472 final - 2013/0222 COD</p> <p>INT/712</p>	octobre

68.	<p>Santé des animaux et des végétaux</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil relatif à la santé animale</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil relatif à la production et à la mise à disposition sur le marché de matériel de reproduction des végétaux (règlement sur le matériel de reproduction des végétaux)</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil relatif aux mesures de protection contre les organismes nuisibles aux végétaux</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Armands KRAUZE (GRIII-LV)</p>	<p>CESE 4013/2013 fin - 2013/0136 COD, 2013/0137 COD, 2013/0141 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 267 final – 2013/0141 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 262 final – 2013/0137 COD</p> <p>COM (2013) 260 final – 2013/0136 COD</p> <p>NAT/610</p>	décembre
DG COMP			
69.	<p>Rapport sur la politique de concurrence 2012</p> <p>Rapport de la Commission – Rapport sur la politique de concurrence 2012</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Juan MENDOZA CASTRO (GRII-ES)</p>	<p>CESE 4092/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 257 final</p> <p>INT/702</p>	octobre
70.	<p>Actions en dommages et intérêts pour les infractions au droit de la concurrence/Quantification du préjudice</p> <p>Proposition de directive du Parlement européen et du Conseil relative à certaines règles régissant les actions en dommages et intérêts en droit interne pour les infractions aux dispositions du droit de la concurrence des États membres et de l'Union européenne COM(2013) 404 final – 2013/0185 (COD)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission relative à la quantification du préjudice dans les actions en dommages et intérêts fondées sur des infractions à l'article 101 ou 102 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne</p> <p>Rapporteuse: M^{me} Reine-Claude MADER (GRIII-FR)</p>	<p>CESE 4975/2013 fin - 2013/0185 COD</p> <p>C(2013) 3440</p> <p>INT/706-707</p>	octobre

DG TAXUD			
71.	<p>Échange automatique et obligatoire d'informations dans le domaine fiscal</p> <p>Proposition de directive du Conseil modifiant la directive 2011/16/UE en ce qui concerne l'échange automatique et obligatoire d'informations dans le domaine fiscal</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Petru Sorin DANDEA (GRII-RO)</p>	<p>CESE 5161/2013 fin - 2013/0188 CNS</p> <p>COM(2013) 348 final - 2013/0188 CNS</p> <p>ECO/353</p>	octobre
DG TRADE			
72.	<p>Garantir les importations essentielles pour l'UE par la politique commerciale actuelle de l'UE et ses autres politiques connexes</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Jonathan PEEL (GRI-UK)</p>	<p>CESE 2169/2013 fin</p> <p>REX/383</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	octobre
DG JUST			
73.	<p>Mesures d'intégration des Roms</p> <p>Proposition de recommandation du Conseil relative à des mesures efficaces d'intégration des Roms dans les États membres</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Ákos TOPOLÁNSZKY (GRIII-HU)</p>	<p>CESE 5155/2013 fin - 2013/0229 NLE</p> <p>COM(2013) 460 final - 2013/0229 NLE</p> <p>SOC/489</p>	octobre
74.	<p>Cadre européen pour les recours collectifs (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions - "Vers un cadre horizontal européen pour les recours collectifs"</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Jörg Freiherr FRANK VON FÜRSTENWERTH (GRI-DE)</p> <p>DG SANCO, DG COMP associé</p>	<p>CESE 5439/2013 fin</p> <p>COM(2013) 401 final</p> <p>INT/708</p>	décembre
75.	<p>Parquet européen</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Conseil portant création du Parquet européen</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Eugen LUCAN (GRIII-RO)</p>	<p>CESE 6311/2013 fin - 2013/0255 APP</p> <p>COM(2013) 534 final - 2013/0255 APP</p> <p>SOC/491</p>	décembre

76.	<p>Voyages, vacances et circuits à forfait</p> <p>Proposition de directive du Parlement européen et du Conseil relative aux voyages à forfait et aux prestations de voyage assistées, modifiant le règlement (CE) n° 2006/2004 et la directive 2011/83/UE, et abrogeant la directive 90/314/CEE du Conseil</p> <p>Rapporteuse générale: Mme Anna Maria DARMANIN (GR II-MT)</p>	<p>CESE 5087/2013 fin - 2013/0246 COD</p> <p>COM(2013) 512 final - 2013/0246 COD</p> <p>INT/710</p>	décembre
DG ESTAT			
77.	<p>Outils statistiques pour mesurer le bénévolat</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Krzysztof PATER (GR III-PL)</p>	<p>CESE 1979/2013 fin</p> <p>ECO/343</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	décembre

No 1	<p>Adapting RPS acts to Article 290 TFEU; COM (2013) 451 final, COM (2013) 452 final - EESC 5530/2013 – INT/719-720 493rd Plenary session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Jorge Pegado Liz (GR11-PT) SG – Vice President SEFCOVIČ</p>
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
The EESC supports the Commission initiative and makes a number of specific comments.	The Commission takes note of the positive opinion and the specific comments of the EESC.
The EESC opinion questions whether the proposal can go so far as to empower the Commission for an indeterminate period of time.	The Commission considers that a basic act may empower the Commission for an undetermined or determined period of time. This interpretation is accepted by the EP and the Council and it is included in the Common Understanding on delegated acts concluded by the three Institutions. It is also important to note that, in line with Article 290(2)(a) TFEU, the proposals provide that the delegation of power may be submitted to the possibility to be revoked at any time by the European Parliament or by the Council, and that corresponds to the legislative practice.
The EESC opinion questions whether the 2 month objection period is appropriate.	The Commission considers that the three institutions agreed in the Common Understanding that an objection period of two months, extendable by two months at the initiative of the European Parliament or the Council, is in principle the appropriate period.
The EESC questions whether the empowerment concerns in all cases 'non-essential elements'. The EESC gives examples of basic acts for which it questions the non-essential nature.	When preparing the proposals, the Commission carried out a careful individual examination of all legislative instruments concerned in order to analyse whether the measures covered by Article 5a of the Decision 1999/468/EC meet the criteria of Article 290 TFEU.

<p>N°2 For coordinated European measures to prevent and combat energy poverty (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2517/2013 fin – TEN/516 Rapporteur: Mr Jean Coulon (GRII-FR) Co-rapporteur: Mr Bernardo Hernández Bataller (GRIII-ES) DG ENER - Commissioner OETTINGER</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.6 The EESC recommends that the European Citizens' Energy Forum (the so-called London Forum) include representatives from the EESC and work closely with national economic and social councils and similar institutions in the Member States.</p>	<p>The Commission is well aware of this Committee recommendation and is willing to continue its close cooperation with the Committee as regards the involvement of Representatives of the Civil Society in our energy fora.</p> <p>The Commission has already invited EESC Representatives to intervene in the London Forum over the last two years. EESC Representatives have also been invited to participate in the Berlin Forum in 2013.</p>
<p>1.7 The European Commission should include in its energy costs and prices report an inventory and analysis of energy poverty in the Union, put forward a European strategy for combating energy poverty and encouraging energy solidarity in this area, and put forward a funding proposal to make it operational</p>	<p>The Commission has partially addressed this issue in the Commission Communication and accompanying report on energy prices and costs adopted on 22 January 2014. The issue was also addressed in the Guidance Document on Vulnerable Consumers endorsed by the <i>Citizens' Energy Forum</i> in December 2013. However, the Commission believes that it would be prudent to have further information of the situation EU-wide prior to proposing an EU strategy. The issue should be better addressed in the broader context of retail market functioning on which the Commission has launched a public consultation (22 January). In addition, the Commission - in cooperation with the Greek presidency of the Council - has approached the Member States with requests for data needed to analyse energy poverty</p>
<p>6.5 The European Commission should make this issue a cross-cutting priority in all European policies and feature it more prominently in its forthcoming initiatives (for example, the guidelines on the</p>	<p>The Commission services work together in the context of the ISG for the <i>Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion</i>. Energy policy initiatives being undertaken take into</p>

internal market, those on implementing the 2012 Energy Efficiency Directive, consumer rights, etc.)	account the issues of energy poverty and consumer vulnerability
6.6 The European Commission should strictly ensure Member States' compliance with the European rules that could help reduce energy poverty	The Commission is fully committed to monitoring the compliance of Member States with the so-called Third Energy Package for the internal energy market and to start infringement proceedings where appropriate
1.9 The European Commission should set up a <i>European energy solidarity fund</i> to be a cross-cutting tool for all European measures on this issue	The Commission believes that preference should be given to using existing instruments rather than setting up new ones. For reasons of efficiency and subsidiarity, setting up a <i>European energy solidarity fund</i> may not represent the most effective or cost-efficient solution
1.11 The European Commission should make a proposal to the Parliament and to the Council for this specific topic to be the subject of a European year "of energy solidarity"	The Commission takes note of the Committee's idea
1.12 The European Commission should organise a European energy information campaign organised at national and local level on combating energy poverty and building solidarity in this sphere	The Commission is of the opinion that launching a Europe-wide campaign from Brussels may not be cost-effective due to the extremely diverse situation of consumers not only in different Member States but also in different regions within individual Member States. These activities are thus best undertaken at a national level

<p>8.4 The European Commission is invited to contemplate innovative financing methods and tools to help States support the poorest households in their efforts to become more energy efficient by taking account of their financial constraints</p>	<p>The Commission notes that significant EU funding is available for energy efficiency projects. For 2014–2020 <i>European Structural and Investment</i> funds, more than €23 billion is available for investment in the low carbon economy (energy efficiency, renewable energy, smart grids and sustainable urban transport), providing sufficient flexibility as regards instruments through which the funding would be used (to accommodate the needs of energy-poor households).</p> <p>The Commission also notes that the <i>Energy Efficiency Directive</i> encourages Member States to put in place financing measures that pursue a social aim, in particular to ensure that vulnerable consumers can benefit from higher household energy efficiency</p>
<p>8.5 The European Commission should ensure that the national energy efficiency plans (NEEAPs) prioritise investments in the homes of the most vulnerable households</p>	<p>The Commission encourages Member States to include in their National Energy Efficiency Action Plans (NEEAPs) energy efficiency measures that could prioritise vulnerable consumers. This could focus in particular on the implementation of national energy efficiency obligation schemes under the Energy Efficiency Directive (Article 7). It is however up to Member States to choose which investments to prioritise in their NEEAPs</p>

N°3	Future of Carbon Capture and Storage in Europe COM(2013) 180 final - EESC 3273/2013 fin – TEN/522 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 Rapporteur: Richard Adams (GRIII-UK) DG ENER - Commissioner OETTINGER
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>Maximum effort must be made to secure an international agreement on a climate stabilisation policy, including an agreed, effective and implemented programme for pricing carbon so that consumption of fossil fuel and consequent CO₂ emissions are progressively constrained and funds are available to prevent or mitigate impacts.</p> <p><i>[Recommendations, paragraph 1.7]</i></p>	<p>The Commission underlines that, following the publication of the Commission proposals for the '2030 climate and energy framework'¹, the EU is the first international actor to consider setting ambitious energy and climate objectives in view of international climate agreement in 2015 and ahead of the Ban-Ki Moon Summit in September 2014. The Commission believes this to be the best way to engage major greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters such as US and China. The 2030 package contains proposals for a domestic and unconditional GHG target, which would strengthen the EU position in international climate negotiations. The adoption of the proposals in the package would also provide the necessary predictability for investors, contributing to sustainable development and tackling import dependency.</p>
<p>Irrespective of such an agreement, an active Carbon Capture and Geological Storage (CCS) demonstration projects programme should be continued to overcome the concerns raised by the public. The potential benefits – in technology, industrial collaboration, public awareness, statutory and regulatory definition, and in cost-reduction – make a very strong case for further development. The EESC considers this programme to be of vital strategic importance in order to pave the way for deployment</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the EESC support to CCS demonstration programmes. CCS demonstration projects help identify the most cost-effective solutions. Funding under <i>the European Energy Programme for Recovery</i> has already supported efforts in this direction. Furthermore, one additional CCS project is under assessment for <i>NER300</i> funding, and results are expected in the summer 2014. Also there is some funding available under the Horizon 2020 programme. The Commission is looking at all possibilities to ensure</p>

¹ COM (2014) 15

<p><i>[Recommendations, paragraph 1.8]</i></p>	<p>that some demonstration projects in the EU are completed.</p>
<p>Such a programme would greatly benefit from being set in the context of a high profile, co-ordinated public dialogue at European level on the future of our total energy system and the need for it to make a transition to a low-carbon future. Public acceptance remains a vital issue for development of CCS infrastructure.</p> <p><i>[Recommendations, paragraph 1.9]</i></p> <p>The EESC therefore advocates and will be active in developing a European Energy Dialogue, an inclusive, transparent, trustworthy and coordinated multi-level conversation within and across all Member States. It should translate into everyday terms the essential points about the energy "transition" – and related issues such as CCS, energy poverty, etc.</p> <p>[point 4.10]</p>	<p>The Commission proposals on the 2030 climate and energy policy framework follow on a wide consultation on stakeholders and, as President Barroso said at the launch of the package, "<i>it will now launch the "2030 debate" among Member States, the European Parliament and stakeholders</i>". The Commission agrees that, in this framework, CCS development can only benefit from more in-depth consultation and wider dialogue with stakeholders.</p> <p>The Commission maintains an active dialogue with society and stakeholders on energy issues. This is carried out through a number of specific events and debates throughout the year. In addition the Commission organises two major annual public dialogues on energy issues: the Berlin forum, which addresses issues concerning energy transition; and the London Forum, which focuses on consumers-related issues.</p>
<p>Any policy aimed at promoting CCS will require supportive financing from the public authorities and has to be accompanied by mechanisms offsetting the costs for European industries exposed to international competition.</p> <p><i>[Recommendations, paragraph 1.11]</i></p>	<p>The Commission believes that Europe cannot be decarbonised cost-effectively without CCS, which is needed for both fossil-fuel power generation and a range of energy and carbon intensive industries. The Commission is keen to work with Member States and the private sector to support the CCS technology through research, development and demonstration, with a view to minimising costs, delivering more competitive capture technologies, improved components and integrated processes. A supportive EU framework, through the strengthened use of auctioning revenues, will be particularly necessary for industries competing on international markets.</p>

<p>N° 4 Révision de la directive sur la sûreté nucléaire Projet de proposition d'une directive du Conseil modifiant la directive 2009/71/Euratom du Conseil du 25 juin 2009 établissant un cadre communautaire pour la sûreté nucléaire des installations nucléaires. Projet présenté en application de l'article 31 du traité Euratom pour avis du Conseil économique et social COM(2013) 343 final - CESE 4368/2013 fin – TEN/529 492^{ième} session plénière du mois de septembre 2013 Rapporteur: M. Richard Adams (GRIII-UK) DG ENER - Commissaire OETTINGER</p>	
Points de l'avis du CESE estimés essentiels	Position de la Commission
<p>Dans son avis sur le projet de proposition élaboré en application de l'article 31 du traité Euratom, le Comité économique et social européen (CESE) apprécie l'action rapide menée par la Commission pour établir cette proposition de modification de la directive sur la sûreté nucléaire. Le Comité constate avec satisfaction que plusieurs des points mis en exergue dans ses précédents avis sur la sûreté nucléaire ont été pris en considération dans cette proposition.</p> <p>En particulier, il salue l'approche plus résolue sur l'harmonisation entre les États membres, la clarification des responsabilités, compétences et capacités en matière réglementaire, le renforcement de l'indépendance des autorités de sûreté nationales et l'action concernant la préparation des interventions d'urgence sur site. Le Comité apprécie également l'approche renforcée sur la transparence globale. Soulignant que les nouvelles exigences législatives doivent être nécessaires, proportionnées et propres à garantir la sécurité publique, le Comité se félicite du juste équilibre atteint de ce point de vue dans cette proposition de modification.</p>	<p>Conformément à la procédure définie à l'article 31 du traité Euratom, la consultation du Comité économique et social européen (CESE) sur un projet de proposition d'acte juridique est une condition préalable à l'adoption ultérieure de la proposition finale par la Commission. Concernant la proposition pour une révision de la directive sur la sûreté nucléaire, cette condition a été remplie suite à l'adoption par le CESE de son avis sur le projet de proposition de la Commission le 18 septembre 2013. En conséquence, la Commission a adopté sa proposition formelle de directive sur la sûreté nucléaire le 17 Octobre 2013 (COM(2013) 715 final).</p> <p>Il convient de rajouter que l'avis du CESE a été pris en considération dans l'exposé des motifs de la directive qui <u>résume</u> brièvement cette avis et explique <u>la position</u> de la Commission par rapport à la recommandation la plus importante faite par le CESE.</p>
<p>Le Comité avait proposé de renforcer les dispositions du projet de proposition dans certains domaines, et recommandé que les États membres soient tenus de veiller à ce qu'un processus participatif soit mis en place pour associer davantage la</p>	<p>La Commission prend note de l'avis du Comité et est toujours favorable à renforcer l'implication du public dans la prise de décisions qui les affectent. Ainsi, la participation de la population dans le processus décisionnel en matière</p>

<p>population à la planification, au réexamen et au processus décisionnel.</p>	<p>réglementaire est reconnue par la disposition prévue dans la proposition de la Commission qui impose qu'elle soit effectivement associée au processus d'octroi des autorisations d'installations nucléaires.</p>
<p>Le Comité souligne qu'il convient de veiller à ce que le texte soit compatible, le cas échéant, avec les définitions équivalentes de la WENRA (Association des responsables des autorités de sûreté nucléaire des pays d'Europe de l'Ouest) et de l'IAEA (Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique) et mis à jour si nécessaire, de manière à garantir la cohérence avec la terminologie reconnue au niveau international.</p>	<p>La Commission est d'accord avec le point de vue du Comité et souligne que les définitions incluses dans sa proposition de directive sont déjà très largement compatibles avec les définitions de IAEA et de WENRA. La recommandation du Comité sera néanmoins partagée avec les autres institutions.</p>
<p>Le Comité prend acte du renforcement des dispositions relatives à la préparation des interventions d'urgence sur site. Selon le Comité, il y aura lieu de réagir rapidement aux recommandations du rapport sur la préparation aux interventions d'urgence hors site, lorsque celui-ci sera disponible. Il s'agit là d'un domaine qui préoccupe particulièrement le citoyen européen et qui requiert la mise en place d'urgence de mesures supplémentaires efficaces.</p>	<p>La Commission prend note des avis du Comité. Elle souligne toutefois que la préparation aux interventions d'urgence <u>hors site</u>, à laquelle le Comité se réfère, n'est pas incluse dans le champ d'application de la directive. Les dispositions de cette dernière se limitent intentionnellement à la préparation des interventions d'urgence <u>sur site</u>. Toutefois, les recommandations du rapport sur la préparation aux interventions d'urgence hors site, mentionné par le Comité, seront prises en compte par la Commission dans son examen de la nécessité d'une action supplémentaire législative ou non législative au niveau de l'UE.</p>

<p>N°5</p>	<p>Energy technologies and innovation (communication) COM(2013) 253 final - EESC 3996/2013 fin – TEN/528 393rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Gerd Wolf (GRIII-DE) Co-rapporteur: Mr Pierre Jean Coulon (GRII-FR) DG ENER - Commissioner OETTINGER</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) supports the Commission's planned measures.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the support of the EESC to the measures proposed in the Commission Communication.</p>
<p>1.6 Appropriate instruments should be used to strike a sound balance between carefully planned project development, on the one hand, and openness to various new approaches and competition between them, on the other.</p>	<p>The Commission takes this suggestion of the EESC. Through the "<i>Integrated Roadmap</i>" as proposed in the Communication, the Commission intends to identify new actions, to open its support to new technologies and their integration into a European energy system while maintaining competition at project level.</p>
<p>1.8 The anticipated shortfall in funding in the Commission's Horizon 2020 R&D budget and in Member States' R&D budgets makes it all the more important to make use of the EU Structural Funds, the European Investment Fund and revenue from the EU Emissions Trading System, and in particular to steer the investment potential of the market economy towards addressing this major challenge.</p> <p>3.24 It is equally important, as proposed by the Commission, to acquire further sources of financing, i.e. to use EU Structural Funds and the European Investment Fund and revenues from the EU Emissions Trading System (which in the meantime have become very limited), and in particular to unlock the investment potential of the market economy and its industries and gear it to addressing this huge challenge.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes and is grateful for the EESC support for the use of other EU instruments to support the development of low-carbon technologies including funds and programmes such as the Structural funds or the European Investment Fund. Exchanges in this sense started already with Member States through the SET Plan Steering Group as well as with DG REGIO.</p> <p>The Commission would nevertheless like to highlight that the €79 billion allocated to Horizon 2020 represent a 43% increase as compared with the 7th Framework Programme for R&D. Furthermore, the Societal Challenge "Secure, Clean and Efficient Energy" is given 7.7% of the Horizon 2020 budget – raised from 7.2% in the original Commission proposal.</p>
<p>1.9 Public research and development funds should be used in cases where this is needed for research objectives, but where industry cannot reasonably be expected to make the relevant investment.</p> <p>3.20 In this connection, the main question is: for what support objectives public funds,</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with these points suggested by EESC. The <i>Integrated Roadmap</i> foresees to identify the actions which will be supported by EU, national and private funding according to criteria regarding its EU added value, the technological and market risks and</p>

<p>i.e. revenues from taxes (or compulsory levies) on individuals and businesses - are supposed to or have to be used, and which funds are supposed to be raised by the private sector. The Committee will not go into the legal side of this matter here; it is concerned with the substantive and thematic aspects. It believes that any support from the Commission (which comes from public funds) should focus on those tasks which are less likely to be supported using private funds. Typical reasons for this may be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a significant development risk involved, which contrasts with the considerable potential benefits should the initiative succeed. • The ensuing costs are very high and can only be met by pooling multiple public sources. • The period of time until practical benefits emerge is too long. • It involves cross-cutting or key technologies (e.g. new materials). • The result cannot readily be marketed, but there is a general social or environmental requirement. 	<p>potential as well as aspects related to international competitiveness.</p> <p>The Commission welcomes and will consider together with the Member States the proposals made by the EESC when assessing the need to use public funds for supporting the development of energy technologies.</p>
<p>3.4 The Committee believes that the measures announced by the Commission are a step in the right direction and therefore supports them in full. At the same time, the Committee recommends that any steps taken always take account of the international situation and be carried out in conjunction with relevant non-EU country programmes.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the EESC suggestion. The <i>Integrated Roadmap</i> will cover international aspects by taking into account the competitiveness of European industries in the energy sector and the options for cooperation with other countries.</p>
<p>3.8 This involves, among other things, a tendency to adopt a centralised, cumbersome and planned economy approach, typically characterised by over-regulation and formal bureaucracy.</p> <p>3.9 In warning about the danger of cumbersome administrative procedures, inefficiency and red tape, the Committee refers, among other things, to its <i>opinion on Simplifying the implementation of the research framework programmes</i>¹. The Committee welcomes the</p>	<p>The Commission understands the point raised by the EESC. The development of the <i>Integrated Roadmap</i> is carried out together with a wide range of stakeholders representing the whole spectrum of energy technologies and services. The Commission will support financially actions identified as having a European added value according to the <i>Horizon 2020 rules for participation</i> which aim at more simplification for its beneficiaries.</p>

¹ [OJ C 48, 15.2.2011, p. 129.](#)

<p>Commission's efforts in this connection and therefore strongly recommends that this approach also be adopted when dealing with the subject under consideration.</p>	
<p>3.10 However, another potential downside might be a tendency to avoid risks among bodies providing and receiving support and their stakeholders. This can lead to a preference for promoting technologies which are already well-known. Moreover, the fact that there is often a lack of experienced and recognised experts (from the respective relevant fields) in decision-making bodies is also a contributing factor here.</p>	<p>The Commission acknowledge this point and will consider it carefully when providing its support.</p> <p>The <i>Integrated Roadmap</i> will provide room for the development of all low-carbon technologies, including promising novel areas, by addressing the whole research and innovation chain from basic research to demonstration and market uptake. Furthermore, <i>Horizon 2020</i> allows for radical innovations to be supported under bottom-up schemes such as the <i>European Research Council</i>, <i>Future and Emerging Technologies</i>, the <i>SME Instrument</i> and the <i>Fast Track for Innovation</i>.</p>
<p>3.15. This particularly concerns the promotion of innovation-oriented projects in industry. There are plenty of examples of especially important innovation which have not come from predominant branches of industry in the market, but rather from outsiders, such as SMEs. Pursuing a state innovation policy which is geared primarily to promoting "national champions" runs the risk of wrongly assessing technical developments and underestimating their importance.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the EESC. The <i>Integrated Roadmap</i> will address in its making the challenge of "keeping the options open" by looking to possible new developments in the energy sector as well to other sectors such as ICT, materials, etc. Furthermore the <i>Integrated Roadmap</i> is not a static document and it should evolve over the time as new possibilities arise.</p>
<p>3.16. However, there is further scope for conflict in the Commission's proposals: between innovation and market roll-out. Innovation is only successful if it proves its worth in the market and can get through the barren period which is often common at the beginning. Although financial support for market roll-out (see also 3.26) or even enforced tariffs (e.g. feed-in laws) can be very effective here, they also lead to long-term market distortions to the detriment of better solutions.</p> <p>3.27 This example should once again illustrate the complex relationship between innovation and market conditions. The Committee therefore reiterates its recommendation that remedial action be taken as quickly as possible</p>	<p>The Commission is aware of the need to prioritise the development of low-carbon technologies in a cost-effective manner. The cost of energy is one of the driving principles in the development of the <i>Integrated Roadmap</i>. The Research, Development and Innovation actions proposed by each sector in the <i>Integrated Roadmap</i> should estimate the impact regarding the cost competitiveness of the respective technology.</p> <p>However the support schemes are not falling in the scope of the <i>Integrated Roadmap</i>. The issue was addressed in other Commission, notably the Communication "Delivering the internal electricity market</p>

<p>in order to give adequate incentives and a chance of economic success to urgently needed investment in the development of innovative technologies and processes by the private sector. Otherwise such investment will cease, because even the most innovative business will make losses, inevitably go bankrupt and disappear from the market if there is competition from state-backed, highly subsidised technologies.</p>	<p>and making the most of public intervention"¹, where the Commission acknowledged that, as technologies mature and grow and as costs decline, it is important that production and investment decisions are driven increasingly by the market rather than public intervention. The Commission notes that it is up to the Member States to determine the conditions for exploiting its energy resources.</p>
<p>3.21 Subject to its comments above, the Committee therefore supports the statement in the Commission's proposal to the effect that <i>"the SET Plan needs increased focus on energy system integration, integration of activities along the innovation chain, and increased coordination of the EIIs [European Industry Initiatives] and EERA [European Energy Research Alliance] to support this"</i>².</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the support of the EESC for pursuing activities focused on energy system integration and integration along the innovation chain.</p>
<p>3.22 The Committee views further appropriate development of the EERA as an important organisational means of achieving, in all energy areas, the European common ground and effectiveness that has, for example, been key to the success of European nuclear fusion research under EURATOM programmes to date. It is therefore important to give the EERA a governance structure geared to R&D, where, for instance, the respective sets of questions relevant to R&D are dealt with together and European expertise pooled. To this end, the Committee reiterates the need to provide for expert, informed and substantial involvement of the Commission in decision-making and the distribution of the respective development resources.</p>	<p>The Commission could, based on the proposals made in the <i>Integrated Roadmap</i>, reformulate or revise the SET Plan implementation structure to bring it in line with the new developments. This process will address both the <i>European Energy Research Alliance (EERA)</i> and the <i>European Industrial Initiatives</i>.</p>
<p>4.3 Particularly in view of the weaknesses of intermittent renewable energies explained in its latest exploratory opinion³ on the subject, the</p>	<p>The Commission fully welcomes the support of the EESC to address energy system integration aspects especially with</p>

¹ COM(2013) 7243

² COM(2013) 253 final, point 2.8.

³ [Ibid.](#)

<p>Committee supports the Commission's plan to give greater weight to developing environmentally-friendly systems for baseload capacity, and to energy supplies geared to consumer needs, which includes nuclear fusion energy with ITER and the supplementary research programme, alongside renewable energies such as geothermal energy.</p>	<p>regard to the large development of variable renewable. Therefore the Commission started to work and put a substantial effort in addressing together with the stakeholders the integration aspects into the energy system being at European, regional or local level.</p>
<p>4.7. This concerns first and foremost developing storage facilities with sufficient capacity which are as efficient as possible and offer the best possible value. In this regard, the Committee sees a particular need to make up ground in the appropriate further development and large-scale application of electrochemistry and electrolysis technology, together with the relevant materials. Like the ideas for battery-driven electro-mobility, a systemic link to intermittent renewables could thus be developed in (gas or liquid) fuel-powered mobility too (combustion or fuel cell).</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the EESC that storage should be one of the priorities for energy research and innovation. Large and small scale storage technologies will be considered both in the <i>Integrated Roadmap</i> as well as in <i>Horizon 2020</i> as shown in the present Energy Challenge Work Programme 2014-2015.</p>

N°6	<p>EU space industrial policy - releasing the potential for economic growth in the space sector</p> <p>COM(2013) 108 final - EESC 2837/2013 fin - INT/689</p> <p>492nd plenary session of September 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Joost Van Iersel (GRI-NL)</p> <p>DG ENTR – Vice President TAJANI</p>
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.2 EU space policy, sustained by political commitment throughout Europe, should ensure independent European access to space along the whole value chain.</p>	<p>The Commission is actively involved in the dialogue initiated by ESA in mid-2011 on a new European launcher policy, and has provided its input.</p> <p>The launcher policy is currently a sensitive issue. A decision in this respect is awaited from the next ESA Ministerial Council in 2014. On the EU side, it is essential to ensure the priority use of the European launcher and this principle should be reflected in the long term vision on the European space institutional market to be developed.</p> <p>The need of critical technologies, as defined by the Joint Task Force between the European Commission, the European Space Agency and the European Defence Agency, for non-dependence is recognised in the space industrial policy Communication. EU expenditure will contribute towards developing critical technologies throughout Horizon2020. The H2020 Work Programme 2014-2015 will earmark funding specifically for critical technologies.</p>
<p>1.3 The EU needs critical mass. An internal market for space requires dealing with a well-defined notion of a European level playing field, both for internal and external reasons</p>	<p>The industry has often underlined that international cooperation should serve as a market opener for the promotion of European space technologies and services while stressing that EU trade negotiations should take into account the specificities of the space sector. This is one of the priority actions stemming from the space industrial policy, notably to support access to the global market.</p>
<p>1.4 [...] Competitiveness of European industry must be enhanced.</p>	<p>The Communication addresses for the first time European space industry issues in a global and consistent manner by</p>

	<p>identifying the main challenges, and proposing a series of measures to achieve the overall objective of supporting EU space industry to become more competitive at global level.</p> <p>These measures include the improvement of the regulatory framework conditions in the space market, the promotion of Galileo and Copernicus applications market uptake, promoting technological non-dependence, independent access to space (European launchers) and improving access to international markets (trade).</p>
1.5 EU Industrial policy should bring different strategies of Member States (MS) under one umbrella and streamline national preferences into one framework.	The industry has often stated the need to have a clearer view of medium to long-term intentions regarding space institutional expenditure as this would help to better organise themselves, keep engineering teams in place, etc. The importance of such a vision is recognised in the space industrial policy Communication.
1.6 All parties have to work in the same direction. [...] They require well-developed coordination and fine-tuning between all players, i.e. the services of the Commission, ESA, and the MS.	Coordination among the main institutional actors is an important issue and is at the centre of the Commission's preoccupation as reflected in the November 2012 Communication on EU/ESA relations (COM(2012) 671 final).
1.9 Strategic security and defence considerations are the driving forces for space policy in all countries. [...] They must be embedded in a closer agreement between MS regarding security and defence [...].	The recently adopted Communication on defence (COM(2013) 542 final) highlights a number of areas where the Commission can take action in support of Member States not only to improve competitiveness but also in the area of capabilities. Space has been identified as a key area to be explored.

1.10 EU's space industrial policy can indeed give a boost to a competitive, solid, efficient and balanced industrial base in Europe [...]. It now comes to implementation!

The overall objective of the EU space industrial policy is to support this strategic sector to become more competitive at global level. To this end, the Communication proposes a set of dedicated measures. These include the improvement of the regulatory framework conditions in the space market, the promotion of Galileo and Copernicus applications market uptake, promoting technological non-dependence, independent access to space (European launchers) and improving access to international markets (trade). The implementation work has already started.

Nº7	<p>Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the deployment of the interoperable EU-wide eCall COM(2013) 315 final – EESC 5038/2013 fin - INT/714-715 Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning type-approval requirements for the deployment of the eCall in-vehicle system and amending Directive 2007/46/EC COM(2013) 316 final – EESC 5038/2013 fin - INT/714-715 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Thomas McDonogh (GRI-IE) DG ENTR - Vice President TAJANI Co-lead: DG MOVE - Vice President KALLAS</p>	
	Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
	3.3. European Road Safety Agency	The Commission takes note of the EESC's support to the creation of a Road Safety Agency. The identification and promotion of best practices and the collaboration and exchange of information among Member States is currently ensured by the Commission, through the Road Safety Unit of the Directorate General for Mobility and Transport in close cooperation with Member States which are represented in the High Level Group on Road Safety chaired by the Commission.
	4.1. eCall for new types of vehicles	Vehicle manufacturers should be given enough time to prepare for the application of this legislation and to deal with its design challenges and financial impact. Therefore, this Regulation should apply only to new vehicle types and not to existing types of vehicles.
	4.2. eCall for powered two-wheelers	The eCall technology for powered two-wheelers is not yet sufficiently developed to mandate its deployment. The key issues which need further development are the triggering mechanisms and the fact the driver and vehicle may often be separated after an accident. The industry is working on practical technical solutions to these problems and the Commission will continue to closely follow these

	developments in order to assess the possibility to extend the scope of the Regulation to other vehicles in the future.
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<p>N°8</p>	<p>Promouvoir le potentiel de croissance de l'industrie européenne de la bière (avis d'initiative) CESE 2391/2013 - CCMI/114 493^{ième} session plénière du mois d'octobre 2013 Rapporteur: M. Ludvík Jírovec (GRTH-CZ) Co-rapporteur: M. Edwin Calleja (MT) DG ENTR – Vice-président TAJANI</p>
<p>Points de l'avis du CESE estimés essentiels (point 1.2)</p>	<p>Position de la Commission</p>
<p>a)Le CESE souhaite que les responsables politiques progressent dans la création d'un environnement réglementaire équilibré permettant aux brasseries européennes, quelle que soit leur taille, de produire et de commercialiser de la bière en Europe et ailleurs ;</p>	<p>La Commission continuera à veiller à ce que la réglementation applicable aux boissons alcoolisées respecte le principe de proportionnalité tout en atteignant l'objectif de santé fixé à l'article 168 du Traité sur le Fonctionnement de l'Union Européenne.</p>
<p>b)Le CESE souhaite que les responsables politiques intègrent la bière dans les accords de libre-échange en cours de négociation avec d'autres partenaires commerciaux de l'UE, en tant que secteur prioritaire nécessitant un traitement favorable réciproque ;</p>	<p>La Commission continuera à considérer la bière comme un produit prioritaire offensif dans les négociations de zones de libre-échange.</p>
<p>c) Le CESE souhaite que les responsables politiques fassent davantage de publicité pour les programmes de responsabilité sociale, de santé et d'éducation mis en œuvre au niveau européen et national et encouragent les sociétés et associations brassicoles à s'y impliquer plus largement</p>	<p>La Commission estime que les entreprises devraient faire davantage de publicité sur leur programme de responsabilité sociale. De même, la Commission encourage les entreprises à mettre en œuvre des actions visant à une meilleure santé et une meilleure éducation à la santé par l'intermédiaire du forum alcool et santé.</p>
<p>d) Le CESE souhaite que les responsables politiques prennent mieux en compte l'incidence de l'évolution des politiques d'innovation, industrielle et agricole pour le secteur brassicole.</p>	<p>La Commission signale que les projets innovants et multi-acteurs émanant du secteur brassicole peuvent être pris en compte dans le cadre du PEI (Partenariat Européen de l'Innovation) – Productivité et développement durable de l'agriculture.</p> <p>En outre, la Commission rappelle les opportunités offertes dans le cadre des KICs (Knowledge and Innovation Communities) gérés en commun avec l'EIT (European Institute of Innovation</p>

	and Technology).
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Nº9	<p>Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Copernicus Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 911/2010</p> <p>COM(2013) 312 final - EESC 5084/2013 fin - INT/709</p> <p>493rd Plenary session of October 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Edgardo Maria Iozia (GRII-IT)</p> <p>DG ENTR – Vice President TAJANI</p>
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>The EESC recommends that the Commission “<u>shall</u> entrust” ESA and EUMETSAT with tasks linked to the space component, instead of “<u>may</u> entrust” (Art. 12(4) and (5)).</p>	<p>The Commission’s intention was to keep flexibility in the management of the programme by using the term “may”. Therefore, the Commission maintains a reserve on the EESC’s position, pending the outcome of the co-legislation process.</p>
<p>EESC would recommend that the Commission clearly define Copernicus governance.</p>	<p>Comment considered in the negotiations with the Council and the Parliament.</p>
<p>EESC considers that Copernicus data and service information must be available to third countries under the condition that an agreement ensuring reciprocity is reached.</p>	<p>The Commission’s intention was to provide data on the same basis worldwide, subject to the limitations listed in the Regulation proposal (Article 14). Therefore, the Commission maintains a reserve on the EESC’s position, pending the outcome of the co-legislation process.</p>

N°10	Strategy to strengthen Europe's defence sector COM(2013) 542 final - EESC 4413/2013 fin - CCMI/116 293rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Joost Van Iersel (GRI-NL) Co-rapporteur: Ms Monika Hruševská (SK) DG ENTR – Vice President TAJANI Co-lead: DG MARKT – Commissioner BARNIER
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>Section 1: Conclusions and Recommendations</p>	<p>Although much of the Opinion is addressed to Member States, it is very supportive overall of the Communication and the need for a European approach to tackle the challenges faced by Europe's defence industry and the need to strengthen the internal market and support for defence research. This support for the contribution that the Commission can make is very welcome.</p>
<p>Point 5.5 The EESC very much welcomes the Commission Communication¹, which demonstrates substantial progress in analyses and proposals. The Commission rightly underlines, in the framework of an industrial policy for the defence sector, the significance of the internal market for defence products, R&D, the role of SMEs, the potential contribution of regional policy, and the development of appropriate skills.</p>	<p>This support for the scope and focus of the Communication is very welcome.</p>
<p>Point 5.6. However, as a point of criticism the EESC points to the fact that the Commission highlights insufficiently the exceptional position of the defence sector as well as the need for a pro-active industrial policy. It is not only about the opening of markets, as this must be defined properly, due to the specific characteristics of the defence sector, including Art. 346</p>	<p>The Commission does not agree with this view. Much of the introduction sets out a number of factors which make the defence sector different from other industrial sectors. It also sets out the political context which limits the scope for the Commission to take action in support of the sector. Nevertheless, given these limitations,</p>

¹ See footnote 1.

TFEU.	the Communication is a comprehensive document, the large part of which deals with industrial policy. Most Member States and stakeholders have recognised this approach as ambitious and within the limits of the Commission's competence.
Point 5.14 Defence projects must be linked to EU R&D programmes wherever appropriate. FP7 is already involved in dual use projects. An added value is that it favours cross-border projects. The EESC calls for more systematic consideration of dual use technologies in Horizon 2020.	The Communication proposes to examine the results of Horizon 2020 for potential benefits for defence research without compromising the civil nature of the programme.
Point 5.15 It is crucial that industrial policy in defence should also address the gap between the main producing and other countries. Participation of industries from all countries must be actively promoted to get as many countries politically on board and economically involved as possible. In this way the issue of off-sets, that usually arouses much debate and criticism, can gradually disappear. These elements should become an integral part of an overall European defence strategy.	The Commission agrees that the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base Strategy (EDTIB) and European Defence and Equipment Market (EDEM) must be open to participation of industries from all Member States. This can best be achieved via cooperative projects between Member States and fair cross-border market access. In this context, Member States should use in particular the subcontracting provisions of the defence procurement directive in order to foster market access of SME.
Point 6.2 Cooperation with the EDA [European Defence Agency] is crucial. The EESC considers coordination and dovetailing between the Commission and the EDA, as proposed in various envisaged actions in the Communication, an indispensable condition for progress and success.	While taking full account of the respective competencies, the Commission makes clear that it and the EDA will need to work closely together in a number of areas to achieve substantial progress. This has been recognised by Member States who have called for such cooperation in the conclusions of the European Council on 20 th December 2013.
Point 6.4 The EESC endorses strongly the Commission proposals on standards and certification that will contribute to cross-border cooperation in industry as well as regional specialisation and networks of excellence. It encourages synergies between the EDA and the EASA, notably concerning certification.	The Commission strongly agrees with the EESC about the importance of standards and certification. These will be important aspects of the Communication's implementation.

<p>Point 6.5 SMEs, interlinked also with big companies, are very important for Europe's defence innovation and production. In support of the proposed actions, the EESC underlines the need for open networks.</p>	<p>The Commission also agrees that SMEs are essential for the success of Europe's defence sector. A number of the Commission's recommendations are directed at supporting SME's including support for cross-border business opportunities and regional networks.</p>
<p>Point 6.7 The EESC strongly supports the envisaged Commission actions on skills, which are crucial. It very much welcomes a positive contribution of the European Social Fund and the Structural Funds, and welcomes the work of the EDA in raising Member States' awareness, supporting the design of concrete projects in these domains.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the support from the EESC for its proposed actions on skills which are essential for the future success of the sector.</p>
<p>Point 6.10 The EESC endorses the proposed actions on energy. They will also engage an increasing number of SMEs.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the support from the EESC for our proposed actions on energy and defence. This is an area where there can be major cost savings for Europe's armed forces and a contribution to the EU's 20/20/20 climate and energy targets.</p>

N°11	<p>Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making available on the market of pressure equipment</p> <p>COM(2013) 471 final - EESC 2013/0221 (COD) - INT/716</p> <p>493rd Plenary Session of October 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Antonello Pezzini (GRI-IT)</p> <p>DG ENTR – Vice President TAJANI</p>
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
No particular requests were raised	<p>The Commission proposal is fully addressing conclusions, recommendations and comments in the Opinion of the EESC. There were no particular concerns to be addressed. The alignment of the Pressure Equipment Directive to the NLF (New Legislative Framework) will result in better implementation and legal consistency of the Directive.</p>

N°12	Action Plan for a competitive and sustainable Steel industry in Europe – COM(2013) 407 final - EESC 4522/2013 fin - CCMI/117 494th Plenary Session: December 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Claude Rolin (GR II-BE) Co-rapporteur: Mr Zbigniew Kotowski (GR III-PL) DG ENTR – Vice President TAJANI
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
Publish and discuss with social partners a roadmap with precise timelines for the implementation	A roadmap has been created and made public on the website of the High Level Group. This roadmap has been discussed by the members of the HLG at the last meeting (4 December 2013).
Ensuring EU steel producers have access to third-country markets through fair trade practices	<p>The Commission strongly supports the liberalisation of international trade under the umbrella of the WTO and therefore uses its various trade policy tools and instruments (e.g. trade negotiation, FTAs) to ensure European steel producers have access to third country markets.</p> <p>For information, there are seven on-going anti-dumping investigations on steel, 39 measures currently in force (36 AD + 3 AS).</p>
Undertaking a detailed evaluation of existing capacity	It is up to each single undertaking to manage its own capacity (and overcapacity as the case may be) in relation to demand.
Facilitating the use and transport of scrap and preventing illegal exports	<p>The Commission is currently assessing the possibility to use the Surveillance 2 system to not only monitor imports but also exports of scrap in the EU.</p> <p>The Commission has also presented in July 2013 a legislative proposal on inspections and controls on waste shipments.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Commission has launched a public consultation on a certification scheme for the recycling of exported waste.</p>

Ensuring that a sufficiently sectoral focus is taken when allocating EU structural funds.	General objectives are discussed between the Commission and the Member States but it is up to Member States themselves and eventually the Regions to determine whether a sectoral focus is warranted.
Developing temporary measures with public support to ensure that workers are retained in the steel industry	The Commission expresses interest in the temporary measures for restructuring based on the German model and called upon Member States to share their views or experience on that field.
Boosting demand in steel downstream sectors.	The Commission is doing so via its initiative CARS 2020 and Sustainable Construction. Economic growth will however be the key determinant.
Providing much more support, including public support, for investment in developing new technologies and processes to trigger further upgrading of installations and plant.	SPIRE (PPP for energy-intensive process industries) started (calls launched 11 December 2013) together with H2020 and cover part of these actions. The Research Fund for Coal and Steel (distinct from H2020) continues to run and fund RDI in the European steel industry in the same period (2014-2020).
Introducing a sustainable model of steel production.	The Commission is currently assessing the potential of SustSteel (European sustainable steel construction products).
Focusing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund on anticipating change, for instance by facilitating the introduction of new technologies and helping workers to adjust to new technologies.	A new regulation of the EGF for 2014 - 2020 has been recently adopted and an evaluation of the fund has been launched to assess the added value and the impact of its action.

<p>N°13 The challenges of the European engineering industry (mechanical, electrical, electronic and "metalworking") in a changing global economy (own initiative opinion) EESC 1907/2013 fin - CCM/110 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 Rapporteur: Ms Lucie Studničná (GRII – CZ) Co-rapporteur: M. Rumen Atanasov (GRI-BG) DG ENTR – Vice President TAJANI</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.1 The European engineering industry (EI) plays a vital role in the economic recovery of Europe and the ambitious goal to increase the industrial output by 2020 to more than 20% of the GDP. However, more investment of companies is necessary to generate such growth, to reverse the current trend and to get people out of unemployment.</p>	<p>One of the major aims of the industrial policy communications and initiatives as well as of the regular updating and revision of the internal market legislation is to promote investment, in particular by SMEs.</p>
<p>1.5 In order to generate new investments, Europe must follow a strategy that keeps its industry at the forefront of technological innovation and at the same time, in order to reach the necessary volume of output and employment as a main tool of strengthening competitiveness, be more attractive for companies manufacturing mass production goods, both in the high and in the low and medium-tech ranges. The EESC calls upon the European Commission to launch a strategy on how Europe can attract more investments in high tech companies – including modern factories resulting from the 4th industrial revolution – and highly skilled competences fostering innovation throughout the value chain.</p>	<p>The Commission is already doing a lot to help the EU attract investment, including towards high tech companies. Inter alia, two major projects have been adopted in this regard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSME, with a total budget of EUR 2.3 billion is the first programme fully devoted to competitiveness and it will finance actions aimed at facilitating access to finance, access to markets, at promoting entrepreneurship and improving framework conditions for businesses. • Horizon 2020 with a total budget of EUR 79 billion will be much more industry-friendly (and in particular SME-friendly), and much more oriented towards a job-rich growth than its predecessor for Research, FP7.
<p>1.7 The Commission should increase its efforts to make the life of European companies easier, especially for SMEs. New technical and administrative legislation should only be considered if its targets cannot be achieved otherwise. The Commission should put a stronger focus on a coherent application of existing rules among all Member States, harmonising and</p>	<p>This was the scope behind the introduction of the Commission's New Approach to legislation and the requirement for impact assessments to precede new legislation and the revision of existing legislation. The new Market Surveillance package was introduced to improve and harmonise the application of surveillance activities among</p>

strengthening the Market Surveillance. The Commission should also promote balanced application of such an approach globally towards other world's regions.	Member States, however the Commission cannot dictate how much funds and human resources should be allocated by these.
1.8 Disadvantages, such as difficult access to finance, high energy costs or costs resulting from administrative burdens and legislation should be reduced by adopting a more consistent and predictable legislation.	See above, for point 1.7
1.9 High employment in Europe can only be maintained if workers are better educated and trained than in competing economies. Measures should be taken to attract youth – both males and females – in technological professions with increasingly sophisticated machinery and services. Cooperation of companies with universities and schools, training and lifelong learning has to be encouraged.	There is a need to further develop links between universities and industry. The Commission encourages this kind of cooperation in particular with respect to research and innovation and related programmes.
4.1.8 Unfortunately, impact assessments of the Commission do not include sufficiently the costs of new legislation for companies, especially for SMEs. The biggest cost of additional legislation actually not taken into consideration is in the investments and new companies that Europe loses and that are instead established outside the EU.	SMEs are always given special attention in the impact assessment studies and reports. It is a fact that sometimes the quantitative data are either not available or not sufficiently developed. Efforts are deployed each time an impact assessment needs to be carried out in order to go as far as possible into quantitative assessments.
4.3.1 ... in recent years many SMEs complain about the amount of standardisation mandates by the Commission and the fact that standardisation has gone beyond technical requirements. SMEs should be encouraged and supported to participate in the standardisation process.	<p>The involvement of SMEs in the Standardisation Process has been included in Regulation 1025/2012 (OJ L 316/12, 14.11.2012), in force since 1 January 2013.</p> <p>In May 2013, the Commission published a Call for Proposal aimed at complying with the SME inclusiveness in the standardisation process. The Call was granted to a consortium created by UEAPME (European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises) and EBC (the European Builders Confederation), called: Small Business Standards (SBS). This international non-profit association will ensure it meets the Commission's aspirations to make the standardisation system as inclusive, transparent and</p>

	open as possible, by strengthening the participation of SMEs, considered being in a weaker position against the bigger industries and therefore endorsing different interests.
4.5.2 Many manufacturing sectors face a shortage of young professionals. Education and vocational systems shall be much more oriented on the needs and future needs of companies. Measures should be taken by both the administrations and industry itself to attract young people into this sector and improve at the same time the image of the sector. Especially the lack of professionals in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in some regions of Europe must be solved, e.g. by supporting the mobility of these professionals throughout Europe.	This shortage of educated workers is something the engineering industry suffers from and which may be partially addressed through the encouragement of industry-academia cooperation as already mentioned above. Such cooperation usually means that most engineering graduates find a job with one of the sponsoring companies. This employment guarantee makes the engineering career a more attractive one. To note that most of the academic related responsibilities are in the hands of national authorities.

<p>4.8.1 ...the EU must insist that raw-material trade is not hindered by WTO-incompatible restrictions, especially rare earth. Thereby has to be taken into account, that ethical, social and ecological standards have to be respected.</p>	<p>The European Commission in its trade policy addresses all restrictions when it comes to trade in raw materials between the EU and third countries, be it in the bilateral context, including through the negotiations of trade agreements or in the multilateral framework. For instance, the WTO case against Chinese export restrictions on rare earths will be made public during the course of this year.</p> <p>There was a successful launch and conclusion of a WTO dispute settlement case against export restrictive measures applied by China on 9 raw materials in violation of WTO commitments. The Appellate Body confirmed the ruling of the panel in January 2012, giving a clear and final interpretation of China's commitments under the WTO.</p> <p>On 13 March 2012, the EU launched a second WTO challenge against China's export restrictions on raw materials, including 17 rare earths. The procedure is ongoing for this second case.</p> <p>Moreover, the Commission is engaged in several dialogues on raw materials at bilateral level with partners such as Argentina, Chile, China, Colombia, EuroMed countries, Greenland, Japan, Mexico, Russia, United States of America and Uruguay where trade aspects of raw materials are also addressed, as well as within the context of OECD and internal Metal Study groups. Finally, the EU promotes sustainable access to raw materials in its development policy. In the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, a bilateral cooperation was launched on raw materials, covering issues related to governance, investments and geological knowledge.</p>
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4.9.2 EESC urges the Commission to monitor the situation in international trade of critical raw materials. EESC recommends preparing several plausible scenarios, with the worst case one, to describe the threats and potential solutions. Cooperation with other countries in a similar situation (US, Japan, South Korea) should be enhanced.

The EU is building capacity to follow the flows of raw materials, including critical ones, within and outside the EU, as described in the European Innovation Partnership and the Strategic Implementation Plan 'Knowledge Base'. Preliminary steps through a number of studies have already been taken.

The list of critical raw materials and associates information (including flows) is a valuable information tool that is used by the European Commission in (1) policy making (2) funding research and innovation and (3) trade related matters to address restrictions of those critical materials in commercial trade between the EU and third countries. The list of critical raw materials is a valuable information tool that is used by the European Commission in trade related matters to address restrictions of those critical materials in commercial trade between the EU and third countries.

Through the first pillar of the European Commission's Raw Materials Initiative (fair and sustainable supply of raw materials from global markets), trilateral dialogues are being organised with Japan and the US on critical raw materials. The European Commission is also pursuing a "Raw Materials Diplomacy" with a view to secure access to raw materials in particular the critical ones. In December 2013, the European Commission organised a technical workshop with the US and Japan. Other Raw Materials Diplomacy dialogues are planned with Latin America (Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Mexico), with Greenland, with technologically advanced mining countries such as Canada, US, Australia, Chile and South Africa and finally also with the African Union.

N°14	<p>The European ship maintenance, repair and conversion sector (own initiative opinion) EESC 2301/2013 fin - CCMI/111 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Marian Krzaklewski (GRII-PL) Co-rapporteur: Mr Enrique Calvet Chambon (GRI-ES) DG ENTR – Vice President TAJANI</p>
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
Section 1: Conclusions and Recommendations	The Commission agrees with the general conclusions in points 1.1 -1.5 on the important role of the ship repair and conversion industry as an essential part of the European maritime industries.
<u>On the recommendations</u>	
Point 1.6.1, first two indents : A wider role of the EIB and the organisation of workshops by the Commission with participation of the EIB and industry stakeholders	The Commission and the EIB agree that there is scope for a wider use of EIB and EIF financial instruments by the ship repair and conversion sector. A workshop was held in September 2013. The follow-up takes place in the European Sustainable Shipping Forum and the topic will be further discussed in the framework of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Shipbuilding.
Pt 1.6.1, 3 rd indent: allocation of regional funding to the maritime sector	The use of Structural Funds for the maritime sector is currently considered in a number of Member States for certain regions implementing the "smart specialisation" concept.
Pt 1.6.1, 3 rd indent and Pt 4.2.1, extension of the Framework on aid to shipbuilding and later replacement by the horizontal Frameworks on Regional Aid and RDI	The Commission decided on 5 December 2013 to extend the validity of the State aid framework for shipbuilding until 30 June 2014. On 1 July 2014 the new horizontal Framework on Regional Aid will enter into force, which will apply to shipbuilding. As regards innovation aid, the Commission envisages integrating the current rules in the new framework on aid for research, development and innovation. However, the Commission has not taken a formal decision yet. It is expected that the new R&D&I framework comes into effect

	on 1 July 2014. No "financial bottlenecks" or "economic damages" will occur due to the changes.
Pt 1.6.1, 4 th indent: prioritisation of EU RDI funding under Horizon 2020 (...) for focused maritime projects with demonstration elements and innovation potential (including PPP for research purposes)	The current Horizon 2020 call for 2014-2015 in the area "Mobility for Growth" contains specific topics for research and innovation actions in maritime transport which allow for the financing of demonstration elements, if proposed and selected. A decision on the contractual PPP "Vessels for the Future", currently in preparation by the industry, could possibly be taken in line with the general schedule for further contractual PPPs in the course of 2015.
Pt 1.7 -1.9: Skills and education, sectoral skills council	As identified in the LeaderShip2020 initiative, the availability of a skilled workforce is of utmost importance for this industry and a priority for action by the industry, regions, Member States and the EU. The social partners are working on this issue in the framework of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Shipbuilding and are preparing the establishment of a Sectoral Skills Council as proposed.
Pt 1.10: frequent and systematic consultation of the shipbuilding industry (Ship maintenance, repair and conversion sector (SMRC) and newbuilding) with EMSA	The Commission supports contacts between EMSA and industry. However, these have to be within the mandate and work programme of EMSA, taking due account of the limited resources of the Agency.
Pt 1.11/1.12: call for DG MOVE to take the SMRC sector in its strategic policy developments into account; support for the installations of cleaners (= scrubbers), ballast water treatment, use of LNG	The Commission has established the European Sustainable Shipping Forum, and the shipbuilding industry including SMRC participate in its works.

<p>N°15</p>	<p>State of the Innovation Union 2012 - Accelerating change COM(2013) 149 final – EESC 3251/2013 – INT/695 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Cveto Stantič (GRI-SI) DG RTD– Commissioner GEOGHEGAN-QUINN</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 The EESC welcomes the Commission's decision to publish, for the second year in a row, a report on the state of the Innovation Union, in which it notes considerable progress, namely that 80% of the commitments under the flagship initiative are being implemented according to plan. The EESC agrees that progress has been made, particularly as regards the framework policy, which relates to the implementation of concrete commitments. It therefore expects that by the end of 2014 all 34 commitments will have been implemented.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the support of EESC for its proposal.</p> <p>Notes that no final date for implementation has been set for the final implementation of the strategy.</p>
<p>1.2 The EESC is convinced that the Innovation Union, even if all 34 commitments are met, needs to go deeper, and in this connection supports the ERIAB¹ recommendations and the Commission's response to them. At the same time, it calls on the Commission to draw up, as soon as possible, a list of measures and areas in which deepening is possible and urgent. The Committee sees opportunities for deepening particularly in further improving the environment for fast-growing innovative enterprises, in innovation in the public sector, in social innovation and in new, innovative business models, which could radically change the mindset and existing approaches to innovative solutions.</p>	<p>Draws the attention of the EESC to a methodology developed under the Innovation Union commitment 15 that can be used to assess the effects of regulatory frameworks on innovation. The methodology can be used by any level of government to identify the rules that need to be improved and/or new rules that need to be implemented in order to provide sufficient and continuous incentives to drive innovation. This can greatly contribute to improving the regulatory environment for fast-growing innovative enterprises.</p>
<p>1.7 The EESC welcomes the progress in building top-quality research infrastructure at pan-European level and the encouraging initial results of the European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs). It considers that the latter are in some cases still unverified and</p>	<p>The Commission has organised a review of the EIPs during 2013. An independent Expert Group was set up to deliver an objective and reasoned assessment of the overall performance of the EIP concept and approach.</p>

¹ European Research and Innovation Area Board: Stress-test of the Innovation Union, November, 2012.

<p>unfinished models, and calls on the Commission, on the basis of experience to date, to prepare a comprehensive analysis of their effectiveness along with uniform conditions for their operation and financing.</p>	<p>The Group has analysed what has been achieved and where the problems are, assessed any amendments needed to improve the functioning and impact of the current EIPs, and recommended conditions for launching further EIPs. The report of the Group will be finalised early-2014.</p> <p>Furthermore, each EIP is setting up a monitoring and assessment framework, drawing on the various actions undertaken by stakeholders in line with the priority action areas identified in their Strategic Implementation Plans.</p>
<p>1.9. The Committee sees considerable potential for stimulating innovation through more innovative targeting of public procurement. It therefore calls on the Member States to increase the use of pre-commercial procurement and share experiences and models of innovation-friendly procurement. This should also apply to public procurement financed by the Structural Funds.</p>	<p>The Commission's proposal under Innovation Union that foreseen that Member States and Regions set aside dedicated budgets for public procurement of innovative products and services was not taken up by the Council.</p> <p>Nevertheless, some action has been taken in this direction by some Member States.</p>
<p>1.11. The EESC would once again like to highlight the specific role of social innovation, which could play an important role in tackling the crisis and the other challenges of modern society. Therefore, those support mechanisms that are also accessible to potential social innovators in civil society and the social economy sector should be developed. The EESC calls on the Commission to put in place support for the creation of incubators for innovative social projects as soon as possible.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the support of the Committee to social innovation, and in particular the call to put in place support for the creation of incubators for innovative social projects. By the end of 2013 two European networks of incubators for social innovation have been launched, resulting from a pilot action funded under FP7.</p> <p>Support to social innovation under Horizon 2020 is linked to all areas where it is relevant, and in particular all societal challenges. In addition, social innovation will be supported under the societal challenge 6, with specific topics (Social innovation Community, INSO-5-2015).</p>
<p>3.5 The new concept of EIPs, the initial pilot</p>	<p>The Commission has organised a</p>

<p>projects of which are aimed at tackling key societal challenges¹, is so far showing an encouraging picture. They aim to bring together stakeholders at all levels, to overcome fragmentation and to provide a critical mass. Despite these positive signs, European partnerships are in some cases still unverified and unfinished models. The EESC therefore calls on the Commission, on the basis of experience to date, to draw up a comprehensive analysis of their effectiveness as soon as possible and to draw up uniform conditions for their operation and financing in the future.</p>	<p>review of the EIPs during 2013. An independent Expert Group was set up to deliver an objective and reasoned assessment of the overall performance of the EIP concept and approach.</p> <p>The Group has analysed what has been achieved and where the problems are, assessed any amendments needed to improve the functioning and impact of the current EIPs, and recommended conditions for launching further EIPs. The report of the Group will be finalised early-2014.</p> <p>Furthermore, each EIP is setting up a monitoring and assessment framework, drawing on the various actions undertaken by stakeholders in line with the priority action areas identified in their Strategic Implementation Plans.</p>
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¹ European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Active & Healthy Ageing, EIP on Agricultural Sustainability and Productivity, EIP on Smart Cities and Communities, EIP on Water, EIP on Raw materials.

<p>N°16</p> <p>Innovation investment package</p> <p>COM(2013) 494 final</p> <p>COM(2013) 493 final</p> <p>COM(2013) 495 final</p> <p>COM(2013) 496 final</p> <p>COM(2013) 497 final</p> <p>COM(2013) 498 final</p> <p>COM(2013) 500 final</p> <p>COM(2013) 501 final</p> <p>COM(2013) 503 final</p> <p>COM(2013) 505 final</p> <p>COM(2013) 506 final</p> <p>EESC 4572/2013 fin – INT/704</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Antonello Pezzini (GRI-IT)</p> <p>Co-rapporteur: Ms Laure Batut (GRII-FR)</p> <p>494th Plenary Session of December 2013</p> <p>DG RTD – Commissioner GEOGHEGAN-QUINN</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 The EESC agrees that partnerships offer a range of advantages for developing innovation and that they still have untapped potential</p>	<p>The Commission is pleased to see that the EESC shares its view on the advantages and the potential that the proposed partnerships offer.</p>
<p>1.2 The EESC considers it important to fine-tune and synergise the 10 proposed initiatives with financial support from Horizon 2020 (H2020), in as much as they are different from other types of partnership in terms of instruments, form and substance</p>	<p>The Commission confirms that the activities of the public-private partnerships, public-public partnerships and other related initiatives will be implemented in a way that maximises synergies and increases overall impact, in particular where they address common objectives. Synergies will especially be sought in linking activities across the innovation cycle, from research outcomes to closer to market activities, in order to help boost entrepreneurship and business creation in fields of major relevance to the European economy.</p>
<p>1.3 The EESC calls for long-term financial certainty for the initiatives and a stable regulatory framework to reduce the high-risk aspects that set them apart and to help achieve the EU's general objectives: sustainable development, jobs and skilling of new professional profiles</p>	<p>The Commission recalls that, in accordance with its proposal, the Innovation Investment Package represents a total investment over the next 7 years of EUR 22 billion whereby EUR 8 billion from Horizon 2020 will leverage EUR 10 billion from industry, and close to EUR 4 billion from Member States. This will provide vital funding for large-scale,</p>

	longer-term, risky research and innovation initiatives.
1.4 The EESC considers that these instruments are an important means of boosting funding for investment in research and innovation, provided they are flexible, simple, non-bureaucratic, open and transparent, with a leverage effect on additional funding, and that they secure increasing participation by small businesses, especially in disadvantaged regions	The Commission confirms that the partnerships will have improved governance in order to ensure openness to new participants and better links with Structural and Investment Funds support mechanisms for deployment, providing for synergies between Union-led actions and Member States' or regions' development policies.
1.5 The EESC believes that the objectives must be measurable and targeted towards innovation and its translation into industrial goals and new jobs, and be anchored in a shared medium-to-long-term vision, within the context of a balanced, transparent system of governance with clear scientific, technical and socioeconomic performance indicators	The Commission confirms that each partnership has measurable specific objectives and key performance indicators, which will allow closer monitoring and evaluation.
1.6 With regard to institutional public-private partnerships (PPP), the Committee calls for greater attention to be given to mechanisms to impede insider trading, for more to be made of the leverage effect, for more room to be given, in programmes and projects, to all forms of small business including the social economy, and for a strong communication policy to be put in place with a proactive role for stakeholder forums in all joint undertakings	The Commission takes note of these recommendations and recalls that the substantial majority of the EU contribution will be allocated through open calls for proposals using essentially the same rules as the rest of Horizon 2020. Under FP7, PPPs have already proven to be successful in attracting SMEs who represent about 28% of the participants. The participation of small business to the next phase of the PPPs is expected to increase notably because of the achieved simplification of rules for participation.
1.7 With regard to public-public partnerships (P2P), the Committee considers that it would be helpful if the European R&I budget contributed to bringing about a more balanced distribution of EU resources, with a greater focus on technology-intensive SMEs and to clinical, medical and technological innovations that promote the well-being of all, especially as regards active ageing and assistance to the elderly	The Commission takes note of these recommendations and recalls that SMEs will be among the main beneficiaries of these partnerships. It also recalls that the final decision on the distribution of EU resources is incumbent upon the co-legislators.
1.8 The EESC calls for a proactive communication policy on developments in the 10 new initiatives, and recommends that annual conferences be organised with all	The Commission takes note of these recommendations and would be willing to work with the Committee on the organisation of the scheduled

<p>interested parties from organised civil society, during which annual reports on results achieved and future strategies would be presented. It also calls for multilingual handbooks for smart participation in the various forms of partnership that exist at EU level</p>	<p>conferences aiming at reinforcing the interaction with all stakeholders. Moreover, the Committee will be duly informed of communication events organised by the respective PPPs.</p>
<p>1.9 The EESC recommends that the Commission develop proactive policy, perhaps by including the establishment of EESC prizes for economic and social innovation. This concerns three main target sectors: interested scientists and industrialists; users of innovative solutions on the market; and the European public as a whole, to satisfy society's needs, especially in terms of employment and training. The EESC advocates establishing a "European innovation prize" to reward innovative applications in the industrial, economic and social sectors, and to give prominence to European added value</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the offer of the EESC for establishing EESC prizes for economic and social innovation and for advocating the setting-up of a "European innovation prize". The Commission invites the Committee to examine existing prizes, such as the European Enterprise Promotion Awards, the European Social Innovation Prize, the Women Innovation Award and the European Capital of Innovation Award, in order to avoid possible overlap while defining the scope and modalities of the proposed prizes.</p>

N°17	Female employment in relation to growth (exploratory opinion for the Lithuanian presidency of the EU Council) EESC 3611/2013 fin - SOC/486 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 DG EMPL – Commissioner ANDOR
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.1 Female employment should no longer be raised as another debate on gender equality, but instead as an economic imperative to bring prosperity and jobs to the European Union.</p>	<p>The Commission recognises the need to steer the women participation in the labour market, in order to facilitate meeting the Europe 2020 headline target for employment. A number of country-specific recommendations issued under the European Semester address for instance: adequate tax-benefit systems (provide the right incentives to return and/or to stay in work); provision of high-quality and affordable childcare; provision of elderly care services and out-of-school care; availability of flexible working arrangements; the need to tackle the gender pay gap and the gender pension gap.</p>
<p>2.1 The measurement of GDP should no longer be exclusively based on the production/consumption paradigm, but should include indicators such as wellbeing and sustainability (in economic, social and environmental terms) in order to move "towards a more balanced policy".</p>	<p>In August 2009, the European Commission released its policy paper <i>GDP and beyond: Measuring progress in a changing world</i>. The paper outlines an EU roadmap with five key actions to be undertaken now and in the near term. The five key actions support the Commission's aims to develop indicators relevant to the challenges of today — ones that provide an improved basis for public discussion and policy-making. Those five key actions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Complementing GDP with highly aggregated environmental and social indicators •Near real-time information for decision-making •More accurate reporting on distribution and inequalities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Developing a European Sustainable

	<p>Development Scoreboard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Extending National Accounts to environmental and social issues <p>The Commission welcomed the opinions of the EESC¹ on this issue. In 2013 it presented a report² which highlighted the progress made since 2009.</p> <p>Discussions with stakeholders are ongoing on the new lead indicator for resource productivity proposed in the 2011 Commission Communication <i>Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe</i>³.</p>
<p>2.5 (...) it is important to note that the family work done by women without pay is not taken into account as a contribution to the economy. Developing jobs to provide services to the families would contribute to the transformation of this invisible form of work into paid work and would create tax revenues, contributions to pensions, etc.</p>	<p>The European Commission had launched a discussion on the potential of personal and household services in 2012. As part of the Employment package, it adopted the Staff working document on Exploiting the potential of the personal and household services.</p> <p>This is an ongoing debate – the European Commission Conference on Exploiting the employment potential of personal and household services took place on 11-12 November 2013.</p>
<p>2.6 The Committee draws attention to the fact that unemployed women are not always included in statistics and are not registered as unemployed but are in effect untapped potential. The lower level of female employment does not directly translate into unemployment but, rather, into inactivity or undeclared work, owing to the low supply of female work that result from the "disincentive" effect. Therefore, the statistical data at national and European level cannot accurately depict the actual situation. The EESC calls for greater disaggregation of statistical data on female employment gathered and drawn up at European level, in relation to the private service sectors.</p>	<p>The European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) provides population estimates for the main labour market characteristics, such as employment, unemployment and inactivity. The definitions of employment, unemployment and inactivity as well as other survey characteristics follow the definitions and recommendations of the International Labour Organisation. Data are acquired by interviewing the sampled individuals (men and women) directly. The EU-LFS data which are disseminated by Eurostat are disaggregated by occupation and economic activity as well as sex, age and education. The disaggregated data already provide valuable information on unemployment</p>

¹ CESE 647/2010;CESE 814/2012

² SWD(2013) 303 final, 2.8.2013

³ COM(2011) 571 final,

	<p>and inactivity of women as well as on employment of women in economic sectors in the EU and across Member States. As regards the private economic sectors, the Structure of Earnings Survey provides data on earnings of men and women in the private sector and the public sector. The gender pay gap can also be calculated. As regards domestic work, the Time Use Survey (TUS) aims to report data on how people spend their time and, in particular, on the invisible domestic work of women. The TUS is conducted every 10 years and not in all Member States.</p>
<p>2.7 The EESC notes that the Annual Growth Survey should establish targets for women's employment as focused policies can close gender gaps and promote inclusion, significantly increasing the growth potential of the EU economy. Such policies – including (but not limited to) provision of care services for dependent family members and removing financial disincentives to work for second earners – are essential to enhance women's participation in the labour market.</p>	<p>While the Commission recognises the need to steer the female employment, the Annual Growth Survey is not an instrument establishing targets. It is a document setting priorities for Member States for an upcoming year that would serve in the achievement of Europe 2020 headline targets.</p> <p>The 2013 AGS stressed the importance of improving employability levels by measures such as facilitating labour-market participation and access to jobs for second earners through adequate tax-benefit incentives and the provision of quality affordable childcare. Also, in order to promote social inclusion the need was emphasised for affordable and high-quality services such as childcare.</p> <p>The 2014 AGS raised the issue of women's pension entitlements and recalled that access to affordable care services will help the participation of women in the labour market.</p>

<p>2.8 (...) The Commission should prepare a comprehensive study on the impact of austerity on equal opportunities to envisage more qualitative solutions, and should research the way in which the austerity measures have impacted on the quantity and quality of female employment in both the public and private service sectors.</p>	<p>The experts' report commissioned by the European Commission and entitled <i>The impact of the economic crisis on the situation of women and men and on gender equality policies</i> is available at:</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130410_crisis_report_en.pdf</p>
<p>2.10 The EESC recommends allocating the EU funds in a more gender sensitive manner and encourages both the EU institutions and the Member States to implement the recommendations set out in the Evaluation of the European Social Fund's support to Gender Equality.</p>	<p>The Commission makes the necessary efforts towards greater gender mainstreaming in the future European Structural and Investment Funds.</p> <p>The legislative framework for the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 includes provisions requiring Member States to ensure that equality between men and women, and the integration of a gender perspective, are taken into account and promoted throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes. Member States shall also take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex and ensure the existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of EU gender equality law and policy in the field of European Structural and Investment of ESI Funds¹.</p> <p>Moreover, in the context of the ESF, the programming of specific actions for gender equality and non-discrimination is mandatory and all data has to be broken down by sex.²</p>

¹ See: Art 7 of the REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

² See: Art 7 of the REGULATION (EU) No 1304/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006.

<p>3.3 (...) The EU institutions and Member States should address gender disparities in education by promoting a change of attitude among students, teachers, parents and society at large. Such intervention should start early on in a student's life, before stereotypical perceptions and attitudes set in towards what boys and girls excel in and enjoy doing.</p>	<p>In November 2012, the Commission Communication "Rethinking Education" underlined the need for basic skills to be achieved by all and provided policy guidance to Member States to this end. The Communication also underlined that greater efforts must be made to prioritise science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) related skills, to make this field more attractive to women and to better understand the career pathways followed by STEM graduates. The 2011 Council Recommendation on early school leaving highlights the importance of prevention policies to tackle gender-specific issues.</p>
<p>4.2 There is a need to sustainably change predominant gender inequalities in European societies. Supporting a better work-family balance for men is an important step to achieve a more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men. More equal sharing of parental leave between both parents would reduce the disincentives for employers to hire women of childbearing age.</p>	<p>The EU law (Directive 2010/18/EU) sets out minimum requirements on parental leave and time off from work on grounds of force majeure. It is based on a framework agreement on parental leave concluded by the European Social Partners (BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC).</p> <p>The directive aims to reconcile work and family life and to promote equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market. It sets out minimum requirements on parental leave for male and female workers, and related employment protection. Under the provisions of the directive, male and female workers have individual entitlement to parental leave on the grounds of the birth or adoption of a child, enabling them to take care of the child for at least four months; at least one of the four months cannot be transferred to the other parent under any circumstances, i.e. it is reserved for each parent.</p> <p>A proposal to prolong maternity leave and change the Pregnant Worker Directive 92/85/EEC adopted by the Commission in 2008 is currently pending in negotiations between the two co-legislators.</p>

<p>4.7 (...) EU Member States should ratify without delay the 189th ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, which sets labour standards for domestic workers.</p>	<p>The Decision authorising Member States to ratify the International Labour Organisation Convention concerning fair and decent work for domestic workers (Convention No. 189) was proposed by the Commission in March 2013, and endorsed by the European Parliament. It was adopted by the EU's Council of Ministers in January 2014.</p>
<p>5.1. The EESC urges policymakers to reduce gender inequalities by closing the gender pay gap (which is 16.2% on average) as equal pay will bring benefits not only to women but also to the whole society – according to the European Added Value Assessment, one percentage point decrease in the gender pay gap increases economic growth by 0.1%¹.</p>	<p>The Commission's focus for the coming years will be to monitor the correct application and enforcement of the equal pay provisions of Directive 2006/54/EC² at national level and to support Member States and other stakeholders with the proper enforcement and application of the existing rules.</p> <p>In that vein, the Commission has recently adopted a Report on the application of Directive 2006/54/EC³, which particularly focuses on assessing the application of the provisions on equal pay in practice. The Report is accompanied by a section on gender-neutral job evaluation and classification systems, a summary of equal pay case law of the Court of Justice, examples of the national case-law on equal pay as well as a description of the factors that cause the gender pay gap, the Commission's actions to tackle it and examples of national best practices⁴. The aim of these measures is to make it easier for employees to enforce their rights as well as to help employers, social partners, national authorities and national courts to apply more effectively the national law on equal pay.</p>

¹ European Parliament, Motion for a Resolution ([B7-XXXX/2013](#)), 17.6.2013.

² Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast), *OJ L* 204, 26 July 2006, pp. 23–36.

³ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast), COM(2013) 861 final.

⁴ Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the application of Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, SWD(2013) 512 final.

	<p>The Commission is also planning a non-legislative initiative aiming to promote and facilitate effective application of the principle of equal pay in practice. This initiative envisaged for adoption in 2014 is likely to focus on increasing wage transparency¹.</p> <p>The Advisory Committee on equal opportunities between women and men has also delivered an Opinion on reducing the gender gap in pensions, mentioning the possibility of developing care credits. Moreover, the experts' report commissioned by the European Commission and entitled <i>The Gender Gap in pensions</i> provides a first statistical analysis of the gender gap in pensions.</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130530_pensions_en.pdf</p>
<p>5.3 The EESC believes that both closing the gender pay gap and adding the "family time" – child and elderly care, assisting a family member during a short and/or long illness, etc. – in the pension accumulation systems for both men and women (while ensuring the possibility for employees to obtain a family leave for care and assistance) would reduce the gender gap in pensions.</p>	<p><i>Refer to the suivi fiche for:</i></p> <p><i>Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on 'Links between gender equality, economic growth and employment rates' (Exploratory opinion)</i></p> <p><i>(2009/C 318/04)</i></p>
<p>6.3 The EESC has already proposed the following steps to be taken for the promotion of female entrepreneurship on the EU level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the creation of an office of European Women's Business Ownership in order to establish infrastructure that supports female entrepreneurship; 	<p><i>Refer to the suivi fiche for:</i></p> <p><i>Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on 'Female entrepreneurs — specific policies to increase EU growth and employment' (own-initiative opinion)</i></p> <p><i>(2012/C 299/05)</i></p>

¹ See Commission Work Programme 2014, available at http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp_2014_annex_en.pdf

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Women's Enterprise Director to be appointed within the Commission and the Member States' enterprise ministries to raise awareness about the economic benefits of encouraging more women to start and grow businesses; • the collection of gender-disaggregated data on women's enterprises across Europe. 	<p>The Commission takes active steps to promote female entrepreneurship. There are a number of ongoing activities, in particular: the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, the female entrepreneurship ambassadors and mentors network set up to inspire and advise women entrepreneurs, the European Network to Promote Women's Entrepreneurship (WES) and the E-Platform for women's entrepreneurship.</p> <p>The Commission notes the proposals for creations of new offices. The Commission has begun a study to assess what statistical information is available on women's enterprises across Europe, in the context of developing the E-Platform for women's entrepreneurship.</p> <hr/>
<p>7.2, 7.3 – women in economic decision-making</p>	<p>On 14 November 2012 the Commission adopted a proposal for a directive on increasing the gender balance among the non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges (COM (2013) 614). It is currently negotiated by the Council and the European Parliament, and the Commission will continue to give high priority to facilitating these negotiations.</p>
<p>7.4 (...) The EU institutions and Member States, as well as the social partner organisations, should lead by example and introduce gender equality targets in their political and administrative bodies, especially at the highest levels.</p>	<p>The European Commission has long recognised the need to promote gender balance in decision-making processes and positions and the European Commission is encouraging the process by various means.</p>
<p>9.2 The EESC is particularly concerned with discrimination against women who happen to be disabled, migrant, or belong to an ethnic minority. In this sense, it calls for speedy implementation of the equal treatment directive.</p>	<p>The Commission is constantly monitoring the respective Directives (2000/43/EC, 2000/78/EC and 2006/EC) and does not hesitate to launch infringement procedures in case the Directives are not implemented completely or correctly.</p> <p>A proposal for an Anti-Discrimination Directive based on Article 19 TFEU adopted in 2008 and intending to close existing gaps of protection outside the area of employment and occupation is currently pending in Council.</p>

9.4 (...) it is urgent to tackle the persistent inequalities in the form of under-representation (especially at higher levels), barriers to advancement and low pay (compared to men) within the media sector.

In 2013, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) elaborated a Report on Women and the Media, assessing gender equality in decision-making and containing recommendations for improving gender equality in decision-making in media organisations.

N°18	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement of workers COM(2013) 236 final – EESC 3095/2013 fin – SOC/487 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 DG EMPL - Commissioner ANDOR	
	Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>4.5 The Technical Committee on free movement of workers will also have to adopt new guidelines to improve labour mobility</p>	<p>The Commission will ensure that the Technical Committee on free movement of workers plays in full the role attributed to it by Articles 29 and 30 of Regulation 492/2011 in particular by assisting Member States in the preparation of the transposition and implementation of the Directive. A correct transposition and implementation of the Directive will contribute to labour mobility in the EU.</p>	
<p>4.6 : In order to further reduce the existing barriers to mobility, additional measures should be adopted in order to make easily understandable information on labour and social law available to mobile workers in their respective languages. Workers should also have a specific right to advice. The relevant advice facilities should work closely with the social partners and EURES, ensuring that mobile workers are informed about social and legal conditions in the host countries before they leave their countries of origin.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that EU workers exercising rights of free movement under Article 45 TFEU and their family members should receive advice on their rights. The provision of advice is part of the provision of assistance by the body or bodies foreseen in Article 5 of the proposal. This has been underlined by an amendment agreed by the co-legislators to recital 17.</p> <p>As regards making available information that is easily understood, the Commission's proposal in Article 7(2) emphasises the need for information to be accessible. Such information relates to the enforcement of Article 45 TFEU and Regulation (EC) No 492/2011 at national level and as such, where relevant and in this context, will involve giving information on relevant provisions of national labour law and social law. The need for liaison between different national bodies in the provision of assistance and information is reinforced by Recital 18b inserted after agreement between the co-legislators. As regards</p>	

	<p>information on social security benefits, it should be noted that this liaison on the provision of information at national level links to the obligation to provide easily comprehensible information and user friendly services to all persons concerned as regards social security benefits in Article 2(1) and 3(1) of Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 on the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems</p> <p>On the question of making such information available in the language of the EU workers concerned, the Commission is of the view that it would be an excessive administrative burden to require national authorities to provide information in all official languages of the EU. Nonetheless, the co-legislators have agreed that the directive should require information to be provided in more than one official language of the EU in amendments made to strengthen both Article 7(2) and Recital 22 of the directive.</p> <p>The duties in the directive apply equally to the provision of information to EU workers before they leave their country of origin. In addition, the Commission's proposal to modernise the European Network of Employment Services (EURES) adopted on 17.1.2014 also foresees the provision of support services by EURES to EU workers, including before they leave their country of origin (Article 20).</p>
<p>4.12 The EESC also considers appropriate the text of Article 4: "Member States shall ensure that associations, organisations or other legal entities, which have, in accordance with the criteria laid down by national law, a legitimate interest in ensuring that the provisions of this directive are complied with, may engage, either on behalf of or in support of the worker and members of his/her family, with his/her approval, in any judicial and/or administrative procedure provided for the enforcement of rights under Article 45 of</p>	<p>The Commission notes that the recognition of collective action and the role of trade unions, together with the need to respect national procedures for representation and defence before the courts, was a significant point of discussion between the co-legislators in the context of Article 4 of the proposal. An agreement between the co-legislators was reached to modify and strengthen the wording in this respect. In the Commission's view, the wording agreed strikes an acceptable</p>

<p>the Treaty and Articles 1 to 10 of Regulation (EU) No 492/2011”. This is without prejudice to national procedures for representation and defence before the courts. In this respect, the role granted by national laws to the trade unions is crucial and the directive must take account of this.</p>	<p>compromise between respect for individual rights on the one hand and recognition of the role of collective action on the other.</p>
<p>4.13 The Committee supports Article 5 which requires Member States to designate structures and bodies for the promotion, analysis, supervision and support of equal treatment. The EESC agrees that these practical tasks may, depending on national conditions, be assigned either to newly established bodies or to existing national agencies that have similar objectives regarding equal treatment and non-discrimination. In the framework of the national systems, it should be obligatory for the national social partners to be involved in this decision. In both cases the bodies and agencies should clearly include this new mandate among their responsibilities and receive the human and financial resources necessary to perform the new tasks. The Committee proposes that these agencies and bodies be fully independent of governments. The national and regional-level social partners must be effectively involved in these bodies, within the framework of the national systems.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that where the tasks foreseen in Article 5 of the proposal are allocated to existing national bodies, these tasks should be explicitly integrated into the mandate of the body and that adequate resources should be allocated. The Commission is satisfied that the agreement made by the co-legislators adequately recognises this with the addition of a new Article 5(3a) and a strengthened Recital 18.</p> <p>In terms of involvement of the social partners, Article 6 of the Commission’s proposal underlined the need for Member States to promote dialogue with the social partners and relevant NGOs concerning the promotion of equal treatment of Union workers and the elimination of restrictions on their right of free movement. Moreover, a new Recital 18b agreed by the co-legislators incorporates a requirement for cooperation between the bodies exercising the responsibilities under Article 5(2) and the social partners.</p>
<p>4.14 The directive makes no mention of the role of the labour inspectorates and authorities which, when the directive is transposed, will have to ensure compliance with the equal treatment provisions in employment contracts, collective agreements and social protection systems. The Committee proposes that the directive address this issue.</p>	<p>In the context of the enforcement of Article 45 TFEU and the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 492/2011, the co-legislators agreed to insert a new Recital 18b, which makes reference to cooperation between different bodies at national level in the provision of assistance and information, including, where relevant, the labour inspectorates.</p>

<p>4.15.1 The system of "points of single contact" can be very important for facilitating information and guidance to migrant workers on how to live and work in each Member State. The social partners must be closely involved in this. But they must cooperate with existing information and assistance centres and further education centres at regional, national and European level. The essential role of the EURES portal should be maintained and supported, as it is an important EU instrument focusing both on worker mobility and a better match between skills and labour market needs. Here too the involvement of the social partners must be improved and further guaranteed.</p>	<p>The Commission notes that the co-legislators explicitly agreed that at least one of the body or bodies designated under Article 5 of the directive must act as a contact point vis-à-vis equivalent contact points in other Member States in order to cooperate and share relevant information. The Commission agrees that cross-border cooperation in the provision of support and assistance to EU workers is important and welcomes the contribution that the social partners can make to this. The role of the social partners as regards the provision of information and assistance is underlined by Recital 18b agreed by the co-legislators.</p> <p>The Commission adopted a proposal adopted on 17.1.14 to modernise and strengthen EURES.</p> <p>In the context of this proposal the social partners at European level are invited to participate in the meetings of the European Coordination Group (Article 11 point 3) and they are consulted on the draft work programmes (Article 28 point 5).</p> <p>Moreover, in recital 10 the participation and the role of social partners in the EURES network is specified.</p>
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<p>N°19 Strengthening the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union COM(2013) 690 final – EESC 6069/2013 – SOC/494 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Georgios Dassis (GRII-EL) DG EMPL – Commissioner ANDOR.</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.7 - 1.8 The Committee particularly supports a closer surveillance of employment and social developments within the EMU. It considers the envisaged monitoring framework by the Commission - the key employment and social indicators scoreboard - as a first step towards a more comprehensive social dimension of the EMU.</p> <p>The Committee states that the scoreboard should be based on indicators and thresholds in order to pro-actively detect asymmetric developments and spill-overs into overall economic performance. The Committee believes that the monitoring system should trigger where required a timely and effective adjustment mechanism and policy response.</p>	<p>The Commission believes that the key employment and social indicators scoreboard will ensure an early identification of major employment and social trends that may affect the good functioning of the EMU and the Union as a whole, and that may warrant a closer follow-up within the European Semester.</p> <p>The scoreboard containing five headline indicators (unemployment, youth unemployment and NEET rate, gross household disposable income, poverty risk and income inequality) is already to be used in the present 2014 European Semester.</p> <p>With a view to future European Semesters, further work in refining the instrument and integrating it into the existing instruments of employment and social governance (the Employment Performance Monitor, the Social Protection Performance Monitor and the Joint Assessment Framework) is ongoing in order to realise its full potential.</p>
<p>2.7 – 2.10 The Committee argues that in order to further reduce barriers to labour mobility, further measures should be adopted.</p> <p>The Committee stresses that the social dimension of the EMU needs clear instruments, going from qualitative and quantitative objectives to own financial resources and stabilizer mechanisms matching the fiscal, budgetary and monetary stabilizer mechanisms.</p>	<p>The Commission has, in January, adopted a proposal on a stronger functioning of the European Employment Services (EURES) and is envisaging the adoption of a further mobility policy package in April.</p> <p>The Commission EMU Blueprint and the Communication on the social dimension do consider that in the long-term there could be an EMU-wide fiscal capacity acting notably as a supranational automatic stabilizer. However, the Commission has</p>

	indicated that macroeconomic stabilizers at the EU level - like for example a euro area unemployment insurance scheme - are a long term project, and lack a Treaty basis for the moment.
2.11 The Committee takes a positive view on the Commission's proposals to strengthen the involvement of the social partners in EU economic governance.	The Commission is mindful of social dialogue's crucial contribution to policy effectiveness. Consequently, the Commission's proposals - currently being implemented - aim towards improving existing EU social partners' consultation fora and towards a timely involvement in the European Semester, so that social partners can help shape reforms and contribute to policy responses.

<p>N°20</p>	<p>Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services COM(2013) 430 final – EESC 5027/2013 fin – SOC/490 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Ms Vladimírá Drbalová (GRI-CZ) DG EMPL – Commissioner ANDOR</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.2. Establish a more coherent relationship between PES and regional labour market observatories.</p>	<p>The Commission proposal supports the adoption and implementation of a PES modernization concept. The existing network has already adopted such a concept in their 2020 vision, which emphasizes the conductor role of the PES and the importance of cooperation with other actors on the labour market, including in the area of anticipation of labour market needs. The Network will cooperate in its initiatives with the relevant labour market stakeholders in order to reach its goals.</p>
<p>1.4. Specify in its document the links between the new European PES network and the Employment Committee (EMCO).</p>	<p>The proposal already foresees that the Network will work in close cooperation with EMCO. EMCO can request contributions from the Network, while all the Network contributions to the Council will be channeled through EMCO.</p>
<p>1.5. The Network should use statistical indicators to gauge the performance and efficiency of employment services and active employment policies.</p>	<p>The Network will develop and implement benchmarking systems to assess the PES performance. The initiatives of the Network, including the benchmarking systems, will remain however within the area of competence of the PES – namely, the implementation of active labour market policies and not their definition.</p>
<p>1.7. Define the role of each of the partners in the light of Article 4 on cooperation. The proposal should not reduce the social partners' role to that of associate partners, but should give them a stronger voice in PES modernisation. It should also address the role of civil society on the basis of the partnership principle.</p> <p>1.8. All interested parties should participate in creating the conclusions and</p>	<p>The Commission proposal (art. 4) already foresees that the Network shall cooperate with labour market stakeholders by involving them in relevant activities and meetings of the Network and by exchanging information and data. The added value of the Network contributions resides in maintaining the autonomy of the public employment services in forming their conclusions and recommendations. It is</p>

recommendations of the European PES network.	not appropriate to specify in detail in the legal act the partnerships the Network would engage in, as this will reflect the specificities of the initiatives concerned.
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N°21	European minimum income and poverty indicators (own initiative opinion) EESC 1960/2013 fin - SOC/482 494th Plenary Session of Decembre 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Georgios Dassis (GRIL-EL) Co-rapporteur: Mr Seamus Boland (GRIL-IE) DG EMPL – Commissioner ANDOR
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.12. EESC points out that there was an important discussion at the level of the EESC's bodies and stresses the urgent need to guarantee an adequate minimum income in the European Union under a framework directive, with the aim of effectively combating poverty by facilitating labour market inclusion, as called for by the Committee of the Regions¹ and a range of anti-poverty organisations², and calls on the Commission to undertake concerted action in response to the resolution adopted by the European Parliament in 2011³.</p>	<p>The Commission is currently implementing a European Parliament commissioned Pilot Project of EUR 1 million (2011) to promote the creation of a minimum income network. The Commission is also planning to develop together with the Member States a common methodology on reference budgets as announced in the Social Investment Package⁴. Reference budgets (minimum consumption baskets) based on common methodology can serve as a benchmark for minimum income schemes and thus ensure protection of the most disadvantaged.</p> <p>In its follow-up of 9 February 2011 to Parliament's resolution of 20 October 2010 on the role of minimum income in combating poverty and promoting an inclusive society in Europe⁵, the Commission replied that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is not considering introducing a framework directive on minimum income;

¹ Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on *The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion*, [OJ C 166, 7.6.2011, p. 18](#). See p. 19, point 7.

² ATD Fourth World, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA), the European section of Emmaus, etc.

³ Resolution of the European Parliament of 15 November 2011 on the European Platform against poverty and social exclusion (2011/2052/INI) [OJ C 153E, 31.5.2013, pp. 57-78](#).

⁴ See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions *Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020* /* COM/2013/083 final */

⁵ P7_TA(2010)0375 at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oil/file.jsp?id=5845352> – reference SP(2011)609).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the consultation that took place ahead of the Commission Recommendation (2008/867/EC) on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market clearly showed lack of support on the part of Member States for a framework directive on minimum income [...];
1.13. EESC calls on the Commission to examine funding possibilities for a European minimum income focusing in particular on the prospect of setting up an appropriate European Fund;	At this point, the Commission is not considering setting up a specific European fund in order to ensure a guaranteed minimum income. However, it encourages Member States to make the best use of the ESF in particular, in pursuing the 20% target of this fund for social inclusion, for the implementation of adequate active inclusion strategies, including support to design, implement, or pilot minimum income schemes (without providing direct cash transfers).
1.14. EESC calls for further measures to be taken to ensure that the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy concerning employment, poverty and social exclusion are actually achieved. Such measures should include (1) continuing to pursue horizontal employment targets, (2) setting targets for percentage reductions in the three indicators that make up the composite poverty and social exclusion indicator, (3) setting European and national level sub-targets for groups presenting a higher risk of poverty than the population as a whole, such as children and single-parent families, and for the working poor, (4) a review of how Member States calculate poverty levels and set their national targets, and (5) ensuring that the Member States renew their commitment to make sure that the combined efforts of each of them enable the overall European Union objective to be achieved.	<p>The crisis has had a clear impact, particularly on employment and levels of poverty. The progress towards and use of targets and indicators is regularly a matter for discussion at EU level. It has received particular attention lately in the context of work on the reinforcement of EU economic governance and deepening of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).</p> <p>The Council Decision establishing the "employment guidelines" gives broad policy guidance on how to achieve the employment and poverty targets, and also the education target. In turn, the White Paper on Pensions, the Employment Package, the Youth Employment Package and the Social Investment Package offer even more concrete advice. In the Social Protection and Employment Committee the Commission works together with Member States to develop indicators to monitor in detail progress on the EU headline targets and to discuss measures to help achieving these.</p>

<p>1.15. EESC calls for an effective assessment of the social impact of the measures contained in the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) and National Social Reports (NSRs), as well as of the financial consolidation packages, in order to prevent them from worsening poverty or social exclusion and to secure greater civil society participation in drawing up NRPs and NSRs.</p>	<p>The Commission is fully aware of the obligation under the horizontal social clause to carefully anticipate and assess social impacts in the design and implementation of all its policies and activities. The existing Commission Impact Assessment system takes these requirements into account by putting social impacts on an equal footing with economic and environmental impacts, and social inclusion and protection of particular groups is one of the domains of social impact assessment defined in the Commission's impact assessment guidelines and in the specific guidance for assessing social impacts.</p> <p>Awareness and ownership by all relevant actors – governments, parliaments, regional and local authorities, social partners, civil society and all stakeholders – is a crucial prerequisite for success. In many Member States, the involvement of the different stakeholders in the implementation of the strategy could still be improved. At European level, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions have been particularly active, closely monitoring the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, and act as catalysts for action in the Member States, including at regional and local levels. The Commission has also reinforced its representations in the Member States.</p>
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<p>1.16. EESC calls for closer monitoring of worsening poverty and social exclusion and calls on the Commission to put forward specific social inclusion recommendations for each country whenever needed, as part of its assessment of national reform programmes and national social reports. Such recommendations should also be made for countries covered by special assistance programmes from the European Commission, the European Central Bank or the International Monetary Fund.</p>	<p>The Commission is closely monitoring the social situation and regularly reports on this in quarterly reports (http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1974&furtherNews=yes).</p> <p>The CSRs cover a broad range of issues, but focus on structural reforms. While there are recommendations on public finances, the CSRs, particularly in 2013, focus on reforms of taxation, pension and health systems, and the labour market, all of which can improve competitiveness and address high unemployment. In addition various Member States received social inclusion recommendations (see Europe 2020 website). The programme countries - i.e. Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Cyprus - do not receive recommendations, as they are subject to more intensive monitoring under programmes that aim to restore macro-financial stability, growth and competitiveness.</p>
<p>1.17. EESC stresses that to have a decent job is the best guarantee against poverty and social exclusion and urges the Commission in cooperation with the Member States to implement measures of the Growth and Jobs Pact to boost growth, competitiveness and job creation; and welcomes the intention of Vice President Tajani to set-up an industrial compact to strengthen industry in the EU and its potential to create jobs.</p>	<p>The emphasis put on employment as a means to combat poverty and social exclusion is well in line with the Commission position as set out inter alia in its Annual Growth Survey published in November 2013, as is the call for implementation of measures of the compact for growth and jobs .</p> <p>Vice President Tajani has expressed his ideas about an industrial COMPACT but this is not part of any document adopted by the Commission.</p>

<p>2.9. [...]Countries receiving special assistance from the European Commission, the European Central Bank or the International Monetary Fund are not required to submit specific NRPs¹: they are answerable only under the terms of each memorandum of understanding - these, however, contain no poverty or social exclusion reduction measures.</p>	<p>The memoranda of understanding in place for Countries receiving special assistance from the European Commission entail a wide range of measures aimed at restoring the sustainability of public finances and smart sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs creation. In this regards, the memorandum of understanding on Cyprus and Greece for instance both contain measures aimed at the reduction of poverty and social exclusion, where Cyprus is asked, for example, to reform its social welfare system to better target those in need, while Greece is asked to introduce a minimum income scheme.</p>
<p>2.10 The European Parliament's 2010 resolution² invites Member States to introduce minimum income schemes equivalent to 60% of national median income and asks for stronger EU recommendations, while the 2011 resolution³ urges the Commission to launch a consultation on the possibility of a legislative initiative for a sensible minimum income.</p>	<p>In its follow-up of 9 February 2011 to Parliament's resolution of 20 October 2010 on the role of minimum income in combating poverty and promoting an inclusive society in Europe⁴, the Commission replied that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is not considering introducing a framework directive on minimum income; - the consultation that took place ahead of the Commission Recommendation (2008/867/EC) on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market clearly showed lack of support on the part of Member States for a framework directive on minimum income [...];

¹ European Commission, *Guidance for the National Reform Programmes*, 18 January 2012.

² Resolution of the European Parliament of 20 October 2010 on the role of minimum income in combating poverty and promoting an inclusive society in Europe. 2010/2039(INI), [OJ C 70E, 8.3.2012, pp. 8–18](#).

³ See footnote 3.

⁴ P7_TA(2010)0375 at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oel/file.jsp?id=5845352> – reference SP(2011)609).

<p>4.4 In this regard, the EESC is convinced of the need to re-evaluate priorities and policies, in particular monetary policies, including the Stability and Growth Pact, competition and external trade policies as well as financial and fiscal policies.</p>	<p>The Commission's economic and policy priorities for 2014 are set out in the Annual Growth Survey published November 2013.</p>
<p>1.1. The EESC strongly urges the Commission to act faster into putting into practice the promise it made¹ to support Member States by monitoring reforms towards active inclusion, developing a methodology for reference budgets and monitoring the adequacy of income support, using these budgets once they are developed together with the Member States.</p>	<p>Promoting adequate income is one of the pillars of the Commission Recommendation of 2008 on active inclusion. Adequacy of both first (unemployment benefits) and second (minimum income) tier benefits remains crucial in protecting those in need. Adequate income support combined with inclusive labour market measures and access to enabling services have provided invaluable safety nets that now have to act as springboards back into employment. In its Social Investment Package² adopted on 20 February 2013 and the annexed Staff Working Document on active inclusion, the Commission makes a detailed analysis on how Member States implemented the Recommendation, evidencing best practices across the EU.</p> <p>The Commission is currently implementing a European Parliament commissioned Pilot Project of EUR 1 million (2011) to promote the creation of a minimum income network. The Commission is also planning to develop together with the Member States a common methodology on reference budgets as announced in the Social Investment Package.¹ Reference budgets (minimum consumption baskets) based on common methodology can serve as a benchmark for minimum income schemes and thus ensure protection of the most disadvantaged.</p>

¹ Communication COM(2013) 83 final, point 2.2.

² COM(2013) 83 final : <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1044&newsId=1807&furtherNews=yes>

<p>4.13 The lack of up-to-date figures on income and living conditions is an obstacle to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy.</p>	<p>Data referring to year N are currently published at the end of year N+1. Eurostat has set up an action plan that will improve the situation. Several orientations have been given and some are already implemented. It concerns the early transmission of material deprivation variables (at the end of the reference year), the transmission of full data set 6 months earlier than currently, and some tests of other options (introduction of a variable on current income, model based now casting).</p>
<p>5.6 To complement the social OMC, the EESC supports the introduction of a European directive that would extend minimum income schemes to all Member States, improve the adequacy of existing schemes, taking into account different national contexts, and thus send a strong message regarding the EU social pillar.</p>	<p>In its follow-up of 9 February 2011 to Parliament's resolution of 20 October 2010 on the role of minimum income in combating poverty and promoting an inclusive society in Europe², the Commission replied that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is not considering introducing a framework directive on minimum income; - the consultation that took place ahead of the Commission Recommendation (2008/867/EC) on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market clearly showed lack of support on the part of Member States for a framework directive on minimum income [...];

¹ See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions *Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020* /* COM/2013/083 final */

² P7_TA(2010)0375 at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oel/file.jsp?id=5845352> – reference SP(2011)609).

<p>5.9 The EESC believes that the European Union's efforts to upgrade minimum income protection must consist of helping Member States, particularly those in acute need, to open up markets and implement efficient macro-economic policies, as well as using the available funds in a more efficient and targeted way and examining without delay the possibilities of extending the required funds.</p>	<p>At this point, the Commission is not considering setting up a specific European fund in order to ensure a guaranteed minimum income. However, it encourages Member States to make the best use of the ESF in particular, in pursuing the 20% target of this fund for social inclusion, for the implementation of adequate active inclusion strategies, including support to design, implement, or pilot minimum income schemes (without providing direct cash transfers).</p>
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<p>N°22 Biocidal products COM(2013) 288 final – EESC 4753/2013 – INT/705 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Pedro Narro (GR11-ES) DG ENV – Commissioner POTOČNIK</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.1 The European Commission's proposal helps to improve substantially the practical application from 1 September 2013 of the new Biocidal Products Regulation, clarifies the arrangements for the transitional rules and provides greater legal certainty for operators.</p>	<p>The Commission notes with appreciation the Committee's opinion and the fact that the Committee generally approves the approach taken by the Commission in its proposal.</p>
<p>1.4 The EESC welcomes the changes made to the transitional measures concerning treated articles, and the evaluation of existing active substance and biocidal products. These modifications will prevent the de facto freezing of the placing on the market of many new treated articles, to allow them on the market provided that a complete dossier to assess the active substance(s) contained in these treated articles has been submitted by 1 September 2016¹. These modifications will also allow a better transition to the harmonised authorisation system for existing biocidal products².</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the support of the Committee on this important section of its proposal.</p>
<p>1.5 With regard to the innovative provision on the mandatory sharing of studies on environmental fate and behaviour relating to Annex II of Regulation (EC) No 1451/2007, the EESC calls on the Commission to ensure that the new obligation does not distort competition or have a detrimental impact on companies' innovation capacity.</p>	<p>The provision is aimed at ensuring that all companies placing existing active substances on the market contribute to the costs incurred to generate these studies and to ensure a level playing field between these companies.</p> <p>It is therefore not expected to distort competition or to have a detrimental impact on companies' innovation capacity.</p>

¹ Article 94 of Regulation (EU) No 528/2012.

² Article 89 of Regulation (EU) No 528/2012.

<p>1.6 The EESC is in favour of dealing with other important matters in the context of this legislative modification, such as access to information, the definition of products of the biocidal products family and the obligation to share data.</p>	<p>The Commission considers the scope of this proposal to be to correct clear errors and not to reopen discussions on substantive issues.</p> <p>The Commission would however support clarifications to the text that would be uncontroversial and supported by Council and Parliament.</p>

<p>N°23 European strategy on plastic waste (Green Paper) COM(2013) 123 final – EESC 3036/2014 – NAT/600 492nd Plenary Session of September 2014 Rapporteur: Mr Josef Zbořil (GRI-CZ) DG ENV – Commissioner POTOČNIK</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.4 The EESC highly appreciates the initiatives organised by various interest groups to alleviate this serious problem. The EU might propose an international initiative to organise the clearing up of the worst accumulations of floating plastic waste in the oceans. It should take what steps it can to prevent plastic waste originating in Europe from getting into the sea; and it should consider using development assistance programmes to promote and support more sustainable waste management practices in developing countries, and in particular to reduce the building up of plastic waste from those countries in the oceans.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that more stringent global action will be required to significantly improve the status of marine waters.</p> <p>The Commission is already supporting international projects such as the CleanSea project¹.</p>
<p>1.7 It is vital to improve the accuracy of analyses of material and waste streams that contain plastics, including analysis of how this waste enters the marine environment. The violation of existing rules in terms of mismanaged landfilling should not be tolerated. Plastic waste in the marine environment is unacceptable.</p>	<p>The Commission is closely monitoring the full implementation of environmental legislation in the 28 Member States. Specific implementation promotion measures were taken as of 2012 on the basis of a screening report on waste management performance of Member States. Based on this assessment, a scoreboard was established and recommendations were issued for the 10 worst performing Member States. This process is being pursued, addressing also the dissemination of best practice.</p> <p>The ongoing target review as part of the legislative package 2014 will address the phasing out of landfilling</p>

¹ <http://www.cleansea-project.eu>.

	plastics.
2.3 Whatever the current difficulties, better management of plastic waste also offers new opportunities. Although, as a rule, thermoplastics are fully recyclable, only a small fraction of thermoplastic waste is actually recycled at present.	The Commission agrees that recycling rates for thermoplastics are too low and that higher recycling targets in the Waste Framework Directive and in the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive should be envisaged. As of 2015 separate collection of plastic waste from households will be mandatory in all Member States.
4.1.3 ...The "design for recycling" concept should be used instead of trying to make it (packaging) lighter. The rules on this should be amended but kept as simple as possible.	The Commission agrees that plastic design in packaging and non-packaging is the key element in making rapid progress towards plastic recycling. While there is a clear need for a level playing field through legislation, there is also a need for enhanced voluntary cooperation on the side of producers in the context of extended producer responsibility.
4.3.3 The waste burden posed by short-lived and single-use disposable plastic products can best be addressed through separate collection by plastic type and corresponding sorting. Some countries do it with success, others do not because of the higher costs.	Better collection and sorting systems can contribute to reducing the waste burden posed by plastic bags, but it is also necessary to address the demand side. The Commission has recently approved a legislative proposal requesting Member States to take measures to reduce the consumption of light-weight plastic bags.

N°24	Green Infrastructure (GI) — Enhancing Europe’s Natural Capital COM(2013)249 final – EESC 4135/2013 - NAT/607 Rapporteur: Mr Adalbert Kienle (GRI-DE) 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 DG ENV – Commissioner POTOČNIK	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential		Commission position
<p>3.3 82% of land in the EU is outside the Natura 2000 network. The maintenance and restoration of biodiversity by promoting Green Infrastructure (GI), also outside Natura 2000, are therefore clearly essential both for the viability of the network of protected areas and for the provision of ecosystem services in general. In contrast to Natura 2000, the promotion of GI is not a legal instrument. It cannot therefore replace implementation of Natura 2000 but it adds a further component to it. On the other hand, it is not the objective of the GI initiative to create an additional nature protection network alongside Natura 2000. The EESC argues that the GI initiative should be used in particular to promote cooperative protection of nature and the environment in all Member States.</p>		<p>The Commission shares the view of the Committee that a coherent Natura 2000 network constitutes the backbone of the EU's Green Infrastructure (GI), which is an essential component of further implementation of the Natura 2000 network and the maintenance and restoration of biodiversity both within and outside the sites.</p>
<p>3.4 The EESC stresses the urgency of early and active participation of civil society in GI projects, as provided for in the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. Numerous examples show the extent to which the success of projects depends on approval or rejection by civil society. There should therefore be much greater emphasis on the bottom-up approach and on the building of partnerships, involving local authorities, bodies responsible for infrastructure projects, industry and trade unions, agriculture and forestry, water resources management and coastal protection and environmental NGOs in the European Commission's strategy.</p>		<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee on the importance of early and active participation of civil society for the success of GI projects, and will increase its efforts to promote the building of partnerships for GI in the further implementation of the strategy.</p>

<p>3.5 The EESC notes with regret that the Commission Communication on GI is not yet the European GI strategy announced in the Biodiversity Strategy 2020. The EESC welcomes the actions announced in the communication as steps in the right direction. Experience with the implementation of these measures should be used to develop this into a GI strategy.</p>	<p>The Commission considers that the actions outlined in the GI Communication form the GI strategy. There is no further strategic document planned at this stage. However, experience with the implementation of the package of measures will be assessed in the progress review foreseen for 2017.</p>
<p>3.6 The EESC considers it necessary to go further than the Communication in setting priorities for the implementation of GI. Like the Biodiversity Strategy, the Communication lacks a clear analysis of the reasons why GI has not been adopted on a sufficient scale. The planned technical guidelines and improvements in the state of information and knowledge will not be sufficient to compensate for a lack of political will in individual Member States to implement these concepts. The EESC believes that an effective GI strategy will require stringent monitoring and a critical analysis of the measures in the Member States as well as, where necessary, targeted follow-up measures to support Member States or regions with significant deficits.</p>	<p>The actions spelled out in the Communication are aimed at delivering concrete results from now until 2020. In the context of a dedicated Green Infrastructure and Restoration Working Group, the Commission, together with Member States, will assess possibilities for stringent monitoring and critical analysis of measures to promote GI, which already exist or could be implemented rapidly.</p>
<p>4.1.1 The main responsibility for GI projects lies with the Member States, especially the bodies responsible for regional and local planning. The EU has a mainly supporting role to play by publicising the concept of GI and, as provided for in the Commission communication, providing suitable and accessible sources of information and knowledge. Moreover, the EU financing instruments have a major influence on regional and local planning, and the integration of the GI concept into these financing instruments must therefore be given high priority.</p>	<p>The Commission shares the Committee's view that the responsibility for GI projects lies primarily with the Member States, which should as such include possibilities and requirements for GI funding into their relevant Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes for the ESI Funds (ERFD, CF, EMFF, EARDF, ESF).</p>
<p>4.1.2 In the case of certain GI projects of European importance, the EU must take</p>	<p>The Commission will assess the opportunities for developing an EU TEN-G initiative, developing trans-</p>

<p>on direct responsibility. Such projects are typically based on cross-border landscape features such as mountain ranges, rivers or forests. The Communication cites the European Green Belt initiative as a successful example of this. Particular attention should also be paid to cross-border river valleys as the basis for a European GI. Particularly in the case of rivers like the Danube or the Elbe, which this year once again experienced serious flooding, the GI concept can combine improved flood defences with the maintenance of sensitive waters of importance for pan-European biodiversity, as well as economic and tourism development.</p>	<p>European priority axes for GI in Europe, with significant benefits for the resilience and vitality of Europe's most important GI. It agrees that transnational river basins are a good example of how large GI investments can deliver multiple benefits.</p>
<p>4.1.3 The EESC supports the promotion of a strategically planned European network of GI projects of European importance with a list of cartographically presented projects. This project should, in the framework of a TEN-G initiative, be assigned similar status to European infrastructure initiatives in the areas of transport, energy and telecommunications.</p>	<p>By 2015, the Commission will carry out a study to assess the opportunities for developing an EU TEN-G initiative.</p>
<p>4.2 One major obstacle to the dissemination and promotion of GI is, the EESC believes, to be found in the lack of knowledge of the concept of GI and of the practical advantages, including possible cost advantages. The Commission therefore rightly set itself the goals of raising important stakeholders' awareness of GI, promoting established practices by exchange of information and improving the state of GI knowledge. Social media offer a particularly useful platform in this connection. The EESC considers the use of a clear and easily understandable definition of GI to be an essential precondition for this publicity work. The definition used by the Commission does not fulfil this condition</p>	<p>The Commission has published a brochure in January 2014 to promote GI for the wider public. In 2013, it launched a social media campaign covering GI (on Facebook).</p> <p>The Commission takes note of the Committee's opinion on the definition of GI.</p>
<p>4.3.1 The situation with regard to the availability of natural, semi-natural and</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee in targeting promotion measures on GI to the extent possible.</p>

<p>urban land in the individual Member States and regions is highly diverse. Whilst in some densely populated regions and cities a great deal of land is used for "grey infrastructure", other regions have large areas of land which are left to nature. European GI promotion measures must make a distinction between regions attempting to create new GI and those where the emphasis is, rather, on the maintenance and care of landscapes.</p>	
<p>4.4.2 The EESC welcomes the drawing-up of technical guidelines, with principles and conditions for the integration of GI aspects into regional and cohesion policy, climate and environmental policy, health and consumer policy and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), including the related financing mechanisms. These should be rapidly published so that the Member States, which are already working on the operational plans, can use the guidelines for the 2014-2020 programming period.</p>	<p>The Commission is currently preparing a guidance document on the integration of GI into the CAP, in particular through the implementation of Ecological Focus Areas and rural development policies.</p>
<p>4.4.3 GI depends not only on public but also private investment. The EESC emphasises that sufficient incentives are needed for private investment in GI. The EESC welcomes the proposed establishment of a special EU financing facility jointly with the EIB.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the need for incentives for private investments, and is looking at practical steps to establish a pilot facility with co-financing from the EIB and the EU budget to demonstrate the benefits of investing in natural capital-related projects.</p>
<p>4.5.1 The Communication does recognise the need for integration of GI into regional spatial planning and local planning, but the EESC points to the lack of any specific measures in the action plan. Local spatial, landscape and building planning in particular have a significant impact on the implementation of GI but, under the subsidiarity principle, can only be influenced by the European level to a limited extent.</p>	<p>The Commission is assessing whether guidance on prioritising GI in spatial planning and in urban development could deliver additional benefits, also in light of related commitments set out in the 7th EU Environment Action Programme.</p>
<p>4.7.2 The EESC expects to see further environmental connectivity services</p>	<p>(see 4.4.2) The Commission is currently preparing a guidance document on the integration of GI into</p>

<p>provided in the framework of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and in particular the agricultural environment measures. The EESC has repeatedly pointed to the interest in nature and biotope conservation among a large proportion of farmers and foresters. Many pilot projects have convincingly demonstrated that a partnership-based approach can achieve positive effects. The EESC calls for both extensively and intensively farmed land which is farmed in a resource-efficient way to be included in GI projects. Preference should be given here to voluntary, integrated production measures. Here too it is important to unlock the potential of GI for rural development in social and demographic terms.</p>	<p>the CAP, in particular through the implementation of Ecological Focus Areas and rural development policies.</p>
<p>4.8.2 The deterioration of ecosystems in the EU is above all a consequence of increasing land-take, land fragmentation and more intensive use of land. GI can counter this trend. It should be supported by more intensive European soil protection policy measures, including legislative steps, to reduce land-take.</p>	<p>The Commission is preparing an EU 'no net loss' initiative to ensure there is no net loss of ecosystems and their services and a Communication on land as a resource which intends to foster a more efficient use of land, as well as to limit land take and degradation. GI should be an integral part of these initiatives. Guidelines on best practice to limit, mitigate or compensate soil sealing were published in 2012 (SWD(2012) 101 final/2).</p>
<p>4.8.3 GI acts as a carbon sink, especially by protecting natural soils. The general climate policy objective of developing the European economy into a low-carbon, bio-based economy makes healthy ecosystems even more important. The many uses of GI should be given special attention in the Member States' strategies for adaptation to climate change.</p>	<p>The Commission is currently preparing a guidance document on integrating GI into climate change adaptation policies.</p>

<p>Nº25</p>	<p>Towards more sustainable consumption: industrial product lifetimes and restoring trust through consumer information (own initiative opinion) EESC 1904/2013 fin - CCM/112 493rd Plenary session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Thierry Libaert (GR/FR) Co-rapporteur: Mr Jean-Pierre Haber (FR) DG ENV – Commissioner POTOČNIK DG SANCO – Commissioner MIMICA</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 Planned obsolescence is associated with a form of industrial production that relies on a minimum renewal rate for its products. Although product renewal may be necessary, certain abuses need to be addressed. The European Economic and Social Committee distinguishes between defects built-in deliberately and our accelerated consumption patterns. While we can question marketing practices that promote major innovations which often turn out to be marginal, our opinion advocates curbing the most flagrant cases and improving consumer guarantees. The purpose is to help improve confidence in our European businesses. The recommendations concern technology, business, regulation, and information. They form part of the strategic framework for a better production-distribution-consumption balance that is fair and appropriate.</p>	<p>The Commission supports the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee about planned obsolescence as a practice that artificially accelerates consumption patterns.</p> <p>The consequences of planned obsolescence can have negative economic impacts on consumers, negative consequences on the environment and on fair competition among businesses. Overall, it goes against the objectives of the Europe 2020 objectives of smart, inclusive and sustainable growth.</p>
<p>1.2 The EESC would like to see a total ban on products with built-in defects designed to end the product's life.</p>	<p>Some legislation already partly addresses this issue: under Directive 2005/29/EC on Unfair Commercial Practices, the fact that a trader does not inform the consumer when a product has been designed to have a limited lifetime could be considered as an unfair commercial practice and the trader could be pursued and punished for this reason.</p> <p>Furthermore, any agreement between undertakings regarding the lifespan of their products would have to respect Article 101 of the Treaty, and an</p>

	<p>undertaking in a dominant position would also have to make sure that its behaviour as regards product lifespan did not fall foul of Article 102.</p>
<p>1.3 The EESC recommends that companies make their products easier to repair. This should be done in three ways: technical possibilities (e.g. tablets with batteries that are welded into the device so that they are impossible to repair and thus have to be replaced), and the possibility of replacing components within five years of purchasing the product.</p>	<p>As regards batteries, in accordance with Article 11 of Directive 2006/66/EC on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators, as amended by Directive 2013/56/EU, Member States must ensure ‘that manufacturers design appliances in such a way that waste batteries and accumulators can be readily removed. Where they cannot be readily removed by the end-user, Member States shall ensure that manufacturers design appliances in such a way that waste batteries and accumulators can be readily removed by qualified professionals that are independent of the manufacturer.’</p> <p>Furthermore appliances in which batteries are incorporated should be accompanied by instructions on how those batteries can be safely removed.</p> <p>To give further guidance to Member States on the implementation of the Directive, including as regards the new wording of Article 11 and removability aspects, the Commission will shortly review and update the Frequently Asked Questions document on the Directive.</p>
<p>1.7 The EESC advocates providing information on a product's estimated life expectancy or number of use cycles so that consumers can make informed purchasing decisions. It recommends trying out ways of expressing prices in terms of estimated cost per annum, based on life expectancy, on a voluntary basis, to encourage people to buy long-lasting products. The stated life expectancy would have to be monitored to prevent abuses which would mislead consumers. The consumer could therefore buy products that are more expensive but will hold their value better over time. This would definitely give</p>	<p>Directive 2005/29/EC on Unfair Commercial Practices requires traders to provide in a clear, intelligible and timely manner material information that the consumer needs to take an informed purchase decision, such as the main characteristics of the product. According to the circumstances, the estimated life expectancy could be a part of the main characteristics of the product.</p> <p>The Guidance document on the application of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive is currently being</p>

<p>companies an incentive to produce more durable products. This information would have to focus on relevant information that consumers need and would have to vary depending on the categories of products in order to avoid over-information on certain types of packaging.</p>	<p>reviewed. The Commission plans to adopt a revised Guidance document by the end of 2014.</p> <p>More specifically, Commission Regulation 244/2009 contains functionality requirements for non-directional lamps and the nominal life time shall be visibly displayed to the end user. Similarly, Commission Regulation 1194/2012 contains functionality requirements for directional lamps and LEDs and the nominal life time shall be visibly displayed to the end user.</p>
<p>1.10 Consumers bear the brunt of the cost of shortened product lifecycles and the difficulties associated with insufficient scope for repairing them. Consumers bear the brunt of the policies of manufacturers and of some distributors, who sometimes try to sell warranty extensions after the first year even though two-year warranties are mandatory. It would seem that consumers are often ignorant of their rights. Better communication, mainly through websites and social networks could improve their awareness. A European Planned Obsolescence Observatory would give consumers a clearer overview of practices, enabling them to make informed choices.</p>	<p>Directive 1999/44/EC on certain aspects of the sale of consumer goods and associated guarantees stipulates that the seller shall be liable to the consumer for any lack of conformity which exists at the time the goods were delivered. The seller shall be held liable where the lack of conformity becomes apparent within two years as from delivery of the goods.</p> <p>The Commission will launch an awareness raising campaign in March 2014, covering 8 Member States most in need of and/or most receptive to this campaign. One of the 5 key messages directed at the consumers is expected to be "you have the right to have defective goods repaired or replaced". This refers directly to Article 5 of Directive 1999/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 on certain aspects of the sale of consumer goods and associated guarantee that lays down the right to a 2-year guarantee.</p> <p>The Commission is planning to launch a study on the functioning of legal and commercial guarantees for the EU consumers. It would look into sellers and producers awareness of and compliance with the Directive 1999/44/EC on certain aspects of the sale of consumer goods and associated guarantees, and relevant national</p>

.	legislation. It would also explore to what extent consumers execute their rights stemming from the Directive and what problems they might encounter in this context. The one-year study is expected to start in the first semester of 2014.
1.11 The awareness of consumers is a prerequisite for proper and sustainable use of products. Additionally it is important to properly inform consumers about the minimal product lifetime which is relevant when making decision on product purchase. In this context, voluntary commercial and business initiatives and activities would be welcome.	See comment to point 1.7 above.
1.15 The EESC intends to hold a major European round table in 2014 on this issue. This round table will bring together all the stakeholders: industry, the financial sector, distribution, trade unions, consumer associations, NGOs, standards agencies, experts. The round table will also have to be multi-sectoral in nature to ensure it does not focus on just a few industrial sectors. Finally, it should be flanked by an open forum for EU citizens, as part of an approach that encourages the widest possible public participation; social networks will be one of the channels promoted for this participation.	The Commission welcomes the EESC's intention to organise a multi-sectorial round table and an open forum for EU citizens. These initiatives can offer indeed the opportunity to increase awareness on the issue, by taking into account input and concerns from relevant stakeholders.
<p>1.16 More generally, the EESC advocates stepping up research and development along three strands, which would serve to curb planned obsolescence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product ecodesign, which ensures the sustainability of the resources used from the outset by giving attention to the environmental impact of products and their entire lifecycle. • The circular or closed-loop economy, which takes a "cradle to 	<p>The Ecodesign Directive¹ provides for the setting of generic requirements to improve the environmental aspects of products. Two of the criteria listed for evaluating the potential for improvement are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (f) ease for use and recycling (i) extension of lifetime as expressed through: minimum guaranteed lifetime, minimum time for availability of spare parts, modularity, upgradeability and

¹ Directive 2009/125/EC, OJ L 285, 31.10.2009

<p>cradle" approach, aiming to transform one company's waste into another's resources. The functional economy, aims at developing the idea of product use rather than ownership. In this approach, companies do not sell the product but a function of the product, which is billed according to use. Manufacturers would therefore see a benefit in developing durable products, which are easy to repair and maintain, and a suitable production chain and logistics, which will become central to their economic model.</p>	<p>reparability</p> <p>These criteria could be used to prevent planned obsolescence on a case by case basis in every product-specific ecodesign preparatory study if the improvement potential is found to be significant by the regulator and robust data and measurement standards are in place. There is one precedent of such requirements in the Ecodesign Regulation for vacuum cleaners, which includes durability requirements for the hose and for the operational lifetime of the motor.</p> <p>Product design requirements are also included in the WEEE Directive¹, notably in view of facilitating re-use, dismantling and recovery of WEEE, its components and materials. The extended producer responsibility principle in the WEEE Directive, or extended warranty periods, are other means by which design and production should be encouraged to facilitate the repair, possible upgrading, and reuse of equipment.</p> <p>The European Commission has launched (January 2014) a project on 'The durability of products - Standard assessment for the circular economy under the Eco-innovation action plan', aiming to develop methodologies for measuring the durability of 2 products. These methodologies can be used in relevant EU product policies criteria in order to effectively distinguish more durable products from less durable products for the same product type.</p> <p>Other relevant studies in relation to circular economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Treating Waste as a Resource for EU Industry: Analysis of various waste streams and the
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¹ Directive 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) (recast), OJ L 197, 24.07.2012

	<p>competitiveness of their client industries' that investigated various waste streams as regards their potential for contributing to growth and improving the competitiveness as well as the main driving forces and barriers – including market failures – towards treating waste as a resource for industry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Analysis of certain waste streams and the potential of Industrial Symbiosis to promote waste as a resource for EU Industry' that is exploring the opportunities for expanding the measurement of circular economy, the assessment of the economic impacts of industrial symbiosis, and to present industrial symbiosis practices in the EU and internationally. <p>The Commission will present in 2014 a legislative initiative on resource efficiency and waste. The initiative will build on progress in the implementation of the Roadmap to Resource Efficient Europe and set out the key building blocks needed to unlock EU economic potential to be more productive whilst using fewer resources and advancing towards a circular economy. It will include conclusions drawn from the development of suitable indicators and targets, and the review of the key targets in EU waste legislation (in line with the review clauses in the Waste Framework Directive, the Landfill Directive and the Packaging Directive) and carry out an ex-post evaluation of waste stream directives, including an assessment of options to enhance coherence between them.</p>
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<p>1.17 The EESC is sending out this message at EU level to express its hope that Europe will enter a new phase of economic transition by transforming itself from a wasteful society into a sustainable one, where growth is geared to consumer needs, with a people-oriented approach, and is never an end in itself.</p>	<p>The Commission is committed to achieve a more sustainable society. The Commission's flagship initiative for a resource-efficient Europe under the Europe 2020 strategy supports the shift towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon economy to achieve sustainable growth.</p> <p>The European Consumer Agenda also underlines that consumers should be empowered, assisted and encouraged to make sustainable choices in marketplace.</p>
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N°26	Shipments of waste COM(2013) 516 final – - EESC 6241/2013 – NAT/618 Rapporteur: Mr Stéphane Buffetaut (GRI-FR) 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 DG ENV – Commissioner POTOČNIK
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission Position
<p>4.1 The situation described by the Commission, the scale of illegal shipments and disparities in checks and the implementation of the legislation, justify the intention to take steps to tackle these illegal shipments and reduce the ensuing health and environmental risks, and to deal with the unfavourable situation facing businesses which apply the rules correctly.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the comment. The legislative proposal aims to help ensure more uniform implementation of the EU Waste Shipment Regulation (1013/2006/EC) and a level playing-field for law-abiding businesses. This will be achieved through the establishment by Member States of regular and consistent planning of waste shipment inspections throughout the EU, with a focus on problematic and high-risk waste streams. In addition, the authorities involved in inspections will be provided with increased possibilities to require evidence when checking the legality of waste shipments.</p>
<p>4.2 However, it is essential that the new legislation does not take the form of purely administrative measures in order to comply with newly issued rules, without taking any practical steps, something which will require the use of new financial resources – a sensitive exercise for impecunious Member States confronted with the need to rectify public spending</p>	<p>Adequate planning of waste shipment inspections is necessary to establish the capacity needed for inspections and determine objectives, priorities and other key elements of the inspections. These are not merely administrative measures, but crucial to effectively prevent illegal waste shipments. Through harmonised inspection planning, the proposal aims to ensure a level playing field which is currently lacking.</p> <p>The proposal aims to strike a balance between ensuring effective inspections of waste shipments and avoiding administrative burden. As a result of the inspection planning, Member States will be able to focus on and invest resources to target hazardous and high-risk waste streams. Risk assessments shall be carried out by Member States, covering specific waste streams and sources of illegal shipments, and considering</p>

	intelligence-based data. Every year priorities for inspections shall be selected based on these risk assessments and incorporated in the inspection plans.
4.3 The planned procedures must therefore be simple in order to encourage those Member States, which do not do so correctly today, to introduce or even improve the necessary checks. The fear of being brought before the Court of Justice for failing to meet treaty obligations could possibly act as an incentive for Member States which are faltering, as could measures taken by ordinary people with a legitimate interest to act.	The proposal ensures that the necessary checks are carried out and improves current checks on waste shipments by enabling national inspectors to request the documents and evidence that are necessary to verify compliance with the EU Waste Shipment Regulation. Such provisions are already part of Directive 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment and have proven to be a very effective means for Member States to prevent illegal waste shipments. Many other waste streams than WEEE, such as end-of-life vehicles, plastics, paper, household waste and various types of hazardous waste, are frequently subject to illegal waste shipments.

<p>N°27</p>	<p>Enhancing civil society partnerships to deliver the Baltic Sea Region Strategy more effectively in 2014-2020 (exploratory opinion for the Lithuanian presidency) EESC 4038/2013 – ECO/349 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 Rapporteur: Michael Smyth (GR11-UK) DG REGIO– Commissioner HAHN</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 This opinion sets out an argument that an effective way of strengthening civil society partnerships in delivering the Baltic Sea Region Strategy is through the implementation of the partnership principle as set out in the Commission's code of conduct partnership.</p>	<p>The Commission is of the opinion that there are several ways to strengthen the involvement of civil society in implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and notes that the role of civil society has become more prominent in the revised Action Plan of the EUSBSR. Some NGOs like the Baltic Development Forum and the Baltic Sea NGOs Network act as co-ordinators of horizontal actions together with other actors.</p> <p>Furthermore, the EUSBSR includes the horizontal action "Involve", seeking to strengthen multi-level governance of the Strategy across all Priority Areas. Representatives of civil society are also directly involved in the implementation of flagship projects of the EUSBSR, and are also involved in the consultation process concerning the Strategy.</p> <p>Finally, through the application of the partnership principle for the European Structural and Investment Funds, the strengthening of civil society partnerships in the region is ensured also at the operational level through the operational and cooperation programmes.</p> <p>Securing macro-regional ownership and leadership to the Strategy is key to attaining its objectives.</p>
	<p>The Commission is currently following the Council conclusions of October 2013 on the report on the added value</p>

	of macro-regional strategies, considering how to strengthen the governance of the Strategies, including the role of civil society in their implementation.
1.6. The Baltic could also emulate the Danube Strategy by establishing a Baltic Civil Society Forum. The EESC played a prominent role in the formation of the Danube Civil Society Forum and stand ready to play a similar coordinating role in the Baltic.	The Commission takes note of the suggestion in its considerations of possible recommendations for the strengthening of the ownership of the EUSBSR.

N°28	Financial management and decommitment rules for Member States facing serious difficulties COM(2013)301 final - EESC 5122/2013 fin -2013/0156 COD – ECO/352 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 Rapporteur Mr Viliam Páleník (GR11-SK) DG REGIO – Commissioner HAHN
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
1.3, 2.1, 2.3	The Commission welcomes the EESC's support for this proposal which contributed to a rapid adoption of the proposal in December 2013.

<p>N°29 The added value of macro-regional strategies COM (2013) 468 final - EESC 5146/2013 – ECO/351 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Etele Baráth (GR11-HU) Co-rapporteur: Stefano Mallia (GR1-MT) DG REGIO – Commissioner HAHN</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>2.9 The macro-regional strategy has to be a priority in the 2014-2020 European programming period, integrating the "new" model of territorial cooperation within the partnership agreement and operational programmes (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, EMFF) with a specific focus on the concept of "Community Led Macro-regional Development", which has the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – it focuses on specific areas; – it is community-led, by macro-regional action groups composed of representatives of public and private socio-economic interests; – it is carried out the basis of integrated and multi-sectoral area-based local development strategies; – it is designed with consideration for macro-regional needs and potential. 	<p>The Commission agrees with the EESC regarding the importance to take into account the objectives of macro-regional strategies in the programming period 2014-2020. The Commission DG Regional and Urban Policy screens selectively Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes for 2014-2020 from the macro-regional approach perspective, to make sure that the objectives of macro-regional strategies are embedded into the Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). However, the embedding of the strategies should not be limited only to the ESIF programmes. The objectives of the strategies should be embedded in all relevant EU (such as Horizon 2020, COSME etc.), national, regional and local policy frameworks. The Commission is examining how new approaches, including the community-led local development and integrated territorial investment could be further exploited in the macro-regional context. It takes note of the innovative suggestion made by the EESC, and the need to continue to work closely with social partners.</p>
<p>3.5 The EESC strongly emphasises the great importance of the partnership agreements currently being drawn up and negotiated. These must take account of the macro-regional context. At the same time, appropriate coordination with the social partners is needed, as well as coordination - cross-cutting, between countries and regions - of proposals and projects in the individual operational programmes, and the active involvement of social, economic and civil society stakeholders in them.</p>	
<p>5.3 The principle of including macro-regional objectives in individual partnership</p>	

agreements and operational programmes is a sound one.	
5.4 The European Commission should support the use of best practices for existing programming instruments, including in the case of macro-regions which are still under development or discussion.	The Commission aims to promote the exchange of good practices and experience between existing macro-regional strategies and upcoming ones. This is done, for example, through the High-Level Group of senior officials from the 28 EU Member States and non-EU countries covered by the strategies which focuses on the macro-regional approach, as well as by working closely with the INTERACT programme.
5.6 The EESC feels that realistic measures and indicators must be introduced in order to monitor progress; however, active involvement of the Commission and other European institutions is essential, particularly in order to develop an indicator of added value, given its multilevel nature.	The Commission agrees with the position of the EESC that measures and indicators should be realistic. The issue of governance is also being addressed in a proposed Communication on this subject to be adopted by the Commission before summer 2014.
5.8 The EESC feels that the implementation of the strategies' governance systems should be speeded up and extended while preserving their specific nature.	Responding to the General Affairs Council request (October 2013), to 'facilitate the discussions on improving the governance of the macro-regional strategies and to report to the Council by the end of 2014, including streamlining the reporting, reviewing and follow-up' the Commission will publish a Communication on the governance of macro-regional strategies by mid-2014. It will provide concrete suggestions on how to improve the governance of the strategies and therefore speed up their implementation.
5.14 The EESC wholeheartedly endorses the report's comments that not all options have been explored. However, we cannot agree with the comment that further developments and intensified action are possible "without involvement of the Commission, or based more exclusively on a transnational programme".	The Commission notes that regional cooperation has been developed in the past without its involvement. The specific macro-regional strategies now developed may not match all situations or requirements.
5.15 The EESC is calling on the Commission to continue to take a central role in the development and implementation of macro-regional	The Commission will continue to play a key role in implementing the existing and upcoming strategies. However, its support must be better balanced by

<p>strategies. The EESC is also calling on the Council to give the Commission the necessary tools and resources to be able to carry out this role in a proper fashion.</p>	<p>effective leadership within the regions concerned, and therefore the leadership and ownership of those regions should be further strengthened. Moreover, sufficient human resources should be ensured to deliver the objectives of the strategies (both at EU and Member States level).</p>
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<p>N°30</p>	<p>European Union Solidarity Fund COM(2013) 522 final - EESC 6414/2013 fin - ECO/355 ; 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 Rapporteur Dimitris Dimitriadis (GRI- EL) DG REGIO –Commissioner HAHN</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>5.10. The EESC believes that EUSF financing should be included in the EU's general budget in order to reduce the delays caused by the slow and bureaucratic procedures involving the Council, Parliament and Commission.</p>	<p>The annual allocation of the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) and the way in which appropriations are raised are not part of the EUSF Regulation. They are decided by the European Parliament and the Council in the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework. The maximal annual allocation has been fixed for the 2014-2020 period at EUR 500 mio in 2011 prices, plus any remainders of the preceding year, to be raised over and above the normal EU budget by decision of the budget authority.</p> <p>The EUSF is limited to natural disasters. Nuclear accidents, pandemics etc. fall outside its scope.</p>
<p>5.2. The EESC considers that the amounts foreseen are inadequate in the event of mass disasters that could affect large parts of the EU such as, for example, nuclear accidents, pandemics, etc., and urges the Commission to pay special attention to this aspect</p>	
<p>5.10. There should also be a mechanism to supplement funding in the event of an exceptionally large disaster requiring increased assistance</p>	<p>Art. 10 of the EUSF Regulation provides that in exceptional cases where the annual allocation of the Fund is considered insufficient to meet the demand the Commission may propose to use the allocation of the following year.</p>
<p>5.5. The EESC endorses the advance payments procedure, and the application of the "slowly unfolding damage" clause, e.g. for drought.</p>	<p>The Commission considers the proposed introduction of advance payments essential to improve the responsiveness of the Fund and for the credibility of the EU. While this view is shared by the European Parliament, the Council opposes advances. The Commission defends the introduction of advances considering that they</p>

	constitute one of the key elements of its proposal.
5.5 It also considers that reforestation should be included as part of recovery projects following natural disasters	Payments from the EUSF are limited to non-insurable emergency operations of the public authorities. To the extent that forest damage is private the EUSF may not intervene. Where public forests fulfil a primary role as “protective infrastructure” e.g. against soil erosion, their short term reestablishment could be considered.
5.11. The EESC agrees with the European Parliament that the threshold of 1.5% of regional GDP at NUTS2 level is too high, excluding many serious disasters from the Fund, leading to public disillusionment. It therefore proposes reducing it to 1% so that it primarily covers countries with low population figures.	The purpose of the EUSF is to respond to major natural disasters which Member States find difficult to face with their own means alone. Smaller, so-called regional disasters should be eligible only exceptionally when they reach a certain relatively high threshold. Against this background and in order to safeguard the “budget neutrality” of its proposal the Commission proposed 1.5% of NUTS 2 GDP as threshold. This threshold would ensure maintaining the current level of mobilisations of the Fund. Lowering the threshold to 1% would lead to an increased number of applications and raise the expected number of spending in the future.

<p>N°31</p>	<p>Towards an EU Macro-Regional Strategy to develop economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Mediterranean (own initiative opinion) EESC 3017/2013 fin – ECO/342 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Stefano Mallia (GRI-MT) Co-Rapporteur: Mr Stefano Palmieri (GRII-IT) DG REGIO – Commissioner HAHN</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 The EESC believes that the Mediterranean Region needs a Macro-Regional Strategy (EU MMRS) to help the regions face challenges that cannot be satisfactorily resolved by single regions or countries through the usual means.</p>	<p>Any new macro-regional Strategy should be requested by the European Council, bearing in mind the criteria established in the 2013 Report and the Council Conclusions on the added-value of macro-regional strategies, i.e. there should be evident common challenges and opportunities, agreed geographical identity, readiness to translate political commitment into administrative support, and a clear justification for its added value at EU and macro-regional level.</p> <p>As pointed out in the abovementioned Report, the current macro-regional strategies may well not have exhausted all possible paradigms. It is easy to envisage regional cooperation inspired by this model, but without involvement of the Commission, or based more exclusively on a transnational programme. Those seeking to intensify cooperation and integration should look for the best fit for their situation.</p> <p>A sea-basin approach could also be explored, insofar as it responds to similar aspirations as a macro-regional strategy while focusing on marine and maritime issues.</p> <p>The Commission will welcome in any event a reinforced strategic approach</p>

	<p>for the Mediterranean area, based on a better use of the existing sources, including the numerous 2014-2020 territorial cooperation programmes operating in the Mediterranean area: MED Programme (ERDF, IPA), ENI-CBC-MED (ENI), Adriatic & Ionian (ERDF, IPA), Balkan-Mediterranean (ERDF, IPA), along with all the relevant Cross-border Cooperation programmes funded by ERDF and/or IPA, and taking into account the synergies with other existing frameworks such as the Union for the Mediterranean.</p>
<p>1.3 In view of the vastness of the area, the EESC proposes that the EU MMRS should be subdivided into three sub macro-regions identified on a geographical basis (regional proximity) and rendered operational through action plans based on a functional approach to address common challenges.</p>	<p>Based on the recommendations of the Report and the Council Conclusions on the added value of macro-regional strategies, the Council has mandated the Commission to prepare an EU Strategy for the Adriatic & Ionian Region (by end 2014). Without prejudging any further development, it is worth noting that this Strategy is covering the territory of one of the sub macro-regions identified in the EESC Opinion.</p>
<p>1.4 The EESC favours an EU MMRS based on the "three yeses rule" (more complementary funding, more institutional coordination and more new projects) which strengthens synergies between different EU policies and coordinates the efforts of a wide range of stakeholders within the EU Mediterranean Coastal Regions (EU MCRs).</p>	<p>While keeping the "three no's" (no new structures, no new legislation, no new funds), the Commission agrees with the "three yeses rule" which is already being applied to the existing macro-regional strategies.</p>
<p>1.5 The EESC endorses the development of an EU MMRS which incorporates all the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy</p>	<p>The Europe 2020 Strategy is a key part of the strategic approach for the programming of the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds for 2014-2020, which also takes into account, when relevant, the macro-regional strategies in the countries concerned.</p>

<p>1.7 The EESC draws attention to the considerable importance of supporting the <i>Blue Growth</i> strategy, which has the potential of enhancing competitiveness in the Mediterranean area, facilitating the implementation of greener policies and the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors.</p>	<p>This approach is already fully integrated in the programming of all ESI Funds for 2014-2020.</p>
<p>1.8 The EESC welcomes the European Commission's proposal for the Mediterranean in the context of the Integrated Maritime Policy. However, it wishes to propose a more ambitious approach consisting of a macro-regional strategy [...].</p>	<p>See the considerations for point 1.1</p>
<p>1.9 The EESC notes that the governance structure of the EU MMRS should be based on a multi-level approach involving regional, national and European institutions and should not be seen as an additional activity or effort of the said institutions.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with this approach which is already being applied to the existing macro-regional strategies.</p>
<p>1.10 The EESC believes that the fundamental principle of the implementation of the EU MMRS is the integrated approach which should firstly be defined by setting up round tables and subsequently strengthened by the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Macro-Regional Forum to promote the full involvement of all institutional actors and civil society (stakeholders) and to combine existing policies with functional objectives in order to shape a common and shared policy.</p>	<p>A bottom-up approach, including the consultation of a whole range of stakeholders, is a substantial element of the macro-regional approach, which has already been applied to the existing macro-regional strategies.</p>

N°32	Maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management COM(2013) 133 final - EESC 3176/2013 fin – NAT/601 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Stephane Buffetaut (GRI-FR) DG MARE – Commissioner DAMANAKI
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
General comments	The Commission takes due note of the opinion of the EESC. However, the Commission reserves its position on all issues raised by the EESC during the course of the negotiations between the co-legislators.

N°33	Fiscal consolidation/European Fisheries Fund COM(2013) 428 final - EESC 5262/2013 fin – NAT/613 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Gabriel Sarro Iparraguirre (GR11-ES) DG MARE – Commissioner DAMANAKI
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
General comments	The Commission notes with appreciation the Committee's opinion and the fact that the Committee generally approves the approach taken by the Commission in its proposal.

N°34	Action Plan for a Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic area - Delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth COM(2013) 279 final – EESC 3961/2013 fin – NAT/614 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 Rapporteur: Luis Miguel Pariza Castaños (GRII-ES) DG MARE – Commissioner DAMANAKI
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
Conclusions and recommendations	
<p>1.1. The EESC supports the Action Plan for a Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic area, which sets out priorities for research and investment in the region and provides considerable European added value in terms of boosting blue growth under the Europe 2020 strategy. Cooperation will develop within this strategic framework between authorities and social and economic operators in the Atlantic regions of the five Member States concerned: Ireland, the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Portugal.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the Committee's support to the Action Plan as an instrument to boost the blue economy and that contributes to the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.</p>
<p>1.2. However, the Committee regrets to note that the scope of the Action Plan is limited to the Atlantic basin and suggests that it should be only the first step in establishing a macro-regional strategy that explicitly includes a territorial pillar and is linked to the objectives of cohesion policy. The approach should be more ambitious, providing for the conversion of the strategy into a macro-regional strategy before 2017, when the mid-term review is scheduled, and taking the experience of the Baltic Sea and Danube regions into account.</p>	<p>The Commission believes that the adoption of the Action Plan is a big step forward in terms of boosting the cooperation and blue economy in the Atlantic Region.</p> <p>The adoption of the Action Plan does not prejudice the future development of a macro-regional strategy. While the adoption of the Action Plan could be a first step towards macro-regional strategy, the benefits of such a development would need to be assessed on its own merits and require a specific mandate by the Council.</p>
<p>1.3. The Committee is sorry that the Action</p>	<p>The Leadership Group agreed on a new</p>

<p>Plan does not provide for an adequate system of governance, envisaging only a weak implementation mechanism. In its earlier opinion on the subject¹, the EESC already proposed a multilevel governance system that would guarantee the involvement of all relevant players based on a bottom-up approach that would allow local and regional authorities, the private sector and civil society to spur activities and contribute their know-how directly on the ground.</p>	<p>governance model in December 2013. The governance model guarantees the involvement of the EU Institutions, five Atlantic Member States, regions, private sector and civil society. Regional representation in the Atlantic Strategy Group will be an internal decision for each Member State.</p>
<p>1.4. It is unfortunate, in the EESC's view, that the Commission has wound up the activities of the Atlantic Forum with the adoption of the Action Plan. The Committee proposes that the activities of the Atlantic Forum be continued until 2020, with regular meetings of interested parties to stimulate activities and programmes under the strategy, evaluate their implementation and mobilise all policy-makers and economic and social players in the Atlantic region.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee that Atlantic Forum has been successful in developing the Atlantic Action Plan and has provided useful lessons in how dialogue and coordination can be organised. However, the Atlantic strategy indicated that the Atlantic Forum would be disbanded in 2013.</p> <p>An assistance mechanism for the implementation of the Action Plan has been envisaged to start up in 2014. The assistance mechanism will act as the "one-stop-shop" for stakeholders interested in the Action Plan. It will also be charged with organising workshops in Member States and an Atlantic Stakeholder Conference, gathering all those involved in the implementation of the Action Plan.</p> <p>In addition, to maintain momentum in the delivery of the Action Plan, the Commission will support the organisation of four workshops during the first semester of 2014.</p>
<p>1.5. It is essential to maintain a firm political commitment on the part of the EU institutions and the Member States, and</p>	<p>In December 2013, the Leadership Group agreed on the future governance model for the implementation phase of</p>

¹ [OJ C 229, 31.7.2012, p. 24.](#)

<p>ensure effective participation of all relevant parties: local and regional authorities, social and economic players, and civil society. With the Leadership Group and the Steering Group during the Atlantic Forum it was possible to involve the EU institutions, the Member States, the regions and civil society. The Commission must have the necessary human and material resources.</p>	<p>the Atlantic Action Plan, consisting mainly of the following elements: (1) an Atlantic Strategy Group (ASG) that replaces the former Leadership Group and the Steering Group; (2) an Atlantic Stakeholder Platform (ASP) and (3) an assistance mechanism for the implementation of the Atlantic Action Plan. This governance model guarantees the involvement of the EU Institutions, Member States, regions, civil society, academia and the private sector. The Commission will keep on maintaining a high profile role in support of the ASG and the Action Plan.</p> <p>Besides, the Atlantic Stakeholder Platform will be set up as the appropriate forum for interested parties to share regular dialogues, feedback and exchanges of views. The existing Atlantic networks are encouraged to take an active part in it.</p>
<p>General comments on the Action Plan: the Atlantic strategy as a sea-basin strategy</p>	
<p>4.8. However, while supporting the Commission's proposal in so far as it identifies the marine environment research initiatives as priorities, the EESC believes that it should also forefront measures designed to improve the capacity and opportunities of industrial sectors that create jobs and economic growth directly.</p>	<p>The Commission believes that the Action Plan has also been designed to improve opportunities of industrial sectors. In fact, the Action Plan recognises priority actions that improve the capacity and opportunities for both emerging and traditional maritime industries including the promotion of entrepreneurship, closer links between industry and research and the enhancement of skills in traditional and emerging industries in the Atlantic.</p>
<p>4.10. In the Committee's view, it is small companies and microbusinesses that drive economic activity in remote regions, and it is essential that such businesses should also be involved in the activities of the Atlantic</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee that the involvement of SMEs should be encouraged for a successful implementation of the Action Plan. The future Atlantic Stakeholders'</p>

strategy.	Platform will serve as a forum for stakeholders, including SMEs, to share regular dialogues, feedback and exchanges of views. Furthermore, the Assistance Mechanism will facilitate the involvement of all interested parties by providing information on the funding channels and creating networks.
4.11. The EESC suggests that the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the Action Plan be better balanced. In its opinion on Blue Growth the Committee noted the importance of the human factor in the maritime economy and indicated that working conditions are often difficult.	The Commission agrees with the Committee on the importance of the human factor and on the need to strike the necessary balance between the three pillars of sustainable development. It should be noted that the four priorities of the Atlantic Action Plan address these three dimensions.
4.12. The Action Plan should include references to improving working conditions and social standards for the maritime professions, and to the recognition and accreditation of professional qualifications. Training and reskilling should be promoted among coastal communities to make it easier for workers to adapt both to traditional economic activities and to new professions. The image and quality of the maritime professions must be improved so that they become more attractive to young people.	The Commission is fully aware of the issues raised by the Committee and it should be noted that the Atlantic Action Plan addresses all of them over the four priorities.
4.13. The development of new economic activities must be compatible with protecting the marine environment. The Action Plan must boost research programmes in this area. Research focused on avoiding harm to the marine environment will reduce the uncertainty of these activities, e.g. marine energy, modernisation of ports, aquaculture and maritime tourism. Such research will speed up the process of obtaining authorisations.	<p>The Commission welcomes the Committee's views on this issue. The protection of marine waters and the sustainable management of marine resources have been identified as a specific objective in the Action Plan, under 'Priority 2: Protect, secure, and develop the potential of the Atlantic marine and coastal environment.</p> <p>Besides, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) – the environmental pillar of the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) – provides a</p>

	<p>mechanism to ensure that offshore and coastal economic activities are sustainable.</p> <p>The EU's Framework Programme for research has funded a number of projects in this area. The Horizon 2020 research programme from 2014 can investigate any remaining issues.</p>
4.14. The EESC believes that a sustainable and socially cohesive regional development model should preserve the Atlantic maritime culture, which is closely associated with the traditional way of life of coastal communities and is a very important aspect of cultural heritage and identity.	One of the priorities of the Action Plan for a Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic is targeted to create a socially inclusive and sustainable model of regional development by improving understanding of social challenges in the region and preserving and promoting the Atlantic cultural heritage.
4.16. The EESC welcomes the inclusion in the strategy of cooperation with the other Atlantic nations. It is crucial, in the Committee's view, to initiate cooperation agreements in the sphere of research, not just with the United States and Canada, but also with the countries of South America and Africa.	The Commission agrees with the Committee that maritime economies and marine ecosystems transcend national borders and therefore cooperation is not limited to the EU. The Galway Statement on Atlantic Cooperation signed on 24 May 2013 is a first step towards a more global approach of the internationalization of the Atlantic Strategy. The Commission is interested in developing cooperation with other countries in South America and Africa.
7. Comments on Funding	The Commission has been working closely with Member States and regions in getting maritime priorities and the Atlantic Strategy reflected in Partnership Agreements, including the section on European Territorial Cooperation, and will continue to do so for the negotiations of Operational Programmes. The Commission has also been working closely with other services, such as DG Research and Innovation or DG Environment, to ensure that the Action Plan would be

	<p>considered in their respective work programmes. The Commission has had several meetings with representatives of the European Investment Bank during 2013. The European Investment Bank has shown willingness to support both public and private sector investments for the implementation of the Action Plan.</p>
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<p>N°35</p>	<p>Strategic Guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture COM(2013) 229 final - EESC 4359/2013 fin – NAT/605 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: José María Espuny Moyano (GRI – ES) DG MARE– Commissioner DAMANAKI</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The EESC overall welcomes the Commission Communication. However, the EESC is concerned about inadequate implementation of labelling rules for aquatic products, particularly non-pre-packaged products, with information for consumers at the point of sale, from the point of view not just of fraud but also of unfair competition vis-à-vis European producers. The Committee calls on the Commission and the Member States to include in their strategic plans effective measures to rectify this persistent shortcoming.</p>	<p>The strategic guidelines are not legally binding and therefore do not address the implementation of labelling rules. Rules detailing the mandatory labelling of all aquatic products on the EU market are defined in Articles 35 – 39 of Regulation 1379/2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products which was adopted on 11 December 2013.</p>
<p>The EESC strongly recommends stepping up import checks on aquatic products entering the European Union in order to ensure that they are completely traceable and in compliance with standards.</p>	<p>Imported products are subject to equivalent strict rules on health and consumer protection (including hygiene and traceability) as products produced within the EU. Existing sanitary checks of EU and imported products ensure a high level of food safety. Nevertheless, the rules of the World Trade Organization prohibit the imposition of binding standards by the EU on producers in third countries in aspects other than the safety and traceability of the imported product.</p>
<p>The EESC stresses the importance of recognising the European nature of the Aquaculture Advisory Council, that it is set up and starts operating without delay. To this end, it believes that the bodies participating in it must be European, or at least supranational, in scale. This should be</p>	<p>The Aquaculture Advisory Council is intended to function as a platform representing all stakeholders' interests in EU aquaculture. As a stakeholders body, it is its responsibility to ensure that the Advisory Council is representative of all interests. The</p>

<p>reflected in its structure and financing.</p>	<p>Commission will assess this carefully at the end of the ongoing setting up process of the Aquaculture Advisory Council.</p>
<p>The EESC considers the Commission's proposal for re-establishing conditions of fair competition between EU operators and those of third countries to be wholly inadequate. Relying solely on measures to certify the safety and sustainability of EU aquaculture products and inform the general public of this standard is clearly an unsatisfactory way of restoring a level playing-field: public authorities should also demand the same safety guarantees of imports as are required of European products, with full "sea-to-table" traceability</p>	<p>Equivalent safety, hygiene, and traceability standards are demanded of imported produce as produce originating in the EU. Traceability is addressed under Regulation 1379/2013 (Articles 35-39) which state that the provenance and other mandatory information about the product must accompany the product at all stages in the production cycle and must eventually be indicated on the label. Moreover traceability requirements are compulsory under the food law (Regulation 178/2002). The Commission encourages producers in third countries to apply high standards in other production aspects such as environmental protection, as required of EU producers; however the rules of the World Trade Organization prohibit the imposition of binding standards in such aspects on third countries, which may account for a difference in production costs.</p>
<p>The EESC feels that inland aquaculture is not given enough attention in the Commission's communication, particularly in relation to spatial plans.</p>	<p>The Commission places a high importance on the inland aquaculture sector which accounts for 22% of EU aquaculture production. Nevertheless, a greater emphasis is placed on marine spatial planning in the Strategic Guidelines as its application lags significantly behind that of inland spatial planning. Many Member States have detailed land registries and cadastres to hand for inland developments which are frequently privately owned, in contrast to State owned coastal waters. The Commission wishes to encourage the use of spatial planning in the marine environment to</p>

	<p>keep pace with the inland environment. Nevertheless, achieving a level playing field in the spatial planning of inland aquaculture is of course a priority for the Commission.</p>
<p>The Committee suggests that the Commission expand the scope of the best practice exchange seminar scheduled for summer 2014 to include the implementation of coordinated river planning (in addition to maritime planning).</p>	<p>The Commission will reflect on EESC's suggestion.</p>

<p>Nº36</p>	<p>Multiannual recovery plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean COM(2013) 250 final - EESC 2013/133 (COD) - NAT/608 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur Mr Sarró Iparraguirre (GR11-ES) DG MARE – Commissioner DAMANAKI</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The EESC welcomes this amendment to Regulation (EC) No 302/2009, as it shows that the applications and modifications introduced each year point to the fact that during the first six of the planned 15 years of the multiannual plan, they are producing real results in the recovery of bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the position of EESC on the evaluation of the implementation of the bluefin tuna recovery plan and considers that it is broadly in line with the position taken by the European Union in ICCAT.</p>
<p>The Committee again urges the European Commission to apply this Regulation as strictly as possible to all the Member States and ICCAT Contracting Parties.</p>	<p>The Commission is committed to ensure that the provisions of this regulation apply to all Member States.</p>
<p>The Committee wishes in particular to recognise the work being carried out by all the scientific institutions, in both the Member States and by the Contracting Parties, by the European Commission and by the ICCAT itself with a view to moving ahead determinedly with this multiannual recovery plan for bluefin tuna. It would extend this recognition to the European Fishery Control Agency.</p>	<p>The Commission supports the views expressed by the EESC.</p>
<p>Lastly, the EESC urges the Commission and the Member States to further develop their information activities, raising awareness about the reality of the bluefin tuna situation and the results of the recovery plan's implementation.</p>	<p>The Commission considers that the involvement of all stakeholders in the management and the control of this fishery is essential for the success of the recovery plan. Efforts are constantly made to ensure that a dialogue and consultation of the</p>

	stakeholders are undertaken before any decision or position is taken in international forum.
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N°37	<p>Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the comparability of fees related to payment accounts, payment account switching and access to payment accounts with basic features</p> <p>COM(2013) 266 - EESC 3958/2013 Fin (COD) – INT/701</p> <p>492nd Plenary Session of September 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Ms Reine-Claude Mader (GR11-FR)</p> <p>DG MARKT – Commissioner BARNIER</p>
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
1.7. The EESC welcomes the Commission proposal, which aims to give all European citizens access to a bank account and to improve the comparability of fees and mobility, in order to combat financial exclusion and to make it easier for consumers to join the internal market.	The Commission welcomes the support from the EESC to the proposal and its objectives.
1.3 The Committee regrets, however, the restricted scope of some of the measures. It would like to see the harmonisation of terminology cover all charges and thinks that the information document should not only include a list of the most representative transactions. It believes that it is only possible to make an informed choice by comparing the charges applicable to all common transactions, each consumer having different needs.	The Commission decided to focus on a harmonisation based on a core set of terms as the Impact Assessment showed that consumers would benefit from information that is concise and easy to compare instead of lengthy lists of fees. The information document includes a list of the most representative transactions since the purpose of this document would not be reached if consumers had to invest their time in going through lengthy lists of fees.
1.4 It welcomes the provisions which aim to improve transparency, particularly regarding packaged accounts, as the consumer must be able to compare the various options offered by payment service providers and decide which is the most advantageous and suitable for his or her circumstances	The Commission agrees with the EESC.
1.5 It supports the introduction of a requirement for the provision of a statement of fees and would like this to be supplemented by a requirement to inform consumers in advance of the debiting of	The provision on the statement of fees deals with the obligation to provide consumers with <i>ex-post</i> information on fees incurred. The obligation to inform them in advance about fees that

unusual fees to their account in order to give them the opportunity to take appropriate steps or to contest the fees.	consumers are going to incur is already included in Payment Services Directive 2007/64/EC, and is therefore not covered by this proposal.
1.6 Also in the interests of transparency, it favours the establishment of independent comparison websites and calls for the register of existing websites to enable consumers to have access to information on financial institutions located in all the Member States.	Establishing an obligation for MS to set up registers of existing websites at EU level would imply continuous coordination between authorities in different MS. The Commission therefore believes that a publicly accessible register of comparison websites at national level is the most suitable and proportionate approach.
1.7 The EESC also welcomes the proposals on banking mobility. However, it considers that the feasibility of a "portable" account number should be studied and that a system for the automatic redirection of transactions should be systematically established. An independent study should be carried out before these measures are introduced.	The Commission highlights that an assessment of the issue of portability and automated redirection of payments – including the cost and benefits associated to these initiatives - was carried out in the context of the Impact Assessment. At present, we are inclined to consider these issues too costly compared to the potential benefit they would bring.
1.9 The EESC can only support the provisions aiming to give all Europeans access to a bank account with basic features, banking inclusion being a necessity in the modern world.	The Commission welcomes the Committee's support with respect to this important aspect of the initiative
1.10 It has reservations about limiting the requirement to "at least one payment service provider" per Member State; if there is no competition, this could effectively deny the consumer any choice.	The Commission believes that the issues of access should be looked at in the context of the different market conditions at national level and keeping in mind the principle of proportionality. It is important to adopt measures proportioned to the percentage of unbanked population at national level, taking into account that such percentage varies substantially from one Member State to the other.
1.11 It considers that the real costs should be taken into account in determining whether charges are "reasonable" in cases where owning and operating the account is not free,	The Commission agrees with the Committee's view

and it stresses the need to limit non-compliance charges.	
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<p>N° 38</p>	<p>Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on electronic invoicing in public procurement COM(2013) 449 final – EESC 4392/0213 (COD) – INT/703 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Barros Vale (GRI-PT) DG MARKT - Commissioner BARNIER</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.5 Directive should include deadline for CEN to deliver the standard.</p>	<p>A 36 months deadline for publication of the standard has been added to the Directive in Article 3(2). Since this deadline also includes the actual publication procedure within the Commission once the standard has been developed, the deadline for CEN will in fact be shorter.</p> <p>A specific deadline for CEN will be included in the standardisation request, as foreseen by Article 10(1) of Regulation (EU) 1025/2012 (the standardisation regulation).</p>
<p>1.6 Transposition deadline of 48 months is excessively long and should be shortened.</p>	<p>It should be noted that the originally proposed deadline included the time required to develop the standard, which had been estimated at 24 months.</p> <p>The Commission agrees that a rapid implementation of the Directive would have been optimal. However, the proposed deadline was almost unanimously rejected by the MS, and the Council's position was broadly supported by the Parliament. The new deadline for implementation of the provisions of the Directive (18 months) is linked to the publication of the standard (36 months, as mentioned above). Furthermore, the MS have the possibility to postpone the application of the directive for sub-central Contracting Authorities and Contracting Entities for a further 12 months.</p>

<p>1.7 Deadline of 10 years for a review of the impact of the directive on the Internal Market is too long and should be shortened.</p>	<p>The deadline foreseen in the initial proposal was 5 years after the transposition deadline. This was seen by the Commission as an amount of time which would allow for a thorough assessment of the effects of the Directive.</p> <p>In the final compromise agreement, the review time has been reduced to 3 years after the deadline for implementation for sub-central authorities.</p>
<p>1.8 "The Committee wonders whether this would not justify the broader aim of a real standardisation of procedures and the universal acceptance by all stakeholders, both private and public, of the model that is developed for electronic invoicing."</p>	<p>The recommendation is not entirely clear to us.</p> <p>It is not possible for the Directive to enforce electronic invoicing in the business-to-business (B2B) sector, as the Commission does not have the jurisdiction to regulate business relations between economic operators. However, recital 6d stresses that the new standard should be developed in such a way as to make it possible for it to be used in commercial transactions between enterprises.</p> <p>Making the sending of electronic invoices in public procurement compulsory was considered at the Impact Assessment stage, but it was decided not to propose it due to concerns about proportionality and the potentially negative impacts on small and microenterprises.</p>
<p>1.10 The Committee calls for use to be made of the work already done within the framework of the CEN BII Workshop and the PEPPOL project.</p>	<p>The Commission fully agrees that work which has already been carried out within the framework of CEN, other standardisation bodies, and any Commission co-funded projects should not go to waste. For this reason, the initial proposal already made specific mention of this in recital 7.</p> <p>The final compromise agreement extends the reference to include the results of</p>

	<p>Large-Scale Pilot Projects implemented within the framework of the Policy Support Programme of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). Although PEPPOL falls into this group, it was deemed not possible to make a specific reference to this project in order to ensure technical neutrality, in light of its current status as a not-for-profit association.</p>
<p>1.11 Safeguard the interests of SMEs by adopting a solution that is affordable and easy for all users to take up, in terms of both cost and the technology used.</p>	<p>Several recitals have been included in the Directive which highlight the specific needs of SMEs. Among others, these recitals urge the MS to: ensure that appropriate support and training should be provided; stress that the new standard should allow for the establishment of user-friendly and cost-efficient e-invoicing systems; and call on the Commission and the MS to undertake all efforts to ensure that the new standard should not place undue cost and burden on SMEs. Another recital recalls that Structural fund support can be made available to further facilitate the transition for SMEs.</p> <p>Article 3(1) now lists the need to take account of the special needs of the SMEs as one of the minimum requirements for the development of the standard.</p>
<p>1.12 Account should be taken of the needs and interests of consumers. Widespread training will have to be provided in the fields of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).</p>	<p>Since the directive applies only to e-invoicing in the business-to-government (B2G) sector, consumers will not be directly affected. As such, no specific reference to trainings for consumers is foreseen.</p> <p>Nevertheless, as mentioned for point 1.11, the directive does call on Member States to provide trainings for SMEs, who will in fact be the end-users of the standard.</p>
<p>1.13 The interests of people with disabilities must be safeguarded. The document should be designed to provide</p>	<p>This is a requirement stemming from the Charter of Fundamental rights of the EU, so the Directive, like any legislative act,</p>

universal access and must consider the special needs of people with disabilities.	will in any case have to respect this principle, including in the way it is implemented.
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<p>Nº39 End-to-end e-procurement to modernise public administration COM(2013) 453 final – EESC 5037/2013 fin – INT/713 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Paulo Barros Vale (GRI-PT) DG MARKT - Commissioner BARNIER</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
1.8. The EESC already had the opportunity to advocate speedy implementation of "end to end" e-procurement in a previous opinion ^{1 2} and now reiterates its support for making this practice widespread, since it has potential for optimising resources.	The European Commission welcomes the support of the EESC on the e-procurement agenda and would like to thank the EESC for its valuable comments.
1.5 The low level of Member State involvement is worrying, indicating continued resistance to adopting practices which are known to be beneficial to both public administration and economic operators. Here the Commission will have to keep up its efforts to persuade the relevant parties to use e-procurement at all stages, either by implementing the "end-to-end" e-procurement system in their procedures, or by legislating and spreading good practice in this domain. The EESC therefore welcomes the fact that the Commission has made its e-procurement solutions available to those Member States wishing to use them.	The European Commission will continue to monitor the development of e-procurement in Member States and will pursue its efforts to disseminate good e-procurement practice by publishing guidelines which any system should comply with in order to be compatible with Internal Market principles. Moreover, the Commission is committed to implement “end-to-end” e-procurement in its procurement procedures as mentioned in Commission Communications “A strategy for e-procurement” COM(2012) 179 final and “End-to-end e-procurement to modernise public administration” COM(2013) 453 final.

¹ [OJ C11, 15.1.2013, p.44](#)

² "End-to-end" e-procurement concerns the use of electronic communications and transaction processing by public sector organisations when buying supplies and services, in all stages of the tendering process, from the pre-award phase (notification, access to tender documents, submission of tenders, assessment of tenders and contract awards) to the post-award phase (ordering, invoicing and payment).

<p>1.6 The public procurement market is segmented: it contains multiple solutions and platforms which in most cases are not designed to be interoperable. The lack of strategic guidelines, and even lack of will on the part of Member States to come together to implement joint solutions for universal access, makes access difficult for national and cross-border economic operators and, as a consequence, hinders free competition. It is up to the Commission to play its role as standardiser, harmonising technical requirements based on work already carried out and supported inter alia under the PEPPOL project (Pan-European Public Procurement Online), which met with widespread support. Harmonisation is a key step towards democratising a market which is intended to be transparent and accessible, in the interests of rigorous deployment of public funds.</p> <p>1.7 The EESC also calls for the solutions to be accessible to everyone, by overcoming language barriers and ensuring access for disabled people. At the same time, it is important to keep costs low when creating, adjusting and maintaining existing platforms. Standardisation is therefore vitally important.</p>	<p>The European Commission fully agrees that standardisation, interoperability and accessibility are key conditions to complete the transition towards e-procurement and to reduce the fragmentation of the public procurement market. Several initiatives to identify and address interoperability and accessibility barriers, such as the Golden Book on e-procurement and the e-Tendering Expert Group, are set-out in the Commission's Communication of 20 April 2012. The 2013 Communication on “end-to-end e-procurement to modernise public administration” also announces the publication of key principles with which any e-procurement system in Europe should comply in order to be compatible with the Internal Market. In addition, further standardisation work will be launched under CEN within the workshop on Business Interoperability Interfaces, with a view to promote harmonisation.</p>
<p>1.10 Commission funding for developing e-procurement infrastructures throughout Europe by means of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is to be welcomed, but a question mark has now been placed over this initiative due to the deep cuts in the funding allocated for it by the Council. The EESC deplores this reduction, which will entail major changes to projects of common interest promoted by the Commission, including support for developing and implementing e-procurement.</p>	<p>The European Commission agrees with the EESC that the reduction of the Connecting Europe Facility diminishes the resources available to support the development of e-procurement. However, structural funds will also be used to further support e-procurement take-up.</p>
<p>1.11 The EESC would underline that, as with any initiative involving change, training for the people involved is of vital importance.</p>	<p>The European Commission agrees with the position of the EESC and fully supports Member States in using</p>

<p>The possibility of financing training programmes under the 2014-2020 structural funds is to be lauded. However, training in the public sector must not be neglected, since it is essential to develop new technical skills and raise awareness about new "paperless" working methods.</p>	<p>structural funds to train not only companies but also the public sector in using e-procurement.</p>
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N°40	Fonds européens d'investissement à long terme COM(2013) 462 final - CESE 5189/2013 – ECO/354 492ième session plénière du mois d'octobre 2013 Rapporteur: M. Michael Smyth (GRIII-UK) DG MARKT - Commissaire BARNIER
Points de l'avis du CESE estimés essentiels	Position de la Commission
Commentaires generales	La Commission estime qu'il n'est pas nécessaire de donner une suite à l'avis du CESE 5189/2013 concernant les Fonds Européens d'Investissement à Long Terme (FEILT), notamment en raison de l'absence de points de désaccord entre la proposition de la Commission sur les FEILT et l'avis correspondant du CESE.

<p>N°41 Single Market Act - Missing measures (supplementary opinion) EESC 3154/2013 – INT/688 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Ms Bénédicte Federspiel (GRI-CZ) DG MARKT – Commissioner BARNIER</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
1. Introduction	
<p>1.1 The comments and conclusions of the "EU Citizenship Report 2010 – Dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights" should be taken into consideration. The EESC draws the Commissions attention to the fact that there are more obstacles to the Single Market today than when it was established.</p>	<p>The Commission disagrees with the statement that there are more obstacles to the Single Market today than when it was established. Indeed the Single Market has brought numerous rights and benefits to European citizens. However, there is still a need to act to overcome the remaining obstacles. This is what the annual publication of the "EU Citizenship Report", as well as the Single Market Act I & II, which set out key actions aiming at fostering growth and jobs, are about.</p>
<p>1.2 The EESC is one of the major partners in the organisation of the Single Market Month.</p>	<p>The Commission appreciates the good cooperation with the EESC in the context of the Single Market Month and thanks the EESC for its support.</p>
<p>1.3 The adoption and implementation of the Single Market Act I and II initiatives are considered to be too slow.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that the European Parliament and Council should intensify their efforts to adopt the legislative proposals delivered by the Commission under the Single Market Acts I & II. By 3 March 2014, 11 of the 12 SMA I key action proposals have been agreed and 4 of the 12 SMA II proposals</p>
<p>1.6 Initiatives under the SMA I and II must be coordinated with the measures and steps undertaken to strengthen EMU (Fiscal Pact, ESM, Euro plus, etc.).</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the support of the EESC for a strengthened EMU architecture. The single market and the SMA I & II are key measures under the Europe 2020 Strategy, which is fully articulated with the Commission's</p>

	measures to strengthen EMU.
1.7 Negotiations on free trade agreements should be used to enforce the level playing field, for instance reciprocity of tariffs, while maintaining high standards of consumer, environmental and social protection. When competing with global players, the EU must secure elements which will enhance its competitiveness, such as accessible energy resources, a skilled labour force and a flexible labour market.	The Commission welcomes the support for free trade agreements and the stated objectives. It would like to stress that such agreements should result in balanced outcomes of access to markets, through a lowering of tariffs or non-tariff barriers.
2. The digital Single Market	
2.1 The recently adopted Regulation on selective distribution has maintained the discrimination between off- and on-line distribution channels by allowing that certain distributors can be required to have a physical (brick and mortar) shop office before engaging into on-line sales. The new regulation will not prevent selective distribution of everyday products which can be detrimental to competition and consumer choice.	The Regulation provides a general safe harbour for distribution and supply agreements on condition that the parties have market shares not exceeding 30%. The fact that suppliers and distributors may benefit from that safe harbour when they agree to form a selective distribution system which requires that all distributors, in addition to their possible on line sales, also have one more brick and mortar shops, does not imply discrimination. By monitoring cases and market developments with the help of the European Competition Network, the Commission effectively protects competition without unduly restraining firms in their commercial choices.
2.2 The European Commission should stand firm and confirm the search neutrality principle, according to which search engines should not manipulate the natural results for their own commercial interests. Remedies based on labelling of search results are not sufficient to restore competition, stop anti-competitive behaviour and foster consumer welfare.	The aim of the Commission's competition law enforcement is to ensure that dominant undertakings do not impair effective competition by foreclosing their competitors in an anti-competitive way. The Commission will therefore only accept remedies in competition cases which address appropriately the concern about anti-competitive foreclosure to the benefit of consumer welfare.

2.3 Data Protection	
<p>2.3.1 Once the revised Data Protection Regulation is adopted, it will be important to provide Member States with guidelines for specific provisions, thereby ensuring that they are implemented coherently.</p>	<p>Article 66 of the Commission's proposal COM 2012(11) provides for the European Data Protection Board to ensure the consistent application of the Regulation and to issue guidelines, recommendations and best practices addressed to the supervisory authorities in order to encourage this consistent application of the Regulation.</p>
<p>2.3.2 Specific attention should be given to the development of standard privacy notices. The new regulation includes a provision that requires privacy policies to be transparent and understandable to consumers. The development of standard privacy notices will help ensure that consumers are properly informed about the processing of their personal information and that privacy policies are no longer complex legal texts. It should be ensured that businesses, especially SMEs, do not incur disproportionate administrative burden and costs.</p>	<p>Article 14(8) of the Commission's proposal COM 2012(11) provides for the Commission to lay down standard forms for providing the information referred to, taking into account the specific characteristics and needs of various sectors and data processing situations where necessary. This could include appropriate measures for micro, small and medium-sized-enterprises.</p>
2.4 Copyright	
<p>2.4.1 Following the recommendations of former Commissioner Vitorino, the European Commission must adopt follow-up action to ensure that current copyright levies systems are progressively phased out. In the short term, the current system should be reformed and it should be clarified that digital content subject to licensing agreements shall not be levied further by virtue of being uploaded to the cloud or stored in the cloud by a service provider. It is also important to make the copyright levy visible to the end-user, and to calculate levies on the basis of economic harm caused by private copying.</p>	<p>The Commission is completing a review of the EU legislative framework applicable to copyright, including through a public consultation open until 5 March 2013. The scope and application of the private copying and reprography exceptions in the digital environment as well as the functioning of levies systems are covered by this process. The Commission will announce the practical follow-up it considers appropriate upon the completion of that process.</p>
<p>2.4.2 The 2001 Copyright Directive has failed to achieve the objective of</p>	<p>The Commission is completing a review of the EU legislative framework</p>

<p>harmonising the copyright laws of the EU Member States. Significant differences exist with regard to exceptions and limitations, which create legal uncertainty for both consumers and creators. A revision of this directive should be a priority.</p>	<p>applicable to copyright (which includes the 2001 Copyright Directive), and held a public consultation which ran until 5 March 2013. Exceptions and limitations are covered by this process. The Commission will announce the practical follow-up it considers appropriate upon the completion of that process.</p>
<p>2.4.3 The current system for the distribution of audio-visual content, based on platform and territorial release windows, needs to be adapted to the digital environment and respond to consumers' expectations. The chronological release of films on different media (cinemas, DVD, Video on Demand) and territories should be reduced and allow for a certain degree of flexibility. There is space for experimentation with innovative business models that would allow for a single date of release of audiovisual content in countries with common cultural and linguistic traditions.</p>	<p>As already indicated in the Green Paper on online distribution of audiovisual works, the rules/practices on release windows (cinemas, DVD, TV, Video on Demand) currently prevailing in most Member States are seriously challenged by the growing consumer interest in having access to audiovisual and cinematographic works almost immediately after their first release, irrespective of where they reside. In this context the Commission promotes sufficient leeway enabling to experiment innovative financing and business models, such as for example new modes of cross border distribution of films within the framework of the preparatory action on circulation of European films. We agree that shrinking of the windows is a general trend and that the release of the films in the different territories should be better coordinated, including the release dates that should be closer. It seems that films that are ill adapted to a cinema release could benefit from an earlier release on VOD. However, such developments will require new modes of financing and new forms of partnerships along the value chain (e.g. between exhibitors and distributors). The upcoming Commission Communication and proposal for a Council Recommendation on European Film in the Digital Era to be adopted in</p>

	Spring 2014 will touch upon this issue.
2.5 Digital products	
<p>2.5.1 It is necessary to continue the harmonisation process initiated with the 2011 Consumer Rights Directive by revising and updating the 1999 Consumer Sales Directive to meet the challenges of the digital economy: remedies in case of defective digital content products are urgently needed.</p>	<p>In October 2011, the Commission proposed an optional Common European Sales Law which can be used by SMEs and consumers in cross-border trade. The Common European Sales Law provides for a comprehensive set of rules for the supply of digital content, including remedies in case of defective digital content. Adoption of this instrument is a key step for completing the digital single market.</p> <p>The European Commission decided in October 2013 to conduct a REFIT (Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme) evaluation of consumer legislation within the next two years. This will include an assessment of its suitability for current business practices, including those relevant for digital content.</p> <p>In addition, it is explicitly indicated in the Consumer Rights Directive that the report on the application of the Directive to be provided by 31 December 2016 shall include an evaluation of its provisions regarding digital content including the right of withdrawal.</p>
<p>2.5.2 The Commission should draw up guidelines for the application of the legislation on unfair contract terms (Directive 1993/13/EEC) to consumer contracts for the supply of digital content.</p>	<p>The European Commission decided in October 2013 to conduct a REFIT (Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme) evaluation of consumer legislation within the next two years. This will include an assessment of its suitability for current business practices, including those relevant for digital content.</p> <p>In addition, it is explicitly indicated in</p>

	<p>the Consumer Rights Directive that the report on the application of the Directive to be provided by 31 December 2016 shall include an evaluation of its provisions regarding digital content including the right of withdrawal.</p>
3. Goods and Services	
<p>3.1 In September 2013 the European Commission proposed a legislative package for completing the Single Market for Telecommunications. The EESC regrets that the proposal misses the opportunity to further reduce roaming charges and thus to improve the Single Market for European citizens. The EESC welcomes the proposed rules to facilitate switching of operators, to ensure fairer contract terms and commercial practices as well as better enforcement and access to redress. The rules on net-neutrality are a step in the right direction but need to be further enhanced.</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of the EESC position on roaming. The 2012 Roaming Regulation has brought tangible benefits to consumers in the form of end-user prices capped at safeguard levels and by creating conditions for a competitive dynamics in the roaming market. To further address the issue, and building on the existing rules, the proposed Regulation removes charges for incoming calls while roaming, as well as building incentives for the market that can lead to commercial offers from operators whereby roaming within the EU is possible at the level of domestic service prices.</p> <p>The Commission welcomes the EESC support to the principle of net neutrality. The Commission as part of the normal co-legislative procedure is involved in the debate in order to achieve the goals of the initiative. The Commission's aim is to have a clear text with the right safeguards and that still leaves room for investment incentives and innovation.</p>
<p>3.2 The ratio of harmonised to non-harmonised sectors meets the basic needs of the economy. Any further move to harmonise other goods sectors must be based on a thorough analysis. For non-harmonised sectors covered by the</p>	<p>The ratio of harmonised to non-harmonised sectors meets the basic needs of the economy. Any further move to harmonise other goods sectors must be based on a thorough analysis. Still, various sources of information point at</p>

<p>principles of mutual recognition, the Commission should issue guidelines about the role and legal status of private testing bodies that do not accept certificates issued by testing bodies from other countries. The bilingual list of non-harmonised products on the European Commission website should be completed.</p>	<p>remaining problems regarding the implementation of the mutual recognition principle, not only due to lack of awareness on how it applies, but also specifically regarding those technically complex products or products which can pose safety or health problems. For non-harmonised sectors covered by the principles of mutual recognition, the Commission should, inter alia and in light of Reg. 2008/765 and the case-law of the Court of Justice, issue guidelines about the role and legal status of private testing bodies that do not accept certificates issued by testing bodies from other countries. A comprehensive evaluation on the challenges posed by this situation assessing the need for further action should also be considered.</p>
<p>3.3 There is still no Single Market for retail financial services for consumers. Because of business and commercial obstacles, it is basically impossible for consumers to buy financial services abroad. Current big differences in terms of quality and price between bank accounts, savings accounts and mortgages, etc. between Member States could make it interesting for consumers to obtain financial products from other countries. The EESC calls on the European Commission to analyse this situation and propose initiatives. Consumers often do not obtain objective and independent recommendations/advice as regards their major financial decisions, linked to savings for retirements, other investments or long term credits. Independent and affordable financial advice models should be promoted across Europe.</p>	<p>The Commission has already adopted various pieces of EU legislation (CCD, MiFID, IMD, UCITS, AIFMD, Prospectus, IORP and others) with the aim of building a genuine internal market on financial services and favour the sale of the relevant products cross-border (consumer credits, securities, insurances, retail investment funds, alternative investment funds, occupational pensions, payment accounts and more), whilst guaranteeing a high level of consumer protection. Consumers are already able to purchase most investment products (bonds, shares, securities of various kinds, investment funds and other complex products) from other countries.</p> <p>On 8 May 2013, the European Commission issued a proposal for a directive on the transparency and comparability of payment account fees, payment account switching and access</p>

	<p>to a basic payment account. This proposal currently under discussion in the Council and the European Parliament should ensure non-discriminatory access to bank accounts, including on a cross-border basis, as well as improve transparency of bank account fees. Likewise, the “Mortgage Credit Directive” (‘MCD’), which entered into force on 20 March 2014, will require creditors and intermediaries to inform consumers extensively at pre-contractual stage prior to the sale of a mortgage. This will empower consumers to take informed decisions and to shop around for the most suitable products. The introduction of a passporting regime for credit intermediaries will further contribute to increase competition and the availability of cross-border credit. The MCD also introduces concrete standards for advisory services.</p>
<p>3.4 Enforcement in relation to financial services is still not satisfactory: some Member States have no public body in charge of consumer protection. If they exist, their legal powers are often too limited. Also the European Supervision Authorities (EBA - the European Banking Authority, the ESMA – European Securities and Markets Authority and EIOPA – the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority) established two years ago, do not have a strong enough remit in the area of consumer protection. Their competences in this respect should be expanded, and the authorities must be able to coordinate with national authorities.</p>	<p>The three European Supervision Authorities are currently the subject of a review by the European Commission. The final report on the review, which is expected to be published in March 2014 will, among others, address their performance and role in the area of consumer finance protection and will include concrete recommendations, as appropriate.</p>
<p>3.5 The Single Market for Services, including network infrastructure services (telecommunications, electricity, gas, transport and insurance), has the greatest potential for further improvement. Improving the performance of Single points</p>	<p>In its Communication on the implementation of the Services Directive "A partnership for new growth in services 2012 -2015", the Commission has indicated that Points of Single Contact are among its priorities.</p>

<p>of contact in all Member States is a prerequisite for the directive to contribute to growth and job creation. The Commission should issue regulatory recommendations for the removal of obstacles revealed by the peer-to-peer review of the implementation of the directive. The EESC calls for a complete database of all permission regimes to identify regulatory best practices and pinpoint useless and unacceptable requirements by issuing authorities.</p>	<p>As announced in the Communication, the Commission has agreed with Member States a Points of Single Contact (PSC) Charter that sets out key features of a successful PSC. Member States are invited to make their PSCs compliant with the requirements set in the PSC Charter.</p> <p>In reference to the peer review exercise conducted on legal form and shareholding, the Commission is of the opinion that the most restrictive requirement related to shareholding, legal forms and tariffs, that has been identified in the course of this exercise, could be best addressed with the Member States concerned. The Commission believes that exercises like peer reviews and mutual evaluations are useful to identify regulatory best practices and achieve administrative simplification.</p>
<p>4. Free movement of workers</p>	
<p>4.1 The EESC supports steps to improve free movement of labour, including the elimination of barriers such as the recognition of qualifications. It is especially necessary to modernise and liberalise this system, increase coordination in the healthcare sector in order to prevent labour shortages in sending countries, deepen coordination of social security systems and create a one-stop-shop to facilitate registration procedures.</p>	<p>The revised directive on professional qualifications published in the Official Journal on 28 December 2013 includes several modernisations compared to the existing system which shall facilitate the mutual recognition of professional qualifications. For example, the revised directive includes updates of the training and/or competence requirements for sectoral professions which include professions in the healthcare sector. The modernised directive also foresees new avenues for automatic recognition by introducing the concepts of the European Professional Card and the common training frameworks and tests. The new directive also foresees the use of the PSCs established under the Services Directive as central access points for</p>

	information on regulated professions, education and training and all requirements and procedures to be submitted by citizens to national competent authorities.
4.2 The general framework directive, associated directives and the permanent monitoring via multiannual strategy plans have resulted in the convergence of safety rules (including minimum requirements) which are recognised by workers, including those in (temporary and mobile) cross-border situations. Since 1978 this process has been carried out continuously by successive Action Plans. When the last one ended in December 2012 the Commission did not start a new Action Plan. To continue this convergence process, the European Commission should urgently adopt a new EU Strategy Action Plan to promote high safety standards (as underlined by the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work) in close cooperation with the social partners.	The Commission is taking the necessary steps with a view to adopt soon a Communication on a Strategic framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020. The Communication will describe the main challenges in this policy area as well as the key strategic objectives, taking into account the results of the evaluation of the EU-Strategy 2007-2012 and the results of the broad three-month public consultation on the new EU occupational safety and health policy framework launched end of May 2013.
4.3 The withdrawal of the Monti II regulation does not solve the problems created by the European Court of Justice in its judgments that are based on inadequate EU legislation on the posting of workers and its implementation. European social partners have not been able to reach an agreement on this. Nevertheless, the Commission should consider a proposal to Member States to attach a social progress protocol to the European Treaties stating that social rights are not subordinate to economic freedoms. This could clarify that the Single Market is not an end in itself, but was also established in order to achieve social progress and prosperity for all EU citizens.	Bearing in mind the CJEU jurisprudence on the matter and taking into consideration the withdrawal of the proposal for a so-called Monti II Regulation, the Commission sees no need for submitting further proposals. As far as the protection of fundamental social rights in the EU is concerned, the case law of the Court of Justice clearly acknowledges that there is no primacy of the freedom of establishment or to provide services over social rights, such as the right to strike, not the other way around. However, the exercise of fundamental social rights may have to be reconciled with the requirements and rights related to economic freedoms enshrined in the Treaty in accordance

	<p>with the principle of proportionality.</p> <p>Moreover, it should be recalled that there is already secondary legislation safeguarding the exercise of fundamental rights, including the right or freedom to strike or take collective action and ensuring that trade unions are not prevented from initiating industrial action in view of the protection of their members' interests in accordance with national law and practices, provided prevailing Union law obligations are respected.</p>
<p>4.4 Where substantive EU rights are infringed, workers, consumers and businesses must be able to enforce the rights granted to them by EU legislation. However, in this context the EU only refers to the rights of consumers and businesses. It is necessary that workers have the same possibility to enforce rights from EU legislation in cross-border labour conflicts. Although it is often claimed that workers have access to justice and can seek redress, respect for working conditions and legal provisions through local courts in the host countries, in practice, they are directed to the courts in their home country.</p>	<p>On 26 April 2013 the Commission proposed a Directive on measures facilitating the exercise of rights in the context of free movement of workers aiming to put in place effective mechanisms at national level for enforcing these rights, through better information provision, adequate remedies and formal structures for providing assistance.</p> <p>On this proposal an agreement was reached in December 2013 between the Council and the European Parliament at trilogue level.</p> <p>Its final adoption foreseen in April 2014 will mean, inter alia, the existence of at least one body in every Member State to provide legal and/or other assistance and information to EU workers and their family members on their rights and existing procedures.</p> <p>Member States are also requested to provide appropriate means of redress at national level; to allow labour unions, NGOs and other organisations to launch administrative or judicial procedures on behalf of individual workers in cases of discrimination; and to give better information to EU</p>

	workers as well as to employers and other stakeholders on free movement of workers in general.
5. Transposition, implementation and enforcement	
<p>5.1 A new challenge for enforcement of consumer rights comes from big international companies or associations who apply Europe-wide marketing strategies which can no longer be tackled by national enforcement concepts. Better cooperation between national enforcement authorities and a more prominent role for the European Commission in jointly coordinating these actions should be aimed at. Synergies between public and private enforcement players, such as consumer organisations, should be better exploited.</p>	<p>The Commission published a public consultation on how to improve enforcement of consumer rights in October 2013 (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-936_en.htm) which sought stakeholder's views on themes such as the ones exposed by the EESC.</p> <p>This public consultation is part of the review of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation (2006/2004/EC) foreseen at Article 21a of this Regulation. The review is due by the end of 2014, accompanied, where appropriate by a legislative proposal.</p> <p>As a next step, the Commission intends to publish a report on the functioning of this Regulation before the Summer 2014, summarising the results of the public consultation and identifying the possible options forward. The current Opinion of the EESC will be duly taken into account in this report.</p>
6. Specific consumer issues	
<p>6.1 The EESC regrets that only a non-binding initiative on collective redress has been proposed after all these years and in spite of the four consultations conducted. In addition, the principles enshrined in the European Commission's recommendation do not meet consumers' needs and fall short of the status quo in some Member States.</p>	<p>Taking into account in particular the proportionality principle, the Commission is of the opinion that in the light of limited practical experience in the Member States with collective actions, it is appropriate to take at this stage a more flexible and cautious approach than that of a binding legal instrument. The Recommendation</p>

	<p>contains an evaluation clause upon which the Commission should assess the implementation of the Recommendation on the basis of practical experience by 26 July 2017 at the latest. The Commission should assess also whether further measures to consolidate and strengthen the horizontal approach should be proposed.</p> <p>The Commission's Public Consultation carried out in 2011 showed that almost all stakeholders are in favour of common principles for collective redress at EU level. Nevertheless there has been no consensus between stakeholders on whether the common principles should be legally binding or not. Given the sensitivity of this file, the Commission considered that ensuring consumers' and undertakings' access to justice via collective redress, without imposing specific solutions to the Member States, was the best-balanced approach. The Commission's Recommendation on collective redress provides for measures making national collective redress schemes more coherent and more effective across the EU.</p>
6.2 Unfair commercial practices	
<p>6.2.1 Better enforcement of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive should be aimed at, particularly in the digital environment: notably in e-commerce (e.g. practices that mislead consumers on their legal guarantee rights, non-transparent and unfair contract terms) and in the air transport sector regarding online bookings, etc.</p>	<p>In line with the Commission Consumer's Agenda, the Communication on the application of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive and its accompanying Report adopted on 14 March 2013 identify key areas for action, including the travel and transport and online sectors, where enforcement should be stepped up.</p> <p>In this connection, the Commission is organising thematic workshops with national enforcers and is reviewing the current Guidance on the application of</p>

	<p>the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive to address emerging challenges in enforcement. The Commission plans to adopt a revised Guidance document by the end of 2014.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Commission has been active as the guardian of the Treaties and has initiated a number of infringements proceedings.</p> <p>Under the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation (2006/2004/EC), the Commission is coordinating Member States work to improve enforcement of consumer rights notably in the areas that are highlighted as these areas comprise a substantial share of cross border trade.</p> <p>For example, the Commission is coordinating sweeps of a certain on-line market. The results of 6 sweeps have already been published (http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/sweeps_en.htm) and another one is on-going.</p> <p>Furthermore, the CPC network of enforcement authorities is also working on a new format of joint enforcement project to tackle widespread consumer issues across the EU by addressing their concern to the relevant companies and trade associations. The first project of this kind, on the issues posed by in-app purchases at on line games targeted at children has been announced (http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/joint-projects_en.htm in February 2014).</p>
<p>6.3 Standardisation of pre-contractual information for consumer contracts</p>	

<p>6.3.1 The EESC welcomes the initiative proposed in the 2012 Consumer Agenda on the standardisation of pre-contractual information, set out in Articles 5 and 6 of the Consumer Rights Directive. This should help make pre-contractual information comprehensive, transparent and easy to access and read. This exercise would require the help and support of consumer associations and take into account research on consumer behaviour towards information load (e.g. SWD(2012) 235 final, 19 July).</p>	<p>In line with the priorities of the Consumer Agenda regarding consumer information in the digital area, the Commission is developing a voluntary model for the on-line display of consumer information for digital products, based on common graphical elements (icons) and uniform presentation of the essential information elements. This model and several samples of its practical implementation for specific products and environments were presented to Member States' experts and consumer/industry stakeholders. They were generally well received as a means to improve consumer information about these complex products and to help businesses ensure regulatory compliance. It is expected that the final model will be issued as part of a more general guidance on the Consumer Rights Directive before its application date of 13 June 2014. This activity on consumer information is supported by the research carried out by the Institute for Prospective Technology Studies ("Consumer information in the digital online market – A behavioural approach. Study and behavioural experiment with more than 600 consumers of digital content for DG Justice"; not yet published).</p>
<p>6.4 E-commerce and cross-border delivery</p>	
<p>6.4.1 It is necessary to address the problems of high(er) prices for cross-border delivery compared to domestic delivery and to create more competitive online markets. The price of cross-border delivery is often so high that shopping abroad is not a real advantage for consumers, even if the goods are cheaper. Study done for European Commission in 2011 confirmed that</p>	<p>While postal reform has led to improved services and prices of the universal postal service (domestically and cross-border), the Commission recognises that additional action is required to further facilitate cross-border business for e-retailers, delivery companies and consumers in the e-commerce context. The Commission</p>

<p>published cross-border prices for parcels are on average twice as high as domestic benchmark prices.</p>	<p>adopted its "Green Paper – an integrated parcel delivery market for the growth of e-commerce in the EU" in November 2012, and the "Roadmap for completing the single market for parcel delivery" in December 2013. This Roadmap foresees a set of self-regulatory industry actions to provide e-retailers and consumers with high-quality, accessible and affordable parcel delivery services, taking due account of the needs of SMEs and less-advanced or accessible regions. Industry is leading the effort, but the Commission anticipates concrete results soon and will ensure follow-up so that commitments are met.</p>
<p>6.5 Consumer information</p>	
<p>6.5.2 The work started by the Commission on principles for comparison tools, such as independence and impartiality, should urgently yield concrete policy measures, including guidelines for regulators and businesses.</p>	<p>The European Commission launched in May 2012 the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Comparison Tools comprising representatives from consumer organisations, national authorities and business associations. The report from this Dialogue, presented at the 2013 Consumer Summit, contains a set of recommendations to guarantee the transparency and the impartiality of comparison tools. These recommendations have already been taken into consideration when drafting the provisions specific to comparison tools in recent proposals in the electronic communications (proposal for a Regulation laying down measures concerning the European single market for electronic communications and to achieve a Connected Continent) and financial services sector (proposal for a Directive on the transparency and comparability of payment account fees, payment account switching and access to a basic payment account). In</p>

	parallel, the Commission has launched an in-depth study on the number, functioning and consumer use of comparison tools in the EU which will help us decide on the way forward.
7. Business environment	
<p>7.1 The EESC calls for a reduction in the administrative burden, especially for SMEs, while stressing the need to apply Smart Regulation at EU and national level. Member States should display the transposition of EU legislation online and in real time, involving civil society in the transposition process and raising awareness about new rules.</p>	<p>Since 2006, the Commission has been working to reduce regulatory burdens created by EU legislation. Until 2012 the targeted 25% reduction was accomplished, making administrative processes easier and more efficient for citizens and businesses. In its Communication on EU Regulatory Fitness (COM(2012)746) the Commission committed to strengthening its smart regulation tools and launched the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT). Its progress till now has been described in the "Regulatory Fitness and Performance (REFIT): Results and Next Steps" Communication (COM(2013) 685). The Commission consistently promotes better regulation in Member States and invites them to systematically address the regulatory and administrative burdens existing at national level.</p>
<p>7.2 Committee invites the Commission to take into account the specific characteristics of the small and micro companies within the SME group when preparing impact assessments and drawing up legislative texts; and that micro, small and medium businesses should be treated as three separate groups and not as one group defined as SMEs.</p>	<p>The Commission committed in the Communication 'Review of the "Small Business Act" for Europe" (COM(2011)78) to further strengthen the application of the 'SME test' in its impact assessment procedure to ensure that impacts on SMEs are thoroughly analysed and taken into account in all relevant legislative and policy proposals, with a clear indication of quantified effects on SMEs, whenever possible and proportionate. Moreover, the differences between micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises need to be recognised</p>

	and be taken into account when applying the ‘SME Test’, and, where appropriate, specific measures such as reduced fees or simplified reporting obligations should be envisaged.
7.3 Access to finance is crucial, particularly for SMEs. The EU must support the shift from (largely prevailing) bank financing to other capital products such as venture capital and capital markets. To make this work, investors have to feel that there is a stable investment environment with long-term strategies.	The EU supports entrepreneurs and businesses with a wide range of EU programmes mobilising loans, guarantees, venture capital and other equity financing. By the end of 2013 the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme could mobilise more than EUR 15 billion of loans and EUR 2.4 billion of venture capital to over 275 000 SMEs. In parallel, the European Investment Bank’s support for SMEs reached EUR 13 billion in 2012. The Commission will reinforce its loan guarantee and venture capital facilities under COSME and Horizon 2020. EUR 1.4 billion of the COSME programme will be devoted to mobilising loans and equity financing to SMEs. COSME debt instrument aims to reduce the particular difficulties that SMEs face in accessing finance either due to their perceived high risk or their lack of sufficient available collateral.
7.4 The EESC recommends evaluating the possibility of establishing a European guaranteed financial fund to provide SMEs matching certain basic criteria with financial means through a system that would allow the qualified company to easily access credit without involving collateral or other conditions usually required by banks. The management of this system should involve representative business organisations in charge of the qualified business.	<p>In addition, EUR 2.7 billion of the Horizon programme will be allocated to mobilising loans and equity financing to research and innovation driven businesses, including SMEs.</p> <p>Support for the financing of businesses will continue through Structural and Investment Funds, Creative Europe, the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation and the European Investment Bank.</p>

¹ <http://access2eufinance.ec.europa.eu/>

	<p>The EU finance portal provides businesses simple and easy access to all EU financial instruments.¹</p> <p>The Commission intends to adopt in Spring 2014 a Communication on long-term financing that will address, among other things, the diversification of the sources of finance in Europe. While banks will continue to play an important role, it is widely recognised that a more diversified means of funding the economy is important in the short run, to improve the availability of financing, as well as in the long run, to help the European economy sustain future crises better. The Communication will include a number of concrete actions in this respect.</p>
<p>7.5 Increasing transparency and accountability should have highest priority so that the Single Market effectively contributes to developing a legal environment that respects the legitimate interests of all stakeholders. Initiatives on corporate social responsibility should cover possible abuse of subcontracting and outsourcing, notably related to cross-border service provision and/or labour recruitment. An EU legal instrument must be considered to fight abuse by and of letterbox companies that cause distortion of competition for SMEs, circumvention of labour standards and avoidance of statutory payments. Legal action against EU-wide active non-genuine undertakings has to be facilitated not only in the country of origin but also in the other Member States.</p>	<p>The EU policy on CSR is non-prescriptive and the Commission has no intention to make CSR legally binding. However, through its strategy on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (COM(2011) 681), the Commission expects EU enterprises to integrate social and human rights concerns into their business operations, including through adhering to international standards of responsible business conduct and carrying out risk-based due diligence in their supply chains.</p>
<p>9. Networks: Energy + Transport</p>	
<p>9.1.2 The EU must diversify its sources of energy imports, find alternatives and create networks. Support to some renewable energy sources may lead to the distortion of</p>	<p>The EU has ambitious 2020 targets to increase the use of renewable energy to 20% of all energy consumed. This will</p>

the market therefore this type of support should be gradually decreased. One-stop-shops should be set up to make procedures for granting permits faster, more transparent and simple. This would significantly cut the burden on promoters willing to invest in energy infrastructure.

help reduce our import dependency on fossil fuels (currently around 500 billion euro per year for coal, gas and oil). Renewables need dedicated support in most cases, and the Commission advocates this support to be market-based as technologies mature (see Communication on public intervention of 5th November 2013 that contains best practice indications for the design of RES support schemes and the use of cooperation mechanisms). Especially for small investors the administrative burden has to be reduced and one-stop-shops are also advocated by the Commission. Furthermore, the 2009 Renewable Energy Directive includes provisions obliging Member States to facilitate and streamline the administrative procedures to make investments more efficient. The same directive also requires Member States to ensure adequate grid expansion to accommodate the new and often variable (PV and wind) RES electricity.

As regards infrastructures, the Commission agrees with the Committee's observation concerning the one-stop-shop. Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 laying down guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure¹ (the "TEN-E guidelines") provide for several regulatory measures facilitating and accelerating the implementation of the key energy infrastructure projects in the EU.

These energy infrastructure projects are defined in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1391/2013 on the

¹ Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2013 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1364/2006/EC and amending Regulations (EC) No 713/2009, (EC) No 714/2009 and (EC) No 715/2009; OJ L 115, 25.4.2013, p.39

	<p>Union list of projects of common interest¹ and are commonly known as "projects of common interest - PCIs".</p> <p>The TEN-E guidelines require the establishment of a single national competent authority coordinating the permit granting process for PCIs (one-stop-shop) by 16 November 2013.</p> <p>Other advantages provided by the TEN-E guidelines are: a binding three-and-a-half-years' time limit for the completion of a permit granting process, an increased transparency and an improved public participation.</p>
<p>9.2.1 The proliferation of unfair terms in air transport contracts is an issue of growing concern throughout the EU. In recent years, several consumer organisations have pursued legal action against major European airlines resulting in national courts declaring many terms and conditions commonly used by airlines to be unfair. The European Commission has missed the opportunity to address this issue in its review of the 261/2004 regulation on air passenger rights. The European Commission should establish a binding list of unfair clauses for air passenger contracts.</p>	<p>As part of enforcement cooperation described under point 6.2.1, the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) network is working on consumer issues in the airlines sector. These issues cover several consumer legislations including the Regulation on passenger rights and the Directives on unfair commercial practices or unfair contract terms. The legal actions against certain European airlines carried out by consumer associations are also taken into account.</p> <p>In addition to this, in 2013 a Fitness check of the air transport internal market was undertaken. It demonstrated that air ticket price transparency rules laid out in the air services Regulation do not need being modified, but being better enforced. The Commission is working with the Member States to ensure such better enforcement.</p>
<p>9.2.2 For better functioning of the Single Market there is a need to promote rail goods services and multimodal transport.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that international rail freight services should be developed further in terms of</p>

¹ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1391/2013 of 14 October 2013 amending Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure as regards the Union list of projects of common interest; OJ L 349, 21.12.2013, p.28

<p>More efforts must be deployed to adopt the Technical Specifications for Interoperability.</p>	<p>reliability, quality and capacity, in order to achieve the objectives of the White Paper on Transport with regard to rail. For this purpose, the establishment and development of nine international EU Rail Freight Corridors (RFC) on the basis of Regulation 913/2010/EC, which form the rail freight backbone of the Core Network Corridors, plays a crucial role. Among the tasks of the RFC is the provision of dedicated capacity of high quality for international freight trains, the simplification of capacity allocation procedures via One-Stop-Shops (Corridor-OSS), the harmonisation of technical standards along the corridors including the deployment of interoperable systems (ERTMS, infrastructure requirements of the TEN-T Guidelines) and the better integration of terminal and rail infrastructure and traffic management. The intermodal dimension of the RFC is further strengthened by the mandatory setting up of Advisory Groups for Terminal Owners and Managers.</p> <p>In parallel work is progressing on the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI); they should be adopted by the end of 2014 and it is foreseen that they will apply from January 2015.</p> <p>Moreover, the new TEN-T regulation has been adopted end of 2013 [Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013], providing the framework for the development of a multimodal and interoperable transport core network as the backbone for the internal market. The implementation will be driven by core network corridors which will support the coordinated</p>
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	implementation of the network. The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) will provide EUR 26 billion financial support to develop the TEN-T, including support for more efficient and more environmentally friendly freight transport services.
9.2.3 Transporters of goods by road are still restricted in their cross-border operations. Conditions are not in place to allow further opening of the EU haulage market. Changes to the EU rules on access to the transport market (including cabotage) should be linked with harmonisation in enforcement and in social and fiscal areas. Without these preconditions, changes to the cabotage rules risk having a negative impact on fair competition and sustainability of the sector. Meanwhile, the existing rules must be enforced.	Under Regulation (EC) No 1072/2009, the Commission shall produce a report on the situation of the EU road haulage market. This report shall assess whether market conditions have evolved to the point where further market opening can be considered. Although this report is not yet published, available sources show that: cost structures become comparable throughout Member States, enforcement of road transport specific social provisions have improved (although further work remains to be done) and technical harmonisation of vehicles and on-board systems has progressed, leading to higher levels of road safety. In addition, the road transport sector is not as efficient as it could be, particularly in the segments which are closed to competition (national transport, two thirds of all transport volumes). There therefore seems to be a case for gradual market opening. In combination with appropriate measures to guarantee the application of social and operating rules, road transport can be expected to improve its contribution to the EU economy while restoring its attractiveness as a profession.

<p>N°42 A Single Resolution Mechanism COM(2013) 520 final – EESC 5008/2013 - ECO/350 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Daniel Mareels (GRI-BE) DG MARKT – Commissioner BARNIER</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>Align as closely as possible the Single Resolution Mechanism on the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD).</p> <p>The BRRD will form a rulebook for the resolution of banks throughout the internal market, and the Regulation on the Single Resolution Mechanism is therefore heavily based on it. Given that the Regulation is an extension of the BRRD, there is a need for coherence between the two texts, and inconsistencies should be avoided.</p>	<p>Prise en compte des suggestions dans le cadre des négociations ultérieures avec les autres institutions</p>
<p>Efficient, effective and simple instrument:</p> <p>The Single Resolution Mechanism should form an efficient and effective instrument that is as simple as possible and can be implemented with the greatest haste, at both national and cross-border level, should the need arise.</p>	<p>Prise en compte des suggestions dans le cadre des négociations ultérieures avec les autres institutions</p>
<p>A truly European Single Resolution Fund:</p> <p>The Committee is in favour of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The establishment of a resolution fund at European level; • Funded by the financial resources (raised at EU level) it needs to fulfil its role properly ; • With the aim of severing the existing link between governments and the banking sector. 	<p>Prise en compte des suggestions dans le cadre des négociations ultérieures avec les autres institutions</p>

<p>The process of setting up this Fund should be started as soon as the necessary details have been clarified.</p>	
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N°43 Fonds monétaires COM(2013) 615 final - CESE 5988/2013 – INT/690 493^{ième} session plénière du mois d'octobre 2013 Rapporteur: M. Edgardo Maria Iozza DG MARKT - Commissaire BARNIER	
Points de l'avis du CESE estimés essentiels	Position de la Commission
Points 1.10 et 4.6: une réserve de capital de 3% telle que proposée par la COM apparaît insuffisante. Une transformation des fonds monétaires à Valeur Liquidative Constante (VLC) en Valeur Liquidative Variable (VLV) est plus adaptée à l'objectif poursuivi.	Ce point fait l'objet de négociations au sein du Parlement Européen et prochainement au sein du Conseil.

<p>N°44</p>	<p>Shadow Banking – Addressing New Sources of Risk in the Financial Sector (Communication) COM(2013) 614 final – EESC 4179/2013 fin – INT/691 Rapporteur: Mr Christos Polyzogopoulos (GRII-EL) DG MARKT – Commissioner BARNIER</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EESC recommends stepping up the pace and focusing work on legislation on transferable securities, as securities financing transactions - especially repurchase agreements and securities lending transactions - play a central role when it comes to excessive indebtedness in the financial sector. • Similarly, it notes delay and recommends intensifying and accelerating action to clarify the crucial issue of strengthening oversight of the shadow banking sector, where mention is simply made of a few issues and the only future measure referred to is the review of the European System of Financial Supervisors (ESFS), to be performed by the Commission in 2013. • Given that the main unintended victims of the financial and economic crisis are the public as taxpayers, workers, depositors and consumers, the EESC would recommend bolstering the regulatory initiatives regarding the protection of citizens by means of transparency, proper information, social responsibility on the part of the financial sector, and protection for consumers and small investors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission understands and to a large extent shares the position and recommendations of the EESC as set out in its Opinion of 10 December 2013, in particular as far as the need to <u>focus <i>inter alia</i> on legislation on securities financing transactions</u>, such as repurchase agreements. • As part of this effort on 29 January 2014 the Commission <u>adopted a proposal for a Regulation on transparency of securities financing transactions</u> which complemented the Commission proposal for a Regulation on structural measures improving the resilience of EU credit institutions. • The transparency measures should enhance regulators' and investors' (including smaller investors') understanding of securities financing transactions, such as repurchase agreements and securities lending transactions. This comes on top of a long list of initiatives enhancing shadow banking transparency (eg. trade repositories for derivatives, legal entity identifier, ESRB work on developing risks metrics and comprehensive data collection, IMF-FSB data gap projects).

- On securities financing transactions, strengthening of oversight of the shadow banking will be primarily achieved through requiring counterparties to securities financing transactions to report them to a central database (trade repository). This will allow supervisors to better identify the links between banks and shadow banking entities and will shed more light on some of their funding operations. As a consequence, supervisors will be able to monitor the exposures to and risks associated with securities financing transactions and, if necessary, take better-targeted and more timely actions.
- In addition, the proposal will improve transparency towards investors (including smaller investors) of the practices of investment funds engaged in securities financing transactions and other equivalent financing structures by requiring detailed information reporting on these operations both in funds' regular reports and in pre-investment documents. This will lead to better-informed investment decisions by fund investors and will provide additional discipline for investment funds engaged in securities financing transactions.
- Finally, the proposal also contains measures on transparency of re-hypothecation of securities by setting minimum conditions to be met by the parties involved, including written agreement and prior consent. This will ensure that clients or counterparties have to give their consent before re-

	<p>hypothecation can take place and that they make that decision based on clear information on the risks that it might entail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These transparency measures are an additional step towards a more transparent and better regulated shadow banking sector. However, the work at the international level is still ongoing. The Commission is closely involved in this work and will consider whether further action is needed in line with the international recommendations.
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<p>N°45 Social Impact Measurement (own initiative opinion) EESC 6135/2013 – INT/721 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 Rapporteur: Ms Ariane Rodert (GR11-SE) DG MARKT – Commissioner BARNIER</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The Commission approach has been rushed (paragraph 3.4) which could undermine support for social enterprise</p>	<p>The GECES sub-group which has produced the report on social impact measurement was set up in November 2012. The experts on the report have spent a full year on developing it. The report sets out recommendations that are proportionate and meet the needs of all stakeholders. European Social Entrepreneurship Funds (EuSEF) and the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) Programme which will use the methodologies developed in the report are now up and running so it was vital that the report, published on 28 November 2013, was delivered in a timely manner.</p>
<p>Social Impact Measurement should support the wider social entrepreneurship sector/eco-system (paragraph 3.5).</p>	<p>Social impact measurement is not an end in itself. It has been developed to support specific requirements under EuSEF funds and the EaSI programme. These two measures are designed to foster the social sector.</p>
<p>Social Impact Measurement must be flexible to accommodate the wider variety of social enterprises and it must not stifle their growth (paragraph 1.5).</p>	<p>The report is very clear that measurement must be proportionate to the scale and organisation of the social enterprise. It recognises the very wide variety of social businesses and therefore recommends the use of a very wide range of indicators which are appropriate to the social businesses in question. The Commission is committed to ensure that the level 2¹</p>

¹ In relation to specific empowerments in EuSEF to further develop guidelines on social impact measurement.

	measures being developed maintain this spirit and do not inhibit the growth of social businesses.
There should be pilot programmes to test how well the proposed methodologies work (paragraph 7.2) and create a database of activity across Member States (paragraph 4.6).	As referred to above, further work will be carried out which will involve advice from Member States.

<p>N°46</p>	<p>Payment Services (Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on interchange fees for card-based payment transactions and Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on payment services in the internal market and amending Directives 2002/65/EC, 2013/36/EU and 2009/110/EC and repealing Directive 2007/64/EC) COM(2013) 550 final and COM(2013) 547 final – EESC 5238/2013 fin – INT/711 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Vincent Farrugia (GRI-MT) DG MARKT – Commissioner BARNIER</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>Supports the caps proposed by the Commission in the IF Regulation, but recommends that caps for both credit and debit electronic payments should be lower than those currently proposed</p>	<p>The Commission is open to discussion on how the caps should be calculated (fixed amount or percentage) and on the amount, taking into account its experience in the competition cases.</p>
<p>Shorter transitional periods for introduction of caps - caps should be introduced at national level if possible within six months from the adoption of the Regulation, but by one year at the latest also to allow SMEs that will not engage in cross-border acquiring to benefit as soon as possible from the lower interchange fees</p>	<p>The Commission is open to discussion on the timeframe and can even envisage the same date for national and cross-border interchange fees, provided that if implementation of both elements takes place at the same time, the reduction of domestic fees should take place rather sooner than later than initially proposed, for instance six months after the entry into force.</p>
<p>An option should be found to limit the fees imposed under the 3-party business model</p>	<p>For the reasons explained in the recitals, the Commission is not in favour of extending the caps to 3 party schemes not using licensees.</p>
<p>Commercial cards should be included within the caps at the same level as those proposed for consumer cards</p>	<p>For the reasons explained in the recitals the Commission is not in favour of extending the caps to commercial cards.</p>
<p>Further studies are required to ascertain the effects on consumer behaviour when the true costs of different payment models are</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the idea, a study based on behavioural economics is underway.</p>

made transparent (paragraph 2.7)	
PSD2 should make clear that banks should not charge fees to Third Party Payment Providers (TPPs) for accessing consumer account information.	The Commission is open to include this in the proposal. Amendments to this extent have also been tabled by the ECON Rapporteur and one of the shadow-Rapporteurs (e.g. see AM 17, 186, 418 and 420), by indicating that TPPs should not be obliged to engage in a contract with the bank (which could act as a basis for requesting a fee from the TPP, see AM 17, 420) and by stating in clear terms that no extra charges should be imposed by the banks in case payment orders are initiated by a TPP (AM 418).
Need for fully interoperable standards for payments, implies need for centralised European leadership and a robust governance structure	The Commission recognises the need for common, open technical standards to facilitate the development of new types of payment (e.g. mobile payments) that can operate European wide, a topic that could be taken up by the recently established European Retail Payments Board.
Regulators should consider whether to enforce a shift to clearing and settlement processes operating in real time through a future regulatory initiative	The Commission agrees that this is the next important step in coming to an efficient working payment market in the EU. In view of the differences in stages of development towards real time execution between the Member States, the Commission agrees that actions to promote real time execution are now better pursued at national level. A comprehensive legal framework at EU level should be considered at a later moment in time, when broader support towards this next evolution is established.

<p>N°47</p>	<p>Preparing for a Fully Converged Audiovisual World: Growth, Creation and Values (Green Paper) COM (2013)231 - EESC 4163/2013 – TEN/524 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Jorge Pegado Liz (GRIII-PT) DG CNECT – Vice President KROES</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>General comments: no tangible and structured proposals and no "common thread" (paragraphs 1.2; 1.4; 3.2)</p>	<p>The objective of the Green Paper was to open a broad, public discussion on the implications of the on-going trend towards media convergence before taking position. This should be seen against the background of a perceived need to gather more information and diverging views from stakeholders, expressed in the run up to the consultation. The Commission welcomes the EESC opinion as an important input to such debate.</p>
<p>Importance of media freedom and pluralism (paragraphs 1.3; 3.3; 4.7.2)</p>	<p>The Commission is committed to ensuring media freedom and pluralism within its competences. From 22/03/2013 to 14/06/2013 the Commission held a public consultation on the independent report of the High Level Group (HLG) on Media Freedom and Pluralism. As media freedom and pluralism issues had already been tackled extensively in such public consultation, they are addressed to a lesser extent in the Green Paper. Its main focus is broader (the changing media landscape's effects on market conditions, interoperability and infrastructure, and implications for EU rules).</p> <p>Moreover, with regard to media freedom and pluralism, the immediate focus of the Commission action is the</p>

	follow-up to the recent Council conclusions on such matters ¹ .
Focus on the importance of traditional media (paragraphs 3.6.1; 3.6.2)	Whilst generally encouraging innovation and competitiveness, the Commission does not intend to dictate any specific business models to the media industry. It acknowledges the key social, political and cultural roles of such industry – including in its more traditional forms of distribution – especially in terms of its democratic functions, cultural diversity, and social inclusion.
Suggestion to encourage a widespread debate on the model of governance for the public service media public service (paragraph 4.7.3)	The Commission will take this suggestion into account within the limit of its competences. It should be highlighted that Protocol n.29 on the system of public broadcasting in the Member States, attached to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, recognises the Member States' freedom to define, organise and finance public service broadcasting.
Call on the Commission to take into account EESC proposals; comments concerning access to platforms; promotion of European works; scope of existing rules; interoperability; rules on commercial communications; protection of minors; media literacy; and accessibility (paragraphs 4.6.1; 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 4.3.3; 4.4.1; 4.6.2; 4.6.3; 4.8.2; 4.8.3; 4.8.5; 4.9.3).	<p>Several topics elaborated on by the EESC are addressed in the Green Paper. These include access to platforms; promotion of European works; scope of existing rules; interoperability; rules on commercial communications; protection of minors; media literacy; and accessibility. The Commission takes note of the different concerns by the EESC and will take its comments into due consideration. The Commission is currently analysing the over 200 responses received to the public consultation.</p> <p>The question of possible future actions,</p>

¹ Council conclusions and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on media freedom and pluralism in the digital environment of 26 November 2013.

	in particular of a revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), will need to be addressed in the context of the planned REFIT exercise.
Need for further studies on the impact of hybrid models in the audiovisual field (paragraph 4.5.2).	The Commission will take this recommendation into account and will reflect on whether and which studies to carry in the field of hybrid models.

N°48	<p>Amended proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on guidelines for trans-European telecommunications networks and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC</p> <p>COM(2013) 329 final - EESC 5315/2013 - TEN/531;</p> <p>493rd Plenary Session of October 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Jacques Lemerrier (GRIF-FR)</p> <p>DG CNECT – Vice President KROES</p>
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.5. The Committee stresses the huge difficulties for the Commission in effectively and fairly allocating the funds provided for in the regulation, given the drastic reduction in the initial envelope.</p> <p>4.3. Developing the single digital market requires interconnection and interoperability between national networks. Against the new background of a shrinking budget, the Commission must set stricter criteria for selecting projects for funding, and monitor and assess them on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>As highlighted in the Explanatory Memorandum, the amended proposal aims at focusing the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) intervention on a smaller number of digital service infrastructures and a limited contribution to broadband via financial instruments, with a view to leverage private investment as well as investment from public sources other than CEF.</p> <p>In particular, in order to maximize the impact of the limited budget, new provisions on the eligibility criteria and priorities in the field of digital service infrastructures were added in Article 6 of the amended proposal.</p> <p>The amended proposal was extensively discussed in this context with the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission is satisfied that the funding for broadband will be at the level sufficient for a cost-efficient intervention.</p>
<p>1.6. The EESC is [...] pleased that the principle of technological neutrality, essential for a genuinely open internet, is being reaffirmed. The EESC points out that resources must be used for open, accessible network solutions which are non-discriminatory and affordable for the general public and for companies.</p>	<p>The issue of open character of networks was further clarified during the negotiations with the European Parliament and the Council. The non-discriminatory access to broadband networks was added as an objective of the regulation. As new criterion, broadband projects will have to comply with access obligations under Directive 2002/19/EC.</p> <p>Secondly, by increasing the supply of</p>

	<p>broadband connectivity and by creating more competition, the CEF is expected to have an indirect positive effect on broadband affordability.</p> <p>However, it would not be appropriate to impose specific affordability requirements in the guidelines. The intervention is primarily focused on improving the availability of broadband (broadband coverage). The prices will be set by the market, and pricing requirements imposed on project promoters would risk seriously distorting the market. They would also be incompatible with the method of intervention, which is financial instruments, aiming at improving project promoters' access to finance.</p>
1.7. The EESC reiterates its call for European, national and regional maps to be drawn up which identify coverage gaps and facilitate the creation of new public and private initiatives. The Commission recognises that no Member State or investor is prepared to fund cross-border services.	<p>The initial Commission proposal provided for pan-European mapping of broadband infrastructure. However, the available budget is insufficient to conduct a meaningful mapping exercise at a European level. At the same time, it is not excluded that some projects may receive technical assistance for mapping.</p>
1.11. The EESC notes with consternation that the Commission has, at the Council's request, removed the reference to both the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions in Article 8 of the revised text. The EESC expresses the firm wish that the report in question be forwarded to it.	<p>The deletion was a result of the simplification of the proposal aiming at the reduction of the administrative burden imposed by this regulation.</p> <p>However, more general evaluation reports of the entire CEF package will be transmitted to the EESC and the Committee of the Regions on the basis of Article 27.5 of Regulation No 1316/2013 (CEF Regulation).</p> <p>The Commission also wishes to highlight its commitment to the dialogue with the EESC and the Committee of the Regions on matters related to trans-European telecommunications networks.</p>
1.12. [...] the EESC reiterates that it will from now on be absolutely essential to	<p>The Commission shares the view of the EESC about the importance of</p>

include internet access in the universal service.	broadband access for everyone as key to the development of the European economy and job creation (para. 1.1). The Commission also notes the concern of the Committee with respect to the reduction of the budget for the telecommunications sector under the CEF (para. 1.4). The issue of universal service is, however, beyond the scope of the present proposal.
4.4. The EESC would point out that these projects may help small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to access the digital economy and create new stable jobs in the long term. The EESC asks that a regular report be published on the use of this funding.	<p>The support to the competitiveness of the European economy, including SMEs is one of the objectives of the amended proposal.</p> <p>In conjunction with mid-term and ex-post evaluations of the CEF, the Commission will submit reports on the progress in the implementation, which will take into account the objectives of this legislation.</p>

<p>N°49</p>	<p>Strategy for Micro- and Nanoelectronic Components and Systems COM(2013)298 final – EESC 4345/2013 – TEN/526 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Ms Laure Batut (GRIF-FR) DG CNECT – Vice President KROES</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.2 The EESC believes that micro- and nanoelectronic components and systems can provide the basis for a new industrial revolution and that, to this end, even more than a European industrial "strategy", a genuine "common industrial policy" of public interest is needed in this field, coordinated by the Commission so that European companies are in a position to take the lead in production and on the markets. This aspect is missing from the Commission's proposal.</p>	<p>The Communication foresees that a European Industrial Strategic Roadmap for Micro- and Nano-Electronic Components and Systems is elaborated by an Electronics Leaders Group (see Action 1). This Industrial Strategic Roadmap was delivered on 10 February 2014 to Vice President Kroes by the Electronic Leaders Group. It put forward 22 actions to reach the challenging goal to double the economic value of the semiconductor component production in Europe by 2020. The approach proposed is to combine market-pull with demand-push.</p>
<p>1.3 In this context, the system of state aid and subsidies needs to be revised because the issue faced by the EU in high-tech industries is not competition between EU firms, it is rather the absence of globally competitive leader firms in many high-tech sectors.</p>	<p>The State Aid Rules are currently being revised. In this context it is worth noting that the Commission recently launched a public consultation on the revision of the State Aid Guidelines for R&D&I and guidelines on Important Projects of Common European Interest. The latter covers first production actions.</p>
<p>1.5 Since the roadmap is not due to be established until the end of 2013, the EESC recommends that account be taken of the socio-economic impact on living creatures and on sustainable development resulting from the growing use in our daily lives of micro- and nanoelectronic components and the materials involved, on research, employment, training, the crucial</p>	<p>The roadmap has been finalized in February 2014. The roadmap takes into account crucial issues related to the development of skills and abilities in addressing the shortage of skilled workers in the area of micro- and nanoelectronics. The roadmap also takes into account the links between research and industry. Moreover, as</p>

development of skills and abilities, and on public health and the health of workers in the sector.	part of the implementation of HORIZON 2020 in the ICT part of LEIT in the call on 'Generic micro- and nanoelectronic technologies' a 'Coordination and Support Action' is called for on 'improved assessment of the potential impact on workers of the manipulation of nano-materials in the semiconductor fabrication process'. Therefore the Commission has taken note of the comment of the EESC.
4.2 In order to restore its position in the world, the EU should provide Member States with conditions suited to the industries in question.	See comment on 1.3.
4.3 The Communication is imprecise as to where in the global value chain the Commission plans to target its efforts and whether its ambitions extend beyond generic components and sub-systems.	The full value chain from manufacturing of individual chips to products related to applications; from components to sub-systems, to systems, to products is to be covered. More precision is given in the Industrial Strategic Roadmap released in February 2014 (see comment 1.2)
4.4 ... assist it in drawing up, by the end of 2013, the roadmap which will guide the strategy.	The roadmap has been finalized in February 2014.
4.5 The EU needs strategies, products and leaders. The Communication does not take this aspect sufficiently into account.	The European Industrial Strategic Roadmap for Micro- and Nano-Electronic Components and Systems (see comment 1.2) identifies specific markets of (i) existing system areas where Europe is strong (automotive, energy and industrial automation), (ii) emerging markets such as Internet of Things and Smart Systems and (iii) mobile convergence, and sets out a strategy to develop new silicon production capability and capacity development.
4.6 The EESC regrets that the Commission's strategy is not more explicit in regard to these barriers to entry into the	To repatriate contract manufacturing is mainly a business decision. As indicated in the comments on 1.3, state

global value chain. An essential first step would be to repatriate contract manufacturing.	aid issues are being addressed. Other measures such as skills development and the development of an electronic eco-system were part of the Commission Communication and have been taken up in the Industrial Strategic Roadmap.
4.10 Even so, the EU must not turn its back on market-based discovery.	The comment is not correct. Account is taken of technology-based discoveries, supply pull and demand push. See also comment 4.5.
4.11.2 The EU should take into account the impact of wear, of deterioration at the end of life of nanomaterials contained in current electronic devices, or in those under development or to come in the future, in terms of sustainable development and preserving the environment and living creatures, even though the European Commission's current definition of nanomaterials does not include health as an issue in relation to micro- and nanoelectronics. The precautionary principle should be applied.	The Communication by the Commission does not address the issues related in the context of nanomaterials for the reason indicated in the observation by the EESC. Nonetheless, end of life issues are addressed. For example, as part of the implementation of HORIZON 2020 in the ICT part of LEIT in the call on 'Smart System Integration', the 'Research and Innovation Actions' application specific to smart systems are to address 'testing, end-of-life and recyclability issues'. Thus, the Commission takes note of the comment of the EESC.
5.2.3.1 The EESC suggests that the EU arrange for the possibility of the relevant researchers in these countries joining the best European research centres.	There is a single European labour market for researchers.
5.4.1.3.2 The EESC considers that, in a Communication which aims to make the EU a world-class player in this area, it is vital to sound a note of caution where this is called for and to mention the risks to human health, and to draw attention to the precautionary principle, so as to ensure that everyone can reap the rewards and that the risks can be minimised as much as possible so that we do not go down the asbestos path again. Certain current and future	A lot of research has been done in the area and results are available (e.g., SCHENIR, SCCS). From a health safety perspective, contrary to the statement that 'Certain current and future components of nanoelectronic systems do not stop at pulmonary', the nanomaterials used in nanoelectronics do not breach the barriers of lungs, blood-brain or placenta since they are always present in products in a sealed

<p>components of nanoelectronic systems do not stop at pulmonary, blood-brain or placental barriers. They have a considerable surface of interaction.</p>	<p>form and there is no possible contact with the users during their lifetime. Nevertheless, the precautionary principle is always taken fully into account, in the development of the Commission's position in the area of nanotechnology.</p>
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N°50	Establishing sustainable development goals – European civil society's contribution to the EU position (exploratory opinion) EESC 955/2013 – NAT/594 492nd Plenary Session of September 2014 Rapporteur: Ms An Le Nouail Marlière (GR11-FR) DG DEVCO + DG ENV co-responsible – Commissioners PIEBALGS AND POTOČNIK
<p>Since the publication of the Opinion, there have been many international developments on the post-2015 development agenda, including the UN General Assembly's Special Event towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the continuation of the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing. The EU is engaging actively and constructively in the various intergovernmental processes which will contribute to the establishment of the post-2015 framework.</p> <p>During this time, the EU has continued to hold formal and informal consultations with civil society on the post-2015 agenda, culminating most recently in the conference on 13-14 February, 'A new global partnership, European Civil Society Positions on the Post-2015 Framework', which Environment Commissioner Potocnik, Environment Director General Falkenberg and DG Environment and DG Development and Cooperation officials attended. We look forward to the written outcome of the meeting and to discussing this further with the Committee and other civil society. The EU will take full account of the Opinion and will continue to consult with the Committee and with civil society as it further develops its position on the post-2015 agenda.</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
1.1 Need for ex ante economic, social and environmental impact assessment	The EU supports a post-2015 framework with measurable targets and indicators which should be reviewed and monitored to ensure transparency and accountability for all stakeholders.
1.3 Commitment to adhering to plan to implement 2020 strategy	The EU supports a post-2015 framework which is global in aspiration and coverage and universally applicable, while being based on national ownership and taking into account different national contexts, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. Thus the EU supports the goals, targets and indicators

	<p>in the post-2015 framework being applicable to the EU and its Member States. The EU emphasises that the sustainable development goals should incorporate the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental). A key part of the EU's work towards sustainable development to eradicate poverty in all its dimensions is implementation of Europe 2020. This will enable the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy and so deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. The European Commission welcomes the support of the Committee to the EU's commitment to Europe 2020 and will continue to consult civil society as suggested in the Opinion. The Commission notes the points of the Committee's Opinion which relate to internal EU actions and will take them into account in taking forward implementation of Europe 2020.</p>
<p>1.5.1 Continue efforts on development partnership by means of the EU's Agenda for Change and external cooperation</p>	<p>The European Commission welcomes the support of the Committee for Agenda for Change. This is expected to contribute to implementation of the post-2015 framework including: by focusing resources where they are most needed, including fragile states; enhancing the effectiveness of EU development cooperation, in line with the outcome of the Busan High Level Forum and the work of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation; and focusing on the two priority areas of: human rights, democracy and other key elements of good governance; and inclusive and sustainable growth for human development.</p> <p>The EU is also committed to its Policy</p>

	<p>Coherence for Development initiative, whereby it is required to take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries. Achievement of the post-2015 agenda will require mutually supportive and integrated policies across a wide range of economic, social and environmental issues for sustainable development. The Commission will continue to take forward Policy Coherence for Development as an important means of implementing the post-2015 agenda.</p>
1.5.8 Need to act effectively on environmental issues	<p>Sustainable management of natural resources is a priority element for the EU in the post-2015 framework. Poverty eradication and sustainable development are not achievable without sustainable management, use and protection of natural resources and the ecosystems they provide. They are also essential to support sustainable economic growth and employment.</p>

N°51	Involvement of the private sector in the post 2015 development framework (exploratory opinion) EESC 4374/2013 - REX/386 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Ivan Voleš (GRI-CZ) DG DEVCO – Commissioner PIEBALGS
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of the private sector as an engine of development. - Importance for private sector to commit to socially, environmentally and economically sustainable production and trade practices. - Emphasis of need for an enabling business environment. - The use of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to leverage private sector engagement and financing. - Mention of opportunities to learn from European policies in fields of SME development, competitiveness and good governance 	<p>The Commission fully agrees with these points. They are in line with the issues considered to be addressed in the forthcoming Commission Communication on the role of the private sector in development.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasis of migrant remittances as important source of financing for local investment. - Recommendation to give priority to support of innovation, training, and technology transfer and adaptation in developing countries. - Mention of business-NGO collaboration to implement investments with high development impact 	<p>These are important additional points that are raised in the EESC opinion and which the Commission will consider further. It will in particular further explore the idea to extend the Erasmus programme for young entrepreneurs into third countries, and to give support to the up-scaling of innovative business models.</p>

<p>– Involvement of the private sector in the post 2015 development framework.</p>	<p>The private sector is an important element in the design and implementation of the post-2015 framework. The views of the EESC on this will be taken into account as part of the EU's consultation with the EESC and civil society during the international process of agreeing on a post-2015 global agenda.</p>
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N°52	<p>EU support for sustainable change in transition societies JOIN (2012)27 – CESE 4534/2013 – REX/387 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Andris Gobiņš (GR11-LV) DG DEVCO + EEAS co-responsible - Commissioner PIEBALGS + HIGH REPRESENTATIVE/VICE PRESIDENT</p>
<p>The opinion of the EESC is globally welcoming the proposals enshrined in the Joint Communication and the Council conclusions.</p> <p>However, the EESC is advocating for the development of a number of new tools/instruments in the future in order to support the implementation of the joint Communication. These proposals were not foreseen neither in the Joint Communication itself, nor in the Council Conclusions, as the main objective of the former was to examine how to better use existing tools and policies and was not aiming at developing new ones.</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.3, 3.3.4, 3.3.5:</p> <p>An action Plan on the use of transition experience in the programming process shall be designed.</p> <p>The European Transition Compendium (ETC) and other suggestions from recent EU documents have to be operationalized without delay.</p>	<p>Creating an “action plan” on the use of transition experience in the programming process is going beyond what the Commission and EEAS have already committed to in the Joint Communication or Council Conclusions. The Joint Communication and Council Conclusions have been shared with EU Delegations worldwide, with a request to implement the global approach where relevant.</p> <p>Sharing knowledge and experience on transition, providing technical assistance in transition situations should, first of all, be based on partner countries’ requests/needs.</p> <p>The Commission has created a certain number of tools to make experience on transition available to a wide audience notably the European Transition Compendium or the knowledge sharing platform “EU support and expertise on transition processes” on capacity4dev and both are operational from the Commission’s side.</p> <p>The ETC has been promoted for years by the Commission, including in delegations and with other international partners. In this regard, it is important to highlight that the</p>
1.3, 3.3.4, 3.3.5:	ETC was not conceived as a tool to be used

<p>An action Plan on the use of transition experience in the programming process shall be designed.</p> <p>The ETC and other suggestions from recent EU documents have to be operationalized without delay.</p>	<p>and promoted only by the Commission. What is not known is whether the Member States themselves have undertaken their own 'ETC-promotion exercise' with their own bilateral partners and delegations in third countries.</p>
<p>1.2, 1.5, 3.2.2</p> <p>Partnership agreements, support programmes and grants should not be approved without a structured dialogue with civil society.</p> <p>The engagement of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including social partners from both the EU and the partner countries, is necessary in the programming and realisation of all development cooperation activities.</p>	<p>The Communication makes specifically reference to positive experience of multi-stakeholder dialogue such as the Structured Dialogue (SD).</p> <p>Following the SD concluded in May 2011 and in November 2011, the Commission started to embark on a consultative process with CSOs and Local Authorities (LAs) from the EU and the Partner countries, on the set up of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD). In 2012, two sessions of the PFD were held in Brussels, during which consultations were held, namely on the Communication on CSO in Development, adopted in September 2012 (<i>COM (2012) 492 final, The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations</i>).</p> <p>The PFD brings together representatives of regional and global networks and platforms of CSOs (including Trade Union, Cooperatives, NGOs), the Private Sector and LAs from Africa, Asia and Pacific, Latin-America, the Neighbourhood Region and the EU as well as stakeholders representing the main EU institutions and bodies (EEAS, EP, EESC, CoR, EIB) and the Member States.</p> <p>The overarching goal of the PFD is to offer a multi-stakeholder space for dialogue on development issues (including policy and programmes) at EU headquarters level.</p> <p>On post-2015, the EU will maintain an active and constructive role in international discussions and will continue its strong and open dialogue with civil society up to 2015 and beyond.</p>
<p>1.6 Positive discrimination (...) and requirement that partners with recent</p>	<p>Most of the EU procedures (calls for proposals, tender procedures etc.) are</p>

<p>transition experience should be involved in development projects.</p>	<p>allowing for working in partnership. Partners with less experience in managing EU projects may always acquire this experience through working in partnership with more experienced ones.</p> <p>In addition, this positive discrimination may already exist in some cases, for instance in the thematic programme NSA/LA. Under the COORDINATION AND NETWORKING strand of the programme, the objective is towards “achieving more efficient cooperation, foster synergies and facilitate a structured dialogue between civil society networks, within their organisations and with EU institutions”. “Exceptionally, and exclusively for actions proposed by organisations from the 12 new Member States (EU 12), the rate of EU co-financing can correspond to 90% of the total eligible costs of the action.”</p>
<p>1.7., 3.1.3, 3.3.4, 3.3.6, 3.3.7, 3.3.8</p> <p>New mechanisms for cooperation must be launched and existing ones broadened</p>	<p>The objective of the Communication was not to create new policies or instruments but rather to improve synergies between the current policies (Enlargement, Neighbourhood, etc.) and increase the impact of existing tools.</p> <p>Broadening of existing instruments:</p> <p>The revision of the geographic coverage of certain EU instruments (TaieX, Twinning, Erasmus, etc.) or the creation of new mechanisms of cooperation was not the objective of the Commission Communication. In addition, existing tools already allow for a large margin of flexibility. For instance, the thematic programme NSA/LA is making it possible to develop partnerships between an EU 15 NGO, and EU 12 NGO and a partner country NGO. It is thus recommended to better use possibilities existing under the current programmes rather than develop new ones.</p> <p>Regarding the EDF, the Financial Regulation was adapted during the negotiation with the Council ACP Working Group, as follows:</p>
	<p>"Short-term technical assistance and advice, which Member States that acceded to the</p>

	<p>Union following a transition process received under the TAIEX programme, with which they had positive experience, should be available to ACP States and OCTs, where appropriate. In order to benefit from such assistance and advice in the long term, appropriate support to centres of knowledge and excellence on governance and reform in the public sector could be provided"(Recital 15 a).</p> <p>In addition article 35.1 (c) foresees "expert facilities for targeted capacity building in the ACP State, OCT or their region and short term technical assistance and advice to them, as well as support of sustainable centres of knowledge and excellence on governance and reform in the public sector."</p>
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<p>N°53</p>	<p>European Year of Development 2015 COM (2013)509 – EESC 6639/2013 - REX/392 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Andris Gobiņš (GR11-LV) DG DEVCO – Commissioner PIEBALGS</p>
<p>The Commission welcomes the supportive opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on the proposal on the EYD2015 made by the Commission. The Commission welcomes the proposal to build broad alliances with civil society to promote the EYD2015.</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.5 The main emphasis must be placed on the most sustainable and relevant aspects of development cooperation such as global solidarity and justice, policy coherence for development, sustainable development goals, global public goods and challenges and European citizens' role as consumers and actors in a global economy. Narrow and donor-recipient related issues should not be the priority.</p>	<p>With its main objectives the EYD2015 promotes a wide approach on EU development cooperation taking into account the aspects mentioned by the EESC. The main objectives of the EYD2015 are 1. to inform Union citizens about the European Union's and its Member States' development cooperation, highlighting the results that the EU, acting together with its Member States, has achieved as a global actor and will continue to do so in line with the latest discussions on the overarching post-2015 framework; 2. to foster direct involvement, critical thinking and active interest of European citizens and stakeholders in development cooperation including in policy formulation and implementation; and 3. to raise awareness of the benefits of the Union's development cooperation not only for beneficiaries of the Union's development assistance but also for Union citizens and to achieve a broader understanding of policy coherence for development, as well as to foster among Europeans and people in developing countries a sense of joint responsibility, solidarity and opportunity in a changing and increasingly interdependent world.</p>
<p>1.6 Emphasis should also be placed on the role of the private sector in development¹ as</p>	<p>The private sector has an important role to play in development. The private sector is mentioned</p>

¹ EESC opinion on *Involvement of the private sector in the post 2015 development framework*, not yet published

<p>developing countries do not usually have development strategies for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), which include cooperatives. Such development strategies can contribute to eradicating poverty and facilitating inclusive growth. European experience with policy to support SMEs, in collaboration with the social partners and interested NGOs, should be transferred in a targeted and relevant way to developing countries with the aim of achieving sustainable growth in all its three pillars – economic, social and environmental.</p>	<p>as a key stakeholder to design and implement the European Year for Development 2015.</p>
<p>1.7 The EESC reiterates that the key for success in previous European Years has been the close cooperation between EU institutions and bodies and civil society, both at national and EU level. Thus the Committee calls for immediate action - setting up multi-stakeholder task forces to secure timely and properly structured cooperation. Therefore the EESC strongly supports the establishment of a civil society organisations' (CSO) Alliance.</p>	<p>Like in previous European Years, the close cooperation between EU institutions and bodies and civil society, both at national level and EU level, is the key for success. Therefore, the Commission will work closely with civil society at central and decentralized level with EU Member States.</p>
<p>2. General comments</p> <p>2.1 The European Year plays a special role in the communication and active involvement of citizens and allows joint EU, national and regional/local level events, organised by both the institutional players and a growing number of civil society organisations.</p> <p>2.2 2015 is the year by which the</p>	<p>The Commission fully supports these comments. The EYD2015 should be used to leverage the already broad support by the EU, its Members States and its citizens towards partner countries and serve to build new coalitions between stakeholders.</p>

¹ Special Eurobarometer Nr 352, June 2010 http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_352_en.pdf.

² The initiative was first presented and discussed at the CONCORD General Assembly 22 June 2011 by Andris Gobiņš (European Movement – Latvia and European Economic and Social Committee) and Māra Sīmane (Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS)). An informal task force was established and an official vote in the EESC Plenary on 7 December 2011 on the EESC opinion *Trade, Growth and World Affairs: Trade Policy as a core component of the EU's 2020 strategy* included the request for the European Year of Development and Cooperation.

Millennium Development Goals are to be met. It should culminate with an evaluation of the results attained and the adoption of a new strategy or paradigm for the decade to come. The EU has played a key role in development issues and in setting up the Millennium Development Goals. Although development cooperation is much more than Development Aid, it should be noted that most of the total Official Development Aid (60%) comes from the EU and its Member States. The EU and its citizens, together with its partners in the developing countries, should play a leading role in the post-2015 debates.

2.3 According to Eurobarometer data¹, approximately 20 million people in the EU are personally involved in non-governmental development organisations (including volunteers), approximately 130 million EU citizens donate to an organisation helping developing countries and a total of 72% of EU citizens personally support the idea of helping countries with low development indicators.

2.4 A growing number of people do understand that development starts within our own countries and within our own lives, with fair trade, environmental protection, participation in political processes etc.

2.5 A fast-growing, wide and inclusive coalition of supporters, with strong support from the EU Commissioner for Development, and his team, under the leadership of CSOs from national and EU level – the European Movement – Latvia, the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS) and the Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD), and the EESC² have brought together key stakeholders including a wide

<p>range of CSOs, the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament. From the outset, the partners have worked towards a successful and ambitious Year with concrete results.</p>	
<p>3.3 Engaging and involving European citizens and civil society organisations and their partners throughout the world in development and in a political dialogue on global development and global justice is the key to the success of the Year and development as such. CSOs play a key role not only in fund raising and implementing development activities, but also in political processes. This is especially true for the younger generation, who tend to be more connected to the world at large through social and other media and more aware of the pressing issues that they - as our future leaders - will need to resolve. Therefore, the meaningful and direct involvement of children and youth, especially girls, in the debates of the European Year is of crucial importance. There also has to be a meaningful and direct involvement of citizens with various interests, social backgrounds etc. The aforementioned aspects should be duly reflected in the preparation and implementation of the Year, in its content and finances.</p>	<p>EU citizens and civil society organisations are the main target group of the EYD2015. Young people are especially targeted within the decision of the EYD2015 as they are the future leaders. Focussed communication channels (e.g. social media, special events) will make sure that this target group is properly addressed. The gender aspect will be respected.</p>
<p>3.5 The EESC applauds the Commission, for its plan to invest a significant amount of funding to ensure that the Year is a success. At the same time, the Committee expresses its concern that at this stage only a very small percentage of that funding is earmarked for civil society engagement and activities, although this would ensure the best sustainability and results for the Year. Using funds for existing or new PR contracts/tenders should be avoided or reduced to an absolute minimum, as in some cases the work might even be counterproductive to the Year's goals.</p>	<p>Civil society engagement and activities, which is vital for the success of the EYD2015, will be supported directly though funds being managed by the Commission and funds being managed at decentralized level by the EU Member States. The EYD2015 is also part of this this year's Call for Proposal for Development Education Awareness Raising (DEAR) call for proposals. Additionally, the engagement and activities will widely benefit from non-financial support being offered by the Commission.</p>

<p>3.6 Based on good practice in the past European Years, the Committee expresses its support for the establishment of a wide and inclusive CSO Alliance, which as in past years should play the leading role in the planning and implementation of the European Year. The EESC suggests paying special attention to a close cooperation with EESC members and bodies and other stakeholders and with members of the Alliance at EU and national levels.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes this proposal to be in close contact with the EESC, details to be defined.</p>
<p>3.8 The Committee is committed to developing cooperation mechanisms at all relevant levels in order to ensure the best possible cooperation and synergies between the EU institutions and bodies. Cooperation with the United Nations during the Year should be initiated.</p>	<p>Coordination with International Organisations active in Development, including the UN, is foreseen. Against the background of the ongoing post-2015 discussion, closely linked to the EYD2015, a close cooperation with the UN is envisaged.</p>
<p>4.1 Article 1 (additional sentence). A national sub-title would make it possible to reflect the differences in traditions, challenges and potential in each Member State more effectively: "2015 shall be designated the 'European Year <u>for Development</u>' [...] <u>A sub-title and motto, slogan or invitation for the year should be established at Member State level.</u>"</p>	<p>The proposed title is indeed 'European Year <u>for Development</u>'. The suggested subtitle will be the same for all Member States as it has been in previous years with a subtitle, and also take into consideration that this is a European Year.</p>

<p>N°54</p>	<p>Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down certain transitional provisions on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and amending Regulation (EU) No [...] [RD] as regards resources and their distribution in respect of the year 2014 and amending Council Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 and Regulations (EU) No [...] [DP], (EU) No [...] [HZ] and (EU) No [...] [sCMO] as regards their application in the year 2014</p> <p>COM(2013) 226 final – EESC 4657/2013 fin – NAT/604</p> <p>492nd Plenary Session of September 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Seamus Boland (GRIII-IE)</p> <p>DG AGRI – Commissioner CIOLOS</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>For most of the text, the EESC opinion did not entail any concrete requests. It just supported the Commission proposal on the need for smooth transition and stresses the importance of minimising impact of transitional rules in the rural world and environment.</p>	<p>This was in line with the Commission proposal and was duly reflected in the final outcome of the political negotiations</p>
<p>EESC recommended the transitional rules reflect the budget agreed under the old programme and that unrealistic national ceilings are not imposed (points 1.3.1 and 1.7)</p>	<p>The Commission proposal (and final adopted legal text) simply reflected the budget agreed under the MFF and CAP reform discussions</p>
<p>EESC sustained the view that the transitional arrangements should allow for new commitments to be funded with the new budget for area and animal related measures and urgent farm investments.</p>	<p>The adopted legal text (Regulation (EU) No 1310/2014) covered such measures under the transitional arrangements.</p>

N°55	<p>Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)</p> <p>COM(2013)521 final - EESC 6571/2013 fin – NAT/619</p> <p>494th Plenary Session of December 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Seamus Boland (GRIII-IE)</p> <p>DG AGRI – Commissioner CIOLOŞ</p>
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
General comments	<p>This proposal was merged into proposal COM(2013) 226 final, and the ordinary legislative procedure for that proposal has been completed and the final regulation adopted and published as Regulation (EU) No 1310/2013. Therefore, Proposal COM(2013) 521 became obsolete.</p>

<p>N°56</p>	<p>Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au pairing (recast) COM(2013) 151 final – EESC 3516/2013 fin – SOC/484 492nd Plenary Session of September 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Cristian Pîrvulescu (GR11-RO) DG HOME - Commissioner MALMSTROM</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>3.14 Access for third-country nationals to forms of employment that combine work with education and training should be encouraged. It is important to reinforce the principle of equal treatment with regard to the employment and conditions of employment of people whose situation is governed by these directives.</p> <p>3.17 In the case of third-country nationals admitted as researchers, students or au pairs, the Committee encourages the Commission, the Member States and the European Parliament to strengthen their protection in the workplace or where they participate in the labour market. In particular, the Committee thinks that the derogations from the equal-treatment provisions of Directive 2011/98/EU should be removed for students, researchers and au pairs.</p>	<p>The Commission's proposal provides for enhanced opportunities for the relevant groups to combine work with education and training.</p> <p>The Commission position, including in the ongoing negotiations in the Council and the European Parliament, is that any group covered by the Directive which is considered as a worker by the national legislation of the Member State concerned, shall enjoy equal treatment as provided for by Directive 2011/98/EU.</p> <p>Concerning the derogations from the equal treatment provisions of the Directive 2011/98/EU, in the case of researchers the Commission proposal goes further than the scope of the equal treatment provisions of Directive 2011/98/EU as it states that by way of derogation from Article 12(2)b of Directive 2011/98/EU researchers shall be entitled to equal treatment with nationals of the host Member State as regards branches of social security, including family benefits. This approach means that the same rules would apply as is the case in Directive 2005/71. Au-pairs are not fully entitled to equal treatment; doing so would have meant changing the scope of the Single Permit Directive.</p>

	<p>Regarding students, the restrictions set out for students are optional; a forthcoming analysis of the implementation of the Single Permit Directive will provide information on how Member States have implemented this provision.</p>
<p>2.2 The EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility sets the overarching framework of the EU's migration policy. It also defines how the EU organises its dialogue and cooperation with non-EU countries.</p> <p>4.7 The Committee supports the development of mobility partnerships under this policy and underlines the need to enhance cooperation between the EU and third countries to ensure effective "brain circulation". Developing education and research in the EU should not be done by depriving third countries of the skills of their own citizens. It is not clear from the Commission proposal what specific activities are envisaged in this regard.</p>	<p>The Commission proposal is fully in line with the guiding principles behind the EU's Global Approach for Migration and Mobility that promotes cooperation and dialogue with third countries.</p> <p>The target groups of this proposal i.e. students, researchers, trainees, volunteers and au-pairs represent those categories of migrants that engage mostly in temporary movements with the primary aim to obtain education, engage in research or training activities and/or enhance their linguistic or cultural knowledge of the host countries. Most of them return back to their home countries or move to other third countries after their stay in the EU and thus contribute to the brain circulation and enhancement of relations between the EU and third countries.</p>

<p>N°57 A more inclusive citizenship open to immigrants (own initiative opinion) EESC 3210/2013 fin - SOC/479 493rd Plenary session: October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Luis Miguel Pariza Castaños (GRII-ES) DG HOME - Commissioner MALMSTRÖM</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is binding in nature and creates a new framework for European policies on immigration, integration and citizenship. The Commission should analyse the way in which the Charter affects the status and rights of third-country nationals, with a view to launching new initiatives to adapt immigration law to the guarantees enshrined in the Charter.</p>	<p>The Commission systematically takes the Charter into account when evaluating existing legislation and when considering new proposals.</p>
<p>1.2 The EU should adopt an Immigration Code to provide greater transparency and legal clarity regarding the rights and freedoms of third-country nationals residing in the EU. The Committee considers that European immigration law should guarantee equal treatment and the principle of non-discrimination.</p>	<p>The Commission is considering the development of a "Handbook" containing the rights of migrants as enshrined in the EU acquis in order to ensure transparency.</p> <p>The Commission will further reflect on the need for consolidation and streamlining of the immigration acquis.</p>
<p>1.3 The Commission should assess the on-going problems in Member States' practices with regard to protecting the fundamental rights of third-country nationals, especially in relation to social rights, mobility and access to effective remedy.</p> <p>1.4 The Commission should investigate the barriers that in some Member States still hamper implementation of the long-term resident status and the Blue Card and should bring infringement proceedings against those Member States that fail to comply with Community legislation.</p>	<p>Promoting the integration and non-discrimination of third-country nationals, and particularly of long-term resident third-country nationals, is a long-standing commitment of the EU. In order to achieve this objective, Directive 2003/109/EC was adopted ensuring a legal status to long-term resident third-country nationals (LTRs) which approximates rights of third-country nationals to those enjoyed by citizens of the European Union. This Directive therefore guarantees an extended set of rights to third-country nationals who are LTRs throughout the EU, promotes the principle of non-discrimination and lays down for the first time provisions to facilitate mobility from one Member State to another.</p>

	<p>Long-term residents shall enjoy equal treatment with nationals as regards access to employment, including working conditions such as pay and dismissal; education and vocational training; or recognition of professional diplomas, social security, social assistance and social protection, access to goods and services among other things. Further, long-term EU residents enjoy intra-EU mobility rights, under certain conditions. In 2011 the scope of application was extended to beneficiaries of international protection (refugees) by the amending Directive 2011/51/EU of 11 May 2011.</p> <p>The Commission follows closely the implementation of these Directives.</p> <p>The Commission is currently assessing the implementation of the Blue Card Directive which had to be transposed by 2011. A thorough conformity assessment is underway. A first report to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of this Directive by the Member States is foreseen to be adopted in May 2014.</p> <p>The Single Permit Directive had to be applied by December 2013, and as for the Directives above, the Commission has taken legal action against Member States who have not communicated transposition, and the Commission will assess the conformity of the transposition in 2014. This Directive extends the right to equal treatment in an equivalent way to the Long Term Residents and the Blue Card holders for among others, third-country workers who have been admitted on the basis of national legislation. This will be an important Directive to avoid exploitation of third country workers.</p>
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<p>1.5 In the context of the Agenda for Integration, the Commission should carry out an assessment of the procedures and barriers faced by Member States regarding the acquisition and loss of nationality, and the impact of these on EU citizenship.</p>	<p>The database "modes of acquisition of citizenship" hosted at the EU Democracy Observatory on Citizenship of the European University Institute (http://eudo-citizenship.eu/databases/modes-of-acquisition) shows 27 modes of acquisition that captures most of the broad variety of legal regulations that we find in different countries.</p> <p>The project ACIT - Access to Citizenship and Impact on Immigrant integration - carried out by the same institute and supported by the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals, has investigated naturalisation patterns, implementation procedures and the relationship between naturalisation and the integration process in Member States, accession candidates and EEA countries. The ACIT summary report proposes a standard for assessing and improving national legislation and policies on the acquisition of nationality for immigrants and their descendants, explains why acquisition of nationality matters for integration and disseminates knowledge and awareness on the main challenges MSs and the EU are facing in their citizenship and integration policies.</p>
<p>1.6 The Committee calls on the European Commission to draw up a report on the state of play of discussions in the EU concerning the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families¹. The Commission should ensure that the conditions for ratifying this convention are in place.</p>	<p>The Convention is open to accession only for states, not for international organisations. Member States have recently expressed their reluctance concerning accession to the Convention. The lack of principal distinction in the Convention between regular and irregular migrant workers is not in line with national and EU policies – which aim to grant a comparable set of rights only to legally staying third-country nationals and to fight against irregular immigration.</p> <p>The EU is fully attached to the objectives of the Convention and the EU</p>

¹ United Nations General Assembly of 18.12.1990.

	<p>immigration legislation goes in the same direction. The current EU instruments provide far-reaching protection for both regular and irregular immigrants and often go further than the general provisions of the Convention. The protection of fundamental rights and other rights of migrants is a key priority in the application and further development of the EU migration framework, which is easier to modify than rigid international instruments. The value of ratification of the Convention with a wide range of reservations would be very limited or even counterproductive.</p>
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N°58	Immigration by sea in the EUROMED region (own initiative opinion) EESC 2533/2012 fin – REX/375 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Panagiotis Gkofas (GRIII-EL) Co-rapporteur: Mr Stefano Mallia (GRI-MT) DG HOME – Commissioner MALMSTROM
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>Overall – Please see the overall position expressed. Only areas not covered by the Commission Communication mentioned in the overall comment will be covered by this fiche.</p>	<p>The European Commission has taken a position on several of the issues raised by the EESC in its Opinion through the adoption of the Communication on the work of the Task Force Mediterranean (COM(2013) 869) which was adopted on 4 December 2013 and endorsed by Member States at the JHA Council in the same month. The Communication was also welcomed by the European Council in December 2013. It includes 37 operational actions in the following areas: 1) Actions in cooperation with third countries; 2) Regional protection, resettlement and reinforced legal avenues to Europe; 3) Fight against human smuggling and organised crime; 4) A border surveillance operation to enhance the maritime situational picture and saving migrants' lives; and 5) Assistance to Member States dealing with high migration pressures.</p>
<p>1.5 Disembarkation</p>	<p>A draft regulation on rules for border surveillance operations at sea coordinated by Frontex, which covers interception measures, search and rescue, disembarkation and the principle of non-refoulement, is being developed at EU level and it is expected to be adopted in the coming months by the European Parliament and the Council.</p>
<p>1.8 A comprehensive European policy on</p>	<p>The European Commission supports</p>

<p>irregular immigration based on solidarity</p>	<p>the strengthening of voluntary solidarity mechanisms such as intra-EU relocation. To this end, two pilot projects have been undertaken in Malta and the initiatives in this field will be financed through the Asylum, Integration and Migration Fund on a permanent basis. On the other hand, the revised Dublin Regulation was adopted in June 2013 alongside the other legislative elements of the Asylum package, therefore the Commission considers that focus in the coming years will need to be on implementation of the legislation. In the longer term however consideration will be given to all options to further strengthen the Common European Asylum System, on the basis of the thorough evaluation of the existing instruments.</p>
<p>3.5.3. Repatriation of irregular migrants (calls for greater transparency concerning detention centres)</p>	<p>According to Article 16(4) of the Return Directive, <i>"Relevant and competent national, international and non-governmental organisations and bodies shall have the possibility to visit detention facilities, as referred to in paragraph 1, to the extent that they are being used for detaining third-country nationals in accordance with this Chapter. Such visits may be subject to authorisation"</i>. The Commission is checking the correct transposition and implementation of this provision in all Member States.</p>

<p>N°59</p>	<p>Regulation establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps ("EU Aid Volunteers initiative") COM(2012) 514 final – EESC 4394/2013 - REX/388 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Giuseppe Iuliano (GR11-IT) DG ECHO – Commissioner GEORGIEVA</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>EUAV should be used to facilitate the involvement of Member States with less experience in humanitarian activities. Specific actions are needed to promote the participation of volunteers from these countries and foster their social and humanitarian organisations.</p>	<p>EUAV is designed as an inclusive EU-wide scheme that also provides leverage for the less experienced countries. Specific non-discrimination clauses are envisaged in the volunteers' selection and certification processes of the organisations (art. 10.1a and 11.2) plus technical assistance actions to help less experienced European organisations to undergo certification (art.10.5).</p>
<p>The existence of different laws on voluntary action in the various Member States could have a negative impact on the Aid Volunteers initiative.</p>	<p>Treaty Article 214.5 does not allow harmonisation of national laws. To compensate, common standards and procedures for volunteers' management will be established (art. 9) and contracts between the sending organisations and the volunteers signed (art.14.3).</p>
<p>The certification mechanism must be based on past experiences and that its implementation must incorporate the key criteria of transparency, free competition and equal opportunities, not to mention accountability.</p>	<p>Specific provisions have been added to that effect during the negotiations (art. 10.1 and 1a). A stock-taking exercise is currently taking place and more specific arrangements will be defined in implementing acts.</p>
<p>The capacity building of hosting organisations must be a priority and should include technical, logistical, and financial support from the project.</p>	<p>The Commission fully shares this view and therefore has proposed specific capacity building actions to that end (Article 15). 14 % of the overall budget has been accordingly earmarked.</p>
<p>The institutions sending and hosting volunteers must be civilian in nature, to</p>	<p>Specific provisions have been added to make clear that only civilian</p>

ensure that due regard is shown for humanitarian principles and values and that they are accepted by the affected communities.	organisations can take part in the initiative (art. 10.2 and 3). Humanitarian principles and values from the EU Humanitarian Aid Consensus are part of the general principles (art.5.1) applicable in the entire implementation of the regulation.
The safety of beneficiaries, volunteers and staff in general, especially in the sort of situations where humanitarian operations are conducted, must come first. Further refining the definition of the types of projects that are best suited to volunteer participation or, at least, more stringently defining the types of operation from which volunteer involvement under the initiative would be excluded.	The priority of safety and security of volunteers is a general principle (art.5.3). Deployment has been explicitly excluded in the theatre of international and non-international armed conflicts (art.14.2). An annex specifies the priorities for deployment, including types of activities where volunteers would be engaged for response.
Volunteer involvement must always be needs-based, following an analysis and assessment of the situation and the needs of populations affected by disasters or complex crises.	Specific provisions have been added to that effect in almost all articles and actions (art.3,4,5,10,11,12,14,15,16). Needs assessment has been included as a priority when preparing the annual work programme (art.21.3).
Standards for all phases of volunteer management should be based on good practices in the humanitarian sector and existing high-quality initiatives. They must attach particular importance to safety and security and conditions.	Specific provisions have been added to that effect (art.9.1). Implementing rules will be adopted for the procedures to be followed before, during and after deployment to ensure duty of care and appropriate safety and security measures...(art.9.2a)
The participation of businesses that also have experience in corporate or other types of volunteering has to be studied carefully, also in order to enhance the role played by SMEs.	For-profit private organisations can be associated in the implementation of the actions (art.10.4). The Commission is currently carrying out a specific study on employee volunteering.
In order to promote public support for humanitarian action and recognition for the role of voluntary action, dissemination and awareness-raising activities for the general public on these issues are recommended.	The Commission fully shares this view and has envisaged specific communication and dissemination actions based also on communication plan (art.17).

<p>N°60</p>	<p>Blue Belt, a Single Transport Area for shipping COM(2013) 510 final – EESC 5494/2013 fin – TEN/533 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Jan Simons (GRI-NL) DG MOVE- Vice President KALLAS</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.2 In the Committee's view, the feasibility of the Commission's proposals is highly dependent on the view of customs authorities, one of the key stakeholders in this area. It urges the Commission to discuss the proposals in the Customs Committee as soon as possible.</p>	<p>The Blue Belt initiative, including the two proposed modifications of the Customs Code Implementing Provisions (CCIP), have been discussed on several occasions and will be further discussed in the near future in the competent sections of the Customs Code Committee (CCC).</p>
<p>1.3 One of the preconditions for the success of the Commission's proposals – both those on regular shipping services and those on the eManifest – is that Member States' IT systems must be completely interoperable for the eManifest. The Committee would point out that experience has shown that this is not a foregone conclusion, even when building on existing systems.</p>	<p>The Commission considers harmonisation to be one of the key principles of the initiative and strives towards achieving maximum interoperability between systems.</p>
<p>1.4 It should be explicitly stated in the eManifest that it expressly applies to all shipping services.</p>	<p>The Commission confirms that the eManifest should be able to be used by all maritime transport operators, whether or not they offer short sea and/or deep-sea shipping services.</p>
<p>1.5 The Commission's envisaged deadline of June 2015 for implementing the eManifest is appropriate, albeit optimistic, as it coincides with the deadline, set by the Member States themselves, by which they must have established national single window services. Such services are crucial to the smooth operation of the eManifest, the technical preparations for which could not, therefore, be delayed for another year.</p>	<p>The Commission is still committed to the deadlines expressed in the Communication, i.e. presenting a proposal to the competent committee at the end of 2013, the eManifest being ready to be applied as of June 2015 to coincide with the establishment of the National Single Windows as foreseen in Directive 2010/65/EC.</p>

<p>1.6 The Committee would also highlight the need to ensure that all stakeholders – and in particular customs authorities – are kept properly informed. There have been cases where the customs authorities were either unaware that operators were using paper manifests, as they are legally entitled to do, or refused to validate or accept them.</p>	<p>The Blue Belt initiative, including the two proposed modifications of the Customs Code Implementing Provisions (CCIP), have been discussed at several occasions and will be further discussed in the near future in the competent sections of the Customs Code Committee (CCC), where customs authorities are represented. Moreover, all stakeholders, including industry, are kept informed and invited to express their opinions in informal meetings of the ECG (Electronic Customs Group).</p>
<p>1.7 Alongside "hard" IT aspects, the Commission and Member States should also pay attention to "softer" elements such as initial and continuing training for customs officials, but this element is unfortunately absent from the Commission's proposals.</p>	<p>This aspect is covered by the Customs 2013 and its successor the Customs 2020 Programme, which has substantial means for communication and training. These aspects do not fall strictly speaking within the scope of the Blue Belt initiative.</p>
<p>1.10 Finally, the Committee feels that it is very important for regular consultations to be held, once the Commission's proposals have been adopted, with customs authorities, representatives of the shipping sector, freight forwarders and employees in order to consult them on and inform them about obstacles linked to the implementation of the proposals.</p>	<p>A follow-up mechanism, which already exists for other measures, could be used. Apart from the competence of the Customs Code Committee to consider updates of the legal text, there is the Electronic Customs Group, which follows in detail the practical implementation of legal measures. In addition, joint monitoring exercises by Commission and Member States are held on customs matters.</p>

<p>3.3 In this communication, the Commission aims to create a policy framework to achieve the aforementioned goals by presenting two necessary legal measures amending the Customs Code Implementing Provisions (CCIP), one already submitted to the competent committee in June 2013, and a second to be proposed by the Commission by the end of 2013.</p>	<p>The first measure, an enhancement of the Regular Shipping Service, has been presented to the competent committee in July 2013 and adopted after a positive vote on 5 November 2013. The new scheme applies as of 1 March 2014.</p> <p>The second measure, the eManifest, was presented to informal ECG meeting and to the competent committees end of 2013. Discussions are ongoing.</p>
<p>4.2 In its enthusiasm for completing the internal market for maritime transport as soon as possible, the Commission claims that this has already been achieved in other modes of transport. Sad to say, this claim is rather too optimistic: the internal market has not yet been completed either for road freight transport (cabotage restrictions) or for rail transport (national passenger transport).</p>	<p>The Commission continues to strive, in line with Single Market Act II, to further enhance the internal market for all modes of transport. It notes that while obstacles remain, other modes than maritime are more advanced with regards to customs operations.</p>

<p>N° 61</p>	<p>Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 in the field of aerodromes, air traffic management and air navigation services and the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the Single European Sky (recast) and the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Accelerating the implementation of the Single European Sky COM(2013) 408-409-410 final – EESC 5372/2013 – TEN/530 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Thomas McDonogh (GRI-IE) DG MOVE - Vice President KALLAS</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The EESC calls upon Member States to show courage and political will for rapidly creating the Single European Sky (SES), and upon the European Commission to assume full leadership of the implementation process.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the positive and supportive stance of the EESC throughout its report and agrees with it on all questions of principle.</p>
<p>Full-scale social dialogue has to be put in practice without further delay. Only a comprehensive HR partnership in European aviation can ensure the necessary uniform commitment on all sides and a harmonised approach to the realisation of a true SES, to the benefit of employment in all parts of the aviation value chain, the environment and, not least, European consumers.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that social dialogue is vital and is ready to consider this. However, it should be taken into account that several groups already exist for discussion with the relevant social partners and for reasons of administrative efficiency it might well be preferable to enhance the role of these existing groups rather than create new institutions.</p>
<p>The amalgamation and consolidation of Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs) and the reduction in numbers should be processed as soon as possible. The concept of the virtual centres represents a technical innovation compatible with SESAR and at the same time makes an ongoing and socially acceptable transition possible. To this end, the introduction of SESAR will need Air Traffic Management (ATM) reform. The standardisation of ATM equipment across the EU should be pursued.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that economies of scale should be sought wherever they are available. As concerns the concept of virtual centres, a development programme is already underway to determine and certify the first remote tower applications and the concept is expected to spread rapidly thereafter.</p>
<p>The boundaries of the FABs should also be reviewed to ensure that they are of the right shape and size to serve the purpose they are set up for. Traffic flows, service provision synergies and potential performance</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that FABs should be essentially performance-based constructions. That is the reason for proposing to modernise the FAB concept in the SES2+ proposal so that</p>

improvements should be the proper determinant of FAB composition rather than mere geographic proximity or political/cultural affiliation.	it no longer focuses on administrative structures, but rather on the results achieved.
The Committee acknowledges the initiative to unbundle ancillary ATM services, thereby opening them up to greater competition. It insists that before such measures are applied the Commission organises without any further delay the preparation of an independent impact study about the effects, in particular relating to social and employment aspects, of these.	The Commission welcomes the support, but considers that such studies should rather be performed as cost-benefit analyses at local level due to the fact that many factors relating to social effects vary greatly from case to case and therefore a general EU-level study would not be effective in analysing the overall social and employment effects.
Defining objectives that enhance efficiency while maintaining the quality of working conditions and improving aviation safety.	The Commission agrees that the performance targets need to be proportional, not only to the financial, but also to the human cost they incur. This is already an issue to be considered at the level of implementation measures.
The airspace users need to be more involved in policy formulation.	The Commission fully agrees and has proposed to include airspace users in the governance of air navigation service providers.

<p>N°62</p> <p>Food security and bioenergy</p> <p>COM (2012)595/3 – EESC 2634/2013 fin - NAT/595</p> <p>492nd Plenary Session of September 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Franco Chiriaco (GR11-IT)</p> <p>DG CLIMA/DG ENER – Commissioners HEDEGAARD and OETTINGER</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The EESC believes that the issue of food security should be placed at the heart of the EU's policies... and urges the Commission to prioritise the issues of security of food supply, land protection, the competitiveness of European agriculture and land use, making a close correlation between food security and bioenergy production.</p>	<p>The Commission strongly agrees with this principle. The need to reconcile food security with the sustainable use of renewable resources for industrial purposes, while ensuring environmental protection and supporting more resource-efficient food supply chains, are the main aims of the Commission's Bioeconomy Strategy and Resource Efficiency Roadmap.</p>
<p>The Committee agrees with the Commission's decision to include binding provisions on land-use change in Directives 98/70/EC and 2009/28/EC, as current biofuels are produced from agricultural crops...but disagrees with the decision made by the Commission to assess indirect land-use change (ILUC) on the basis of a comparison of fossil-based and biogenic energy sources, looking exclusively at greenhouse gas emissions and downplaying issues such as security of supply and the impact of fossil fuels.</p>	<p>Current EU legislation on harmonised sustainability criteria does include legally binding restrictions with respect to the land used for the cultivation of biofuel that are counted towards EU targets. Further measures aiming to reduce environmental impacts associated with their production, are included in the Commission's legislative proposal of 17 October 2012 COM(2012) 595 final. The Commission would like to stress to the Committee that an assessment of the impacts on security of supply and impact of fossil fuels of the proposed measures taken to address ILUC were considered as part of the preparatory work (SWD(2012)343) in the making of its proposal.</p>

<p>The Committee endorses the Commission's proposal to limit the production of biofuels derived from food crops – while taking account of investments already made – and to incentivise "advanced" biofuels. It believes, however, that the production of second-generation biofuels that use wood and straw could remove carbon sinks and thus increase CO₂ levels.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the endorsement of the Committee to its proposal. It acknowledges the need to further assessment of the impacts associated with the production of advanced biofuels as these technologies are starting to come to market, and states that work to this extent is currently being undertaken.</p>
<p>The Committee feels that its assessment would be different if microalgae were also used as a feedstock for the production of biofuels; even if this is not yet a commercial reality, it would, in comparison to first-generation biofuels, give less cause for concern regarding competition for land and water resources.</p>	<p>The Commission strongly supports the importance of both, legislative and financial incentives for the development and deployment of advanced biofuels technologies and other renewable fuels. The Commission is funding research needs and deployment of advanced biofuels, including microalgae, through existing and recently launched programmes such as NER300, FP7 and Horizon 2020.</p>
<p>The Committee fully reaffirms the conclusion that biofuel production should comply with shared principles and be subject to impact assessment studies in which the local community is closely involved, making sure careful attention is paid to the right to food ... and recommends that the Commission adopt at European level tools such as operator-level indicators to assess the potential impact of bioenergy projects on food security at individual Member State level.</p>	<p>The Commission monitors the impacts of biofuel consumption in the EU on food security and food prices in the Union and globally. Results from this work are included in regular reports to the European Parliament and the Council as specified in the Renewable Energy and Fuel Quality Directives.</p>

<p>N°63</p> <p>The 2015 International Climate Change Agreement: Shaping international climate policy beyond 2020</p> <p>COM(2013) 167 final - EESC 2638/2013 - NAT/603</p> <p>493rd Plenary Session of October 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur Mr Josef Zbořil (GRI-CZ)</p> <p>DG CLIMA - Commissioner HEDEGAARD</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>... To show leadership and have more influence on the international negotiations the EU needs to commit itself firmly to more demanding targets for 2020 and 2030 [...] The Committee continues to urge the EU to adopt indicative targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions of 40% by 2030 and 60% by 2040 and to follow-up with legally binding policies that would deliver these reductions. Such long-term indicative targets are needed as benchmarks to give predictability and stability for investors and decision takers within Europe. They would also provide a strong benchmark level of ambition for the international negotiations.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with this statement in principle. This is one of the reasons that the Commission has prepared a comprehensive climate and energy strategy for 2030, setting out the ambition levels and providing a long term perspective for investors.</p>
<p>... The EESC fully supports the Communication's position that we cannot wait until the 2015 Agreement is in force in 2020: the actions we take between now and 2020 will be crucial for setting policies on the right path.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees: strong action pre-2020 is vital to achieve the objective to limit climate and global warming to less than 2°C. This has inspired a range of initiatives implemented and proposed since the adoption of the 2008 climate change and energy package.</p>
<p>... An imbalance in carbon conditions, mainly between the most competitive regions, has caused investment in the EU to dry up.</p>	<p>The Commission disagrees: The Commission has published a Communication analysing the options for moving beyond a 20% reduction by 2020 and assessing the risk of 'carbon leakage'. http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/ets/cap/leakage/index_en.htm . GDP growth for the period 1990-2011 was 44 % for the EU-15 and 45 % for the EU-28. While the economy grew significantly, emissions</p>

	decreased, demonstrating the decoupling between economic growth and GHG emissions. Accordingly, between 2010 and 2011 the EU- 28 GDP increased by 1.4%, while GHG emissions fell by 3.3 %.
... Rightfully, adaptation is expected to be one of the four mainstays of the future 2015 Agreement.	The Commission agrees: The negotiation positions of the EU for the 2015 agreement are clearly in support of adaptation to be a central part of the 2015 agreement.

<p>N°64 EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change COM(2013)216 final - EESC 4122/2013 - NAT/609 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Isabel Caño Aguilar (GR11-ES) DG CLIMA – Commissioner HEDEGAARD</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>The implementation of the new adaptation plan must take account of the fact that higher temperatures in Europe and the possibility of an increased rate of extreme phenomena may cause damage to people, the economy and the environment that is greater than initially thought.</p>	<p>The EU Adaptation Strategy highlights the benefits of flexible, low-cost and no-regret adaptation measures, in particular given the uncertain outcomes associated with projected climate change.</p> <p>In 2017, when the Commission will report to the Parliament and the Council on the state of implementation of the Strategy and propose its review if needed, the Commission will take into account the state of play on projected climate change impacts and vulnerability, for instance based on the upcoming IPCC report on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability (expected in March 2014), and will assess new policy options accordingly.</p>
<p>The adaptation strategy must include specific measures for urban areas - home to three quarters of the European population - and for rural areas which are especially sensitive to variations in climate.</p>	<p>Regarding urban areas, the European Commission is already implementing action 3 of the EU Adaptation Strategy: to introduce adaptation in the Covenant of Mayors framework (2013/2014). The launch of the urban adaptation initiative ("Mayors Adapt") took place on 19 March 2014 and included representatives of the Commission, the Committee of the Regions and cities. A first signatory event is foreseen for September 2014.</p> <p>Regarding rural areas, the Commission is working with Member States on implementing most effectively the climate mainstreaming objectives in the Common Agricultural Policy 2014-2020 and also under the Climate Change Committee Working Group on Adaptation. Furthermore, the Communication COM(2013) 659 "A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector" highlights the need for Member States to take account of the challenges posed to EU forests by</p>

	a changing climate.
The Commission proposal should offer a broader financial overview, including the key contributions to be made by the Member States, the business sector and families.	The Commission, together with the European Environment Agency, is working on collecting additional evidence on adaptation costs and benefits as well as on funding opportunities at EU and national level and from financial institutions. The collected information will be made available via the European climate adaptation platform – climate-ADAPT.
The EESC suggests specifically examining the structural changes required by the adaptation strategy in certain policies and in the production of goods and services, taking account of the impact on employment, industry, construction and RDI, among other things.	<p>A service contract is ongoing on assessing the employment implications of climate change adaptation. Final results are expected by September 2014.</p> <p>In addition, the European Commission's Joint Research Center is working on refining climate change vulnerability assessments in Europe. This applies in particular when assessing the vulnerabilities of new infrastructure investments. The Commission is also actively promoting ecosystem based adaptation approaches, as mentioned in the Communication Green Infrastructure (GI) (COM(2013) 249 final), for instance in the context of the LIFE 2014-2020 Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013.</p> <p>The Horizon 2020 programme for 2014-2015 promotes research and innovation activities needed to protect our citizens, society and economy against natural disasters, taking account of climate change. The Climate KIC (Knowledge and innovation community) includes a component on adaptation services, to increase the capacity of society, cities and infrastructure to be able to adapt to climate change.</p>
The Commission's legislative proposals on cohesion policy, which will enter into force in 2014, mention adaptation to climate change, but the EESC believes that requirements should be raised.	In the context of the mainstreaming of climate action in the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020, the Commission has published a series of factsheets available on DG Climate Action's website http://ec.europa.eu/clima/publications/index_en.htm#Mainstreaming . They present examples of adaptation and mitigation activities to be considered by

	<p>Member States when developing their partnership agreements and fund-specific programmes. They also explain how the Commission will assess the mainstreaming of climate action by Member States in this context.</p>
<p>Since action by the Member States is crucial, it should be pointed out that insufficient progress has been made in certain areas since the publication of the White Paper in 2009. The Commission must therefore consider the need to play a more active role, making use of its powers under the TFEU.</p>	<p>The Commission is currently developing an adaptation preparedness scoreboard, which will assess the level of readiness to addressing climate change impacts in Europe. Interactions with Member States have been reinforced via the creation of a new working group dedicated to adaptation under the Climate Change Committee.</p> <p>In 2017, the Commission will assess whether action being taken in the Member States is sufficient. If it deems progress to be insufficient, by reference to the coverage and quality of the national strategies, the Commission will consider without delay proposing a legally binding instrument.</p>

N°65	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the monitoring, reporting and verification of carbon dioxide emissions from maritime transport and amending Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 COM(2013) 480 final - EESC 5340/2013 - NAT/616 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Stefan Back (GRI-SE) DG CLIMA - Commissioner HEDEGAARD
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>The EESC welcomes the fact that the Proposal's cost to benefit ratio is favourable for the ship operators involved. The EESC expects the Commission to monitor the outcome of the implementation of the Proposal on this point and to take the appropriate initiatives if, for instance, the predicted costs and benefits turn out to have an adverse impact on competitiveness.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the statement to the extent that the Commission is always expected to review the impact of all its actions including giving consideration to competitiveness issues. According to the studies underlying the proposal, Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) as a standalone measure has been considered a cost-effective measure removing existing barriers currently hampering the uptake of cost-effective technical and operational measures already available.</p>
<p>The EESC takes note that there is a need for further measures in order to achieve the objectives set out in the White Paper and considers that it is extremely important that such measures are taken within the IMO to avoid the risk of conflict with non-EU Member States and/or a negative impact on the competitiveness of EU shipping.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that MRV represents only a first step in tackling maritime emissions and that further action is needed. Action taken at global level is always more effective than action at regional level and it is indeed the EU's preferred option. Therefore, together with Member States, the Commission will continue to work in the IMO towards such measures. 2014 will be an important year to discuss these initiatives; it is therefore essential for the EU to have an agreed view on its own MRV approach in order to feed into these global discussions.</p> <p>As the proposed MRV has been designed as a flag-neutral measure, no negative impacts on the competitiveness of EU shipping can realistically occur.</p>
The EESC questions the need for, and the	The Commission disagrees: firstly,

<p>added value of, the additional operational information that goes beyond the scope of fuel consumption and emissions, which is to be monitored and reported under the Proposal, as set out in Articles 9 (d) – (g), 10 (g) – (j) and Annex II, particularly as at least part of this information is considered to be commercially sensitive by the shipping industry and views seem to diverge as to the value of its availability in an aggregated form.</p>	<p>monitoring, reporting and publication of meaningful ship-specific efficiency information are clearly key aspects of MRV's success as a stand-alone measure (increasing transparency to address the lack of information as a major market barrier for the uptake of cost-effective measures). Furthermore, this scope also aligns the EU-wide MRV with international initiatives gathering data related to operational efficiency parameters, and would ensure EU leadership in these international discussions. The fact that energy efficiency information will be only reported and made available in an aggregated manner based on annual data should dispel any concerns regarding commercial sensitivity. These views are also supported by numerous industry stakeholders.</p>
<p>The EESC draws attention to the Blue Belt initiative by the Commission for alleviating administrative burdens on short sea shipping and takes the view that this approach should also apply with regard to this proposal</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the need to keep a lean as possible approach for MRV obligations. For this reason, only the most relevant emitters above 5 000 GT will be covered and a choice among four monitoring methodologies based on existing practices is also given under the Commission proposal.</p>
<p>The EESC recalls that the proposal will also apply to ships flying the flag of non-EU countries. While this does not pose a problem for intra-EU transport operations, problems may well arise in the case of transport between EU and non-EU ports. The EESC considers that this may represent a practical and political rather than a legal problem in view of the potential risk of retaliation or complications arising from the existence of several parallel systems of this kind. The EESC expresses the hope that the planned system will prove to be sufficiently attractive to those falling under its ambit and that, unlike the ETS system in civil aviation, no difficulties will arise with regard to third country operators.</p>	<p>The Commission disagrees and recalls that a flag-neutral regime applying also to non-EU ships in a non-discriminatory manner when calling at EU ports is in line with existing practices and policies in the maritime sector. This scope is therefore not likely to be a controversial feature to the extent that IMO partners have agreed that monitoring, reporting and verification of energy efficiency data would in any case be the necessary first step. Furthermore, it is common practise in maritime transport to impose certain port-entry conditions.</p>

<p>The EESC also questions whether the scope of the expulsion sanction stipulated in Article 20 (3) of the Proposal is reasonable, since it would appear to prevent a ship from entering any EU port, including those of its flag state. It would seem reasonable to provide for some sort of port of refuge, which would provide an opportunity to resolve compliance problems.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that an expulsion order shall only be considered as a last resort measure in case of repetitive breaches. None of the enforcement measures proposed to be adopted by Member States shall be in conflict with existing international maritime regulations, particularly on vessel's access to ports of refuge in case of distress, or to their own flag State ports.</p>
<p>The EESC questions whether the time limits provided for implementation are not unnecessarily long and whether it might not actually be possible to shorten the timeframe by one year. For instance, while it is foreseen that the Proposal should enter into force on 1 July 2015, monitoring plans do not need to be communicated to the Commission until 30 August 2017, whereas the monitoring process itself will not actually begin until 1 January 2018.</p>	<p>The Commission disagrees and recalls that a number of delegated acts and implementing acts will need to be prepared and adopted once the Regulation has entered into force. Also Member States and stakeholders need to adopt preparatory measures before its effective implementation.</p>

<p>N°66</p>	<p>Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health, plant reproductive material, plant protection products and amending Regulations (EC) No 999/2001, 1829/2003, 1831/2003, 1/2005, 396/2005, 834/2007, 1099/2009, 1069/2009, 1107/2009, Regulations (EU) No 1151/2012, [...]/2013, and Directives 98/58/EC, 1999/74/EC, 2007/43/EC, 2008/119/EC, 2008/120/EC and 2009/128/EC (Official controls Regulation)</p> <p>COM(2013) 265 final, COM(2013) 327 final - EESC 4014/2013 – NAT/611</p> <p>493rd Plenary Session of October 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr José Maria Espuny Moyano (GRI-ES)</p> <p>DG SANCO – Commissioner BORG</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 The EESC generally supports the proposal on official controls, which is aimed at guaranteeing a high level of human, animal and plant health and ensuring that the EU's internal market functions smoothly.</p> <p>4.1 The Committee welcomes the proposal and the Commission's intention to protect the single market and guarantee a uniformly high level of health protection across the EU, helping to avoid legal vacuums.</p>	<p>The Commission thanks the Committee for its support for the Regulation proposal.</p>
<p>4.2 The EESC supports the objective of modernising and strengthening control tools and official controls, so as to increase their use and make them more effective.</p>	<p>The Commission thanks the Committee for its support for the objectives of the Regulation proposal.</p>
<p>1.3 The EESC views the setting of control fees by each Member State using their discretion as problematic, given that they may be implemented in different ways. The Committee is therefore in favour of harmonising these fees in terms of the criteria and the methodology used to manage them, though not in terms of their actual financial amount, which will have to reflect the circumstances of each country.</p>	<p>The proposed provisions considerably frame the calculation of fees and the determination of their amount. They ensure that fees reflect accurately the costs incurred by the competent authorities and avoid unjustified differences between Member States. The Regulation proposal specifies indeed that mandatory fees shall recover all the costs incurred in relation to official controls (full cost recovery) and lists precisely all the costs to be</p>

<p>4.3 The EESC is concerned by the fact that each Member State sets its own control fees without the establishment of a predetermined amount. This could give rise to differences between countries, making some operators less competitive than others.</p>	<p>taken into account when calculating the amount of fees. The proposal also obliges competent authorities to make available to the public the breakdown of the costs incurred per activity (e.g. official controls performed in view of the issuance of official certificates) and per cost element (e.g. equipment) as well as the methods used to calculate the fees, and requires that Member States consult concerned operators on the methods of calculation.</p> <p>The aim of the proposal (as well as of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004) is that fees should reflect the costs to the competent authorities of performing official controls. Where standard or minimum fees are applied instead of cost-based fees, the impact of such fees may be greater on small businesses because of their lower turn-over or through-put, whereas cost based fees are proportionate to the resources deployed during the performance of official controls and so fairer to small businesses.</p>
<p>1.4 The EESC is against financing 100% of official controls in each Member State purely on the basis of these fees, since there is a risk that the competent authorities will not give priority to making their controls more efficient.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that Member States shall ensure effective and efficient official controls and has therefore proposed that the competent authorities of the Member States must publish how the fees are calculated and used as well as the arrangements in place to ensure the thrifty and efficient use of the fees collected. These new transparency provisions will act as drivers to competent authorities to improve the efficiency of their controls.</p>
<p>1.5 As regards exemptions from payment of fees by microenterprises, the EESC highlights the risk of market distortion arising from possible differences in the way in which these fees are applied in the Member States. The risk of distortion would be reduced if the legislative proposal, or subsequent versions, were to include criteria for granting payment exemptions which were uniform across the EU and which were more precise and</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee that it should be avoided that Member States enforce differently the exemption of microenterprises from mandatory fees. The Commission has therefore specified in the Regulation proposal the criteria to be fulfilled: only enterprises employing fewer than 10 persons (full time equivalent) and whose annual turnover or annual balance total does not exceed EUR 2</p>

<p>sufficiently broad so as to reflect the diverse reality of the sector and to take special account of SMEs and microenterprises.</p>	<p>million are exempted from payment of mandatory official control fees.</p>
<p>1.7 The EESC feels it is important that, for the future application of the legislation, account should be taken of the lack of uniformity in application of control measures in various Member States, especially given that differences in human and financial resources in the inspection work of each country may give rise to distortions in the controls of the respective agricultural and livestock markets, with adverse consequences for all.</p>	<p>A series of empowerments in the Regulation proposal will allow the Commission to lay down sector specific rules on official controls (in particular uniform minimum frequencies of official controls, uniform specific requirements for the performance of official controls or particular measures in case of specific non-compliances) or to organise at Union level coordinated mandatory control plans.</p>

<p>N°67</p>	<p>Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on fees payable to the European Medicines Agency for the conduct of pharmacovigilance activities in respect of medicinal products for human use</p> <p>COM(2013) 472 final - EESC 5169/2013 – INT/712</p> <p>493rd Plenary session of October 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Ms Renate Heinisch (GR11-DE)</p> <p>DG SANCO – Commissioner BORG</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 The EESC welcomes the Commission proposal, which makes an important contribution to the further improvement of medicinal product safety and the transparency of the assessment processes. The Committee particularly welcomes the improvements compared with the Commission's first draft, in particular special rules for SMEs.</p>	<p>The Commission thanks the Committee for its support for the proposal.</p>
<p>1.2 The Committee welcomes the principle that the marketing authorisation holder will not have to pay fees twice for the same pharmacovigilance activity. It calls on the Commission to ensure that, simultaneously with the introduction of the new fees, national fees charged for the same activity are abolished.</p>	<p>The Commission would like to remark that the activities to be financed by the proposed fees are performed at the level of the European Medicines Agency. Those activities are set out in the basic Union legislation on pharmacovigilance and the proposed Regulation includes clear references to such activities relevant for each proposed fee. The Commission believes that this approach allows Member States to assess the need to exert their competence of adjusting their national fees, in the cases where this is considered relevant.</p>
<p>1.3 The EESC welcomes the Commission's proposals regarding the periodic safety update reports (PSUR) and post-authorisation safety studies (PASS). The Committee calls on the Commission, however, to allow further fee reductions for medicinal products with a well-understood</p>	<p>The Commission would like to remark that the proposed Regulation is based on the underlying Union legislation on pharmacovigilance. That legislation exempts, in principle, some types of products from submitting regular PSURs and the same types of products</p>

<p>safety profile.</p>	<p>are proposed to benefit from a reduction of the annual flat fee. Moreover, the underlying Union legislation provides for a risk-based approach whereby the frequency of submission of a PSUR is different for the different active substances and the fee would only be charged when the actual PSUR assessment takes place. Regarding PASS, the Commission would like to remark that a fee is proposed only for non-interventional studies which are conducted in more than one Member State and which are imposed on the marketing authorisation holder in the terms of the authorisation. It is believed that the safety profile is taken into account at the moment of the decision to impose such a study.</p>
<p>1.4 The EESC believes that the processing of EU-wide assessment procedures carried out on the basis of pharmacovigilance data (referrals) is a national responsibility, which should not be financed exclusively from fees paid by marketing authorisation holders. Such assessment procedures are a key task of the competent authorities at national and EU level and should, the Committee believes, be financed from EU funds, inter alia in order to ensure the independence of the assessment.</p>	<p>The Commission would like to remark that the processing of the pharmacovigilance referrals, including the scientific assessment delivered by the rapporteurs and co-rapporteurs of the Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee, is performed at the level of the European Medicines Agency. Consequently, the corresponding proposed fee is levied by the Agency and (co)-rapporteurs from the national competent authorities performing the Union-wide assessment are remunerated by the Agency from that fee. Regarding the independence of the assessment, the Commission would like to remark the EMA has rules in place on the handling of conflicts of interests that apply, inter alia, to its scientific experts, including committee members.</p>
<p>1.5 The EESC welcomes the proposal that the EMA will levy an annual flat-rate fee on marketing authorisation holders for pharmacovigilance activities. However, the</p>	<p>The Commission thanks the Committee for its support for the proposal. The Commission takes into account the suggestion of the Committee to re</p>

<p>Committee notes that the pharmacovigilance activities are only available to a limited extent, if at all. The Committee therefore suggests that the flat-rate fee be suspended pending availability of these services.</p>	<p>examine the scope of the activities covered by the annual flat fee in the framework of the negotiations with the other Institutions. The Commission believes that the flexibility to amend the fees through the proposed delegated act is an important tool to adjust, where justified, the relevant amounts.</p>
<p>1.6 The Committee welcomes the Commission's proposal that fees should be shared as fairly as possible between all market authorisation holders affected. The EESC suggests that the proposed approach involving "chargeable units" should be reconsidered.</p>	<p>The Commission thanks the Committee for its support for the proposal. The Commission takes into account the suggestion of the Committee to re-examine the notion of 'chargeable units' in the framework of the negotiations with the other Institutions.</p>

<p>N°68</p>	<p>Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on protective measures against pests of plants, proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material (plant reproductive material law), and proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Animal Health COM(2013) 267 final, COM(2013) 262 final, COM(2013) 260 final - EESC 4013/2013 – NAT/610 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Armands Krauze (GR11-LV) DG SANCO – Commissioner BORG</p>
<p>COM(2013) 267</p>	
<p>1.1 The EESC welcomes and broadly supports the Commission proposal on regulations of the Parliament and the Council on animal health, plant health and the quality of plant reproductive material. It considers that the existence of consistent, transparent rules, provided they are properly implemented in all the EU's Member States, is an essential prerequisite for ensuring fair competition among all market operators in Europe.</p>	<p>The Commission thanks the Committee for its support for the proposal.</p>
<p>1.4 The EESC points out that EU legislative acts, particularly in the area of plant health, must be consistent with the positions the EU has adopted in the past at international level and notes that, for the time being, the Commission proposal relating to the process for establishing international plant health standards is not in line with the point of view previously expressed by the Union as regards the inclusion of invasive alien species in the measures on plant health.</p>	<p>The Commission proposal on protective measures against pests of plants (COM(2013)267 final) covers pests as defined in the standards developed under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), with the exception of genetically modified plants and plants which are invasive alien species. For genetically modified plants, dedicated Union legislation is in force. As regards plants which are invasive alien species, the Commission on 9 September 2013 adopted a dedicated proposal on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (COM(2013)620 final). As a contracting party to the IPPC, the Union implements the standards</p>

	developed under the IPPC, but it may do so through multiple legal acts. The
	Commission therefore does not agree with the statement made by the Committee.
1.5 The EES welcomes the possibility of compensation to the operators concerned for the value of destroyed plants, plant products or other objects subject to eradication or containment measures, introduced in the new plant health law.	The Commission thanks the Committee for its support for the proposal.
COM(2013) 262	
4.18 According to the draft regulation under discussion, the definition of "operator" does not include private individuals. A "professional operator" is defined as any natural or legal person carrying out, as a profession, at least one of the following activities with regard to plant reproductive material: producing, breeding, maintaining, providing services, storing, or making available on the market. To make inspections easier, these professional operators are required to register.	The Commission agrees with the Committee.
4.19 The wording of the new provision relating to professional operators needs to be clarified, as it is difficult to understand its scope: specifically, does it relate only to them or does it also apply to non-professionals?	The definition of professional operator intends to specify specific obligations for particular professionals in areas of concern. Such cases include registration of operators, traceability requirements or authorisation to issue official labels. It is appropriate and proportionate that those obligations only concern persons who “as a profession” produce, breed, maintain, provide services, store or market plant reproductive material, namely plant material capable of, and intended for, producing entire plants.
4.20 The draft regulation proposed by the Commission contains many other grey areas, for example regarding the way in which the	The part of the draft Regulation that concerns forest reproductive material reflects the substantial provisions,

<p>provisions of that regulation are to apply to the production of forest reproductive material and the monitoring of its sale, which differ from those applicable to propagating material of agricultural crops as regards the system of classification, definitions and indeed the fundamental principles for inspection and supervision, which it would be helpful not to change. Moreover, the measures in place to produce and certify such forest reproductive material are compliant with the OECD framework.</p>	<p>scope, terminology and principles of the existing legislation (Directive 105/1999/EC). The text of the proposal has been technically adapted to the nature of the legal acts (Regulation) and to the new requirements concerning the empowerments to adopt delegated and implementing acts. In order to ensure a consistent approach with the other relevant proposals, forest reproductive material must also be subject to the rules on the Official Controls, as set out by the respective Commission proposal¹. However no fundamental changes should be expected with regards to the way controls and certification is carried out in the area of forest reproductive material..</p>
<p>4.21 The EESC cannot accept that the producer be required to cover all the costs connected with raw materials used for the production of forest reproductive material, given that such a provision is likely to reduce the interest in registering new material of high genetic quality of this type, which could have a negative impact on new plantations in the EU. Making such raw material for the production of forest reproductive material is a long term endeavour, which provides a return on investment only after several decades.</p>	<p>Pursuant to the proposal on plant reproductive material, the principle of cost recovery should apply in two areas with regards to forest reproductive material². Those areas concern competent authorities' actions with regards to registration of approved basic forest material pursuant to Article 112, and issuance of a master certificate pursuant to Article 122. That principle aims at ensuring that registration and controls receive the appropriate financial support by the operators who, in a broader sense, will benefit from them. However it should be noted that micro-enterprises, as defined in Article 136, will be exempted from the obligation to pay those fees.</p>
<p>4.22 The EESC welcomes the fact that plant reproductive material exchanged in</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the</p>

¹ COM(2013)265 final

² See Article 135

kind between two people other than professional operators is to be excluded from the scope of the regulation, which must be drawn up in such a way as to allow collectors or neighbours to exchange seeds or plants without having to worry that they might be breaking the law by doing so.	Committee.
COM(2013) 260	
1.3 The EESC calls on the Commission to introduce all necessary safety measures into legislation and to provide for sufficient EU funding to stave off the dangers associated with wild animals which, migrating from third countries and crossing the EU's external land borders, could spread dangerous infectious diseases in the EU.	<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee. All necessary safety measures have been introduced into this proposal.</p> <p>The Commission would like to point out that all financing of any veterinary measures are dealt with separately, in Commission proposal COM(2013) 327 final.</p>
3.5 It is important for the Commission to have the willingness to reduce disturbances in trade, to take account of the particularities of small livestock farms and micro-enterprises, and to put in place simplified procedures in order to avoid undue red tape and disproportionately high costs whilst ensuring strict application of high animal health standards.	The Commission agrees with the Committee. The intention of the proposal is to find the right balance between ensuring strict application of high animal health standards yet also avoiding unnecessary disruption and burdens for operators.
4.1 The EESC has reservations about the Commission's power to adopt delegated acts and implementing acts under the Lisbon Treaty. Its concerns relate in particular to sensitive issues for Member States in that they will not be able, in the case of delegated acts, to ensure that specific national or regional circumstances are taken into account.	The Commission believes that the empowerments for delegated and implementing acts are legally sound and workable in practice. The Commission is committed to consulting Member State experts (as well as other stakeholders) in the development of delegated and implementing acts to ensure that they are workable, within the possibilities provided for in accordance with the Treaty.

<p>4.2 The EESC draws attention to the fact that near the EU's external land borders there is an increased danger of wild animals spreading infectious animal diseases in the Member States. However, the proposal attempts to widen the potential scope of disease control measures which can now be applied more coherently to wild animals and provides for a number of biosecurity and other preventive measures that can be taken at EU borders. In this respect, the EESC calls on the Commission to provide for all necessary safety measures and sufficient European funding to stave off this danger.</p>	<p>The Commission is pleased that the Committee recognises that the proposal attempts to widen the possible measures that can be taken. The Commission points out again that the financing aspects are dealt with separately in Commission proposal COM(2013) 327 final.</p>
<p>4.3 The range of people who are required to report their suspicions relating to an outbreak of animal disease needs to be specified. The owners of animals have a duty to monitor the health of the animals they own.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee that the owners of animals have a duty to monitor the health of the animals they own, but others aside from owners also have a duty to report suspicions. The intention of the Commission is to lay down rules more clearly in the delegated and implementing legislation, where this is needed for clarity.</p>
<p>4.4 The EESC notes inconsistencies in the use of the terms "operator" and "animal professionals", and suggests that an explanation of these terms be given so as to specify that the right of ownership belongs to the "operator". It points out that the role attributed to "animal professionals" is not made clear anywhere in the text of the proposal.</p>	<p>The Commission's intention is that the definition of operator should not be restricted to the owner of animals. The Commission would like to draw the Committee's attention to the definitions of 'operator' and 'animal professional' in Article 4(1)(22) and 4(1)(23), which the Commission hopes provide some clarity.</p>
<p>4.5 The EESC calls on the European Commission to publish, as soon as possible, a structured list of animal diseases so that the measures for preventing and controlling them can be evaluated. It is important to adopt</p>	<p>The Committee will be aware that the list of animal diseases is intended to be drawn up with an implementing act, so as to provide flexibility and rapid response for the future. However, a non-paper has been made public</p>

	<p>a flexible approach so that it can be updated where necessary. It should be drawn up in close cooperation with Member States and other interested parties.</p>	<p>showing how diseases and measures for them which are currently set out in EU legislation fit into the new framework of disease control measures which it hopes aids understanding.</p>
4.6	<p>The EESC wishes to point out that there is an inconsistency in terminology between the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the non-commercial movement of pet animals (hereinafter the "pets regulation") on the one hand, and the Commission proposal being discussed here, on the other. This needs to be put right. It is difficult to understand the legal relationship between the natural person (keeper) and the owner of the animals, although the pets regulation defines an "authorised person" as "any natural person who has authorisation in writing from the owner to carry out the non-commercial movement of the pet animal on behalf of the owner".</p>	<p>The Commission notes the Committee's concerns. The Commission proposal on animal health was finalised and published before the agreement on the "pet regulation" was concluded. The intention is, and always was, to align the wording of the animal health proposal with the final version of the pet regulation, during the legislative process.</p>
4.7	<p>In order to avoid having to use interpretative standards, the EESC suggests that it be specified that the Commission is drawing up a delegated act on the acquisition of basic skills by operators and animal professionals.</p>	<p>The Commission proposal does not envisage drawing up a delegated act for the acquisition of basic skills for operators and animal professionals: this is a general requirement in the proposal and it will be up to the Member States and operators and animal professionals themselves how to implement it.</p>
4.8	<p>With regard to health examinations for certain sectors, such as aquaculture and beekeeping, it recommends that only properly trained and accredited specialists be authorised to perform veterinary tasks.</p>	<p>The intention of the Commission proposal is that only properly trained and accredited specialists be authorised to perform veterinary tasks for aquatic animals. It would be up to the Member States whether they wish to authorise this in their country. This approach is in line with the OIE guidelines. There is no provision in the proposal for</p>

	beekeeping specialists to perform veterinary tasks.
4.9 The EESC calls on the Commission to ensure that the mechanisms for compensating livestock owners in the event of the spread of dangerous infectious disease are identified clearly and comprehensibly in legislation.	The Commission wishes to highlight again that mechanisms for compensating livestock owners are set out in the financial proposal.
4.10 The EESC recommends including sectors like poultry in the rural development programmes for the funding of farm investments required to comply with the new rules on animal health.	The Commission notes the Committee's recommendation, but this proposal does not have a direct impact on the rural development programmes.

<p>N°69</p> <p>Commission report on Competition Policy 2012</p> <p>COM(2013) 257 final – EESC 4092/2013 - INT/702</p> <p>493rd Plenary Session of October 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Juan Mendoza Castro (GR11-ES)</p> <p>DG COMP – Vice President ALMUNIA</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission Position</p>
<p>Looking at how the general principles are applied to specific cases will reveal whether state aid modernisation (SAM) and the new framework for SGEI aid are resulting in more effective and just implementation of the TFEU. Because of their special characteristics, postal services warrant special consideration when it comes to state aid.</p> <p>State aid policies should enable the public authorities to grant aid to businesses which can further the EU's growth objectives, whilst limiting distortions of competition.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the EESC that State aid needs to support the EU's growth objectives, whilst limiting distortions of competition. As for postal services, those postal services that can be considered to be services of general economic interest (SGEI) are indeed assessed under the specific SGEI framework.</p>
<p>It is questionable whether liberalisation – the central aim of EU energy policy – has brought more competition, more transparent markets and lower prices for users, and the Commission appears to acknowledge this</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of the Committee's views; it would like to note that liberalisation is not an aim in itself, but a tool to ensure affordable, secure and sustainable energy supplies in the future. Whilst the Commission agrees that the reform efforts designed to complete an internal market for energy, including the third Energy Package, could have brought more tangible benefits already, it needs to be underlined that the internal energy market is already delivering benefits to consumers and business in the form of dropping wholesale prices, improving security of supply (most notably in gas) and in making the uptake of significant shares of renewables in the energy mix possible. Key remaining challenges are the diversification of the EU's energy supply, promoting investments, and</p>

	<p>addressing increasing energy prices .</p> <p>Competition is part of the policy mix that can contribute to tackling these challenges. EU energy legislation has contributed to dismantling legal monopolies; harmonising rules; and bringing in measures to support market integration and liberalisation. Competition policy, on its part, has ensured that companies would not maintain or reinstate barriers to competition. Hence, competition enforcement, regulation and liberalisation measures all contribute to the three pillars of EU energy policy: sustainability, competitiveness and security of supply.</p>
<p>As regards the telecommunications market, the EESC believes that the principal goals should be a genuine reduction in telephone charges for households and businesses, high-quality broadband connections for all, abolition of roaming charges, and a single EU regulator.</p>	<p>The Commission shares the view of the EESC concerning the importance of the creation of a genuine single market for telecoms. However, regulatory efforts need to be complemented by competition enforcement in this area.</p> <p>As for the access to broadband services, the revision of the Broadband Guidelines for State aid aims to support the development of broadband infrastructure in areas where this investment would not be commercially viable. In addition, the Guidelines ensure that such State-funded infrastructure is pro-competitive, by requiring that open access is granted to competitors.</p>
<p>In high-technology sectors where there is constant innovation, the lengthy period of time between the start of proceedings and the adoption of decisions can result in the disappearance of the companies that are the victims of these anticompetitive practices.</p>	<p>The Commission recognises that prompt reaction is required in fast-moving markets. While the Commission is constantly working on the improvement of its procedures, it needs to give proper account to due process and fairness in its antitrust proceedings given the complexity of antitrust cases. The Commission has recently used commitment decisions, where the</p>

	companies involved are willing to offer adequate commitments, which have allowed for speedier proceedings.
The ban on anticompetitive practices on the e-book market in the EU faces the added difficulty that there are different policies in the Member States on pricing and taxation of books in general and e-books in particular. The EESC points to the need for greater harmonisation in the e-book market to prevent arbitrage and to move towards market integration.	The Commission believes that the commitment decision adopted in the e-book cases address adequately the identified competition concerns. The Commission takes note of the EESC's opinion that a greater harmonisation is necessary on the e-book market.
The EESC welcomes and supports the Commission's endeavours to penalise abuse of patents by large pharmaceutical companies, creating barriers to the generic medicines market. However, given these companies' high profits, the fines are unlikely to have a dissuasive effect. Tougher legal measures should be considered for infringements of competition principles in the medicines market.	The Commission started to focus on distortive practices in the pharma sector based on the results of the sector inquiry in 2009. In the recent years the Commission has adopted prohibition decision concerning patent abuse in some significant cases, like the Lundbeck and the Fentanyl cases. The Commission is convinced that its actions have a significant deterrent effect. At the same time, the Commission is determined to continue competition enforcement in the pharma sector as long as such practices are changed.
The EESC expresses its concern at the proposed Commission Regulation (EU) declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market under Articles 107 and 108 of the TFEU ¹ , given that they pose a serious threat to the jobs of people with disabilities in certain Member States. The EESC recommends, in particular, that state aid for the employment and training of vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities be exempt from application of the threshold based on national GDP and treated as an absolute principle, as it would have no effect on preventing distortion of competition.	<p>The Commission is fully committed to defending the rights of workers with disabilities.</p> <p>According to the latest draft of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER), very large schemes of aid for the employment of workers with disabilities exceeding the threshold set out in Article 1(2)(a) of the draft GBER do not need to be notified. In addition it should be noted that the draft extends the scope of eligible costs for aid for compensating the additional costs of employing workers with disabilities.</p>

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consultations/2013_gber/gber_draft_regulation_en.pdf

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<p>N°70</p>	<p>Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on certain rules governing actions for damages under national law for infringements of the competition provisions of the Member States and of the European Union and on the Communication from the Commission on quantifying harm in actions for damages based on breaches of Article 101 or 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union COM(2013)404 final - EESC 4975/2013 fin – INT/706-707 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Ms Reine-Claude Mader (GRIII-FR) DG COMP – Vice President ALMUNIA</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>General comments</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the Opinion of the EESC, which is very supportive of the Proposal for a Directive on antitrust damages actions and the Communication on the quantification of harm.</p>
<p>The EESC considers that it is crucial for victims to be able to obtain sufficient disclosure of evidence to support their claims for damages and endorses the system based on a proportionality test to be carried out by the national courts that the Commission introduces to that end in the Proposal for a Directive.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes this endorsement of the rules on the disclosure of evidence included in the Proposal for a Directive.</p>
<p>While acknowledging the need to protect the effectiveness of the leniency programmes of the Commission and national competition authorities should be ensured, the EESC stresses that such protection should not absolve infringers from paying damages to victims. In combination with the exemption of immunity recipients from joint and several liability, in relation to which the EESC sees some practical difficulties, the EESC considers that too much protection is offered to undertakings benefiting from leniency programmes, to the detriment of victims.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the statement of the EESC that the effectiveness of leniency programmes should be protected and agrees with the EESC that cooperation with a competition authority in the framework of a leniency programme should not lead to civil immunity in actions for damages. The Proposal for a Directive contains two measures protecting the leniency programme: first of all, certain specific documents are excluded from disclosure in actions for damages; second, the immunity recipient has certain advantages in</p>

	<p>relation to joint and several liability. As regards disclosure, it should be noted that only two specific documents are excluded from disclosure, whereas all other evidence – most notably that drawn up at the time of the infringement – is accessible for the victims. Furthermore, the self-incriminating nature of the two protected documents warrants the exclusion from disclosure, as the disclosure would have a particularly negative effect on the willingness of infringers to participate in the leniency programme. As regards the limitation of joint and several liability of the immunity recipient, it should be emphasised that this protection ensures that the immunity recipient is not put in a worse position than its co-infringers because of cooperating with the competition authority and – as a result – not challenging the infringement decision in court. Furthermore, the right of victims to full compensation is always guaranteed, since the injured parties can still claim damages from the immunity recipient if the other infringers are not able to provide full compensation.</p>
<p>The EESC supports the rules on binding effect of NCA decision and on limitation periods, which allow victims of competition law infringements to take optimal advantage of the decision of the competition authority establishing the infringement.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the support of the EESC on this point.</p>
<p>The EESC emphasises that compensation should be obtained by those who actually suffered the harm, which is achieved through the rules on passing-on introduced by the Proposal for a Directive. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of the rules on passing-on that significantly</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the endorsement from the EESC as regards the rules on the passing-on of overcharges and agrees that situations of multiple compensation, but also of absence of liability, should be avoided.</p>

<p>improve the possibilities for consumers and small undertakings to receive compensation for the harm suffered. The EESC furthermore mentions that unjust enrichment should be avoided.</p>	
<p>The EESC regrets that the Proposal for a Directive does not contain binding rules on collective redress.</p>	<p>On the same date when the Proposal for a Directive was adopted, the Commission also adopted a horizontal Recommendation and Communication on collective redress, encouraging the Member States to introduce mechanisms of collective redress, not only in the field of competition law, but to facilitate the enforcement by national courts of all EU rights (for further information, reference is made to the Commission position in relation to INT/708 on the European Framework for Collective Redress).</p> <p>As regards the Proposal for a Directive, it should be emphasised that its provisions apply to both individual and collective damages actions for breaches of competition law, if such collective damages actions are possible under national law.</p>
<p>The EESC thinks the Communication and Practical Guide on the quantification of antitrust harm are useful tools to resolve one of the most difficult issues in antitrust damages actions, i.e. the quantification of antitrust harm.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the EESC's support on this point.</p>

<p>N°71</p>	<p>Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 2011/16/EU as regards mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation COM(2013) 348 final – EESC 5161/2013 (CNS) – ECO/353 493rd Plenary Session of Octobre 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Petru Sorin Dandea (GRIL-RO) DG TAXUD – Commissioner ŠEMETA</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 The EESC welcomes the proposal for a directive¹ amending Directive 2011/16/EU as regards mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation (AEOI), and believes that it represents a significant step forward in the implementation of the action plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion².</p>	<p>The Commission thanks the EESC for its broad support to its proposal.</p>
<p>Since tax evasion and fraud are global issues, they cannot be combatted solely within the EU. The EESC would therefore urge the Commission and the Member States to redouble their negotiating efforts, in the OECD and other global bodies, to promote AEOI as an international standard.</p>	<p>The Commission has long since believed that tax transparency and effective exchange of information between tax administrations are of crucial importance in the fight against international tax fraud and evasion. It welcomes and actively contributes, in coordination with the Member States, to the OECD work on the design of a global standard for automatic exchange of information for tax purposes, which builds on European experience and expertise in this area.</p>
<p>1.8 For the sake of simplicity and efficiency, from the point of view of cost-savings, and for the benefit of everyone involved, the EESC takes the view that efforts must be made to harmonise the various systems for exchanging information that are associated with each of the initiatives and to reorganise them into a single framework. This should at</p>	<p>The Commission shares the view of the EESC that is important to align the systems for exchange of information at the EU and global levels. It is working closely with OECD to ensure that the IT reporting system for exchanging information automatically is compatible with european standards, so as to save costs for EU tax</p>

¹ COM(2013) 348 final.

² COM(2012) 722 final.

<p>least happen at European level. Moreover, the underlying rules should be clear and should be proportionate to the desired outcomes.</p>	<p>administrations and financial institutions.</p>
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<p>N°72</p>	<p>Securing essential imports for the EU (own initiative opinion) EESC 2169/2013 - REX/383 493rd Plenary Session of October 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Jonathan Peel (GRI-UK) DG TRADE– Commissioner DE GUCHT</p>
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.7 The problems are currently more geopolitical than geological, yet the Committee is disappointed that the EU response gives the impression of being more a patchwork of specific initiatives rather than an overall global strategy.</p>	<p>As a general comment, it is important to underline that there is a trade strategy developed by the Commission in the context of the EU Raw Materials Initiative and spelled out in the Trade Raw materials policy 2009 annual report.</p> <p>The EU's trade strategy for raw materials is threefold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the rules of the game by securing trade disciplines on export restrictions in bilateral and multilateral negotiations, • Effective enforcement of the rules and tackling of restrictions, through dialogue, in the framework of the Market Access Strategy and eventually through WTO dispute settlements, • Outreach to third countries to develop bilateral dialogues and raise awareness in international fora such as the G8, G20, OECD and UNCTAD. <p>The EU trade strategy for raw materials is complemented by the "Raw Materials Diplomacy" the aim of which is to engage policy dialogues on raw materials with strategic partners. This path has been pursued with the United States, Japan, Russia, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay,</p>

	Greenland, China and countries of the Union for the Mediterranean, while further dialogues are in preparation.
<p>1.7.1 Above all it considers that a stronger, more coordinated effort needs to be made globally, primarily through the G20 (which includes many of the key "demandeurs" for strategic imports), where the issue has been discussed less productively so far, but also through the OECD and the UN and its agencies.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee that a global view is essential, and the G20 is well placed to provide that. Outreach to international organisations, primarily G20 and the OECD is a core activity within the EU trade strategy. As outlined in the EU Trade Policy for Raw Materials Second Activity Report, the EU has supported the inclusion of the sustainable supply of raw materials on the G20 agenda. Only limited progress could be achieved so far due to the resistance of some emerging countries. However, the EU will continue to target G20 as it is the right forum to discuss raw materials. The EU has now engaged with the Australian presidency on that issue.</p> <p>Work on raw materials has developed substantially in the OECD, which constitutes an important setting to gather economic and policy facts, advance economic analysis and allow for multilateral debate and policy development. The EU is actively contributing on substance and with financial support, in particular, with a view to involve non OECD members in the discussion.</p>
<p>1.7.2 The Committee therefore recommends that, as part of the overdue review of the WTO, which are rules of international law, a specific competence be added to cover energy and raw materials and their sustainable use.</p> <p>Greater emphasis should also be placed on the annual UNCTAD Global Commodities Forum</p>	<p>In the context of DDA the EU has made proposals also relevant for raw materials (e.g. tackling export restrictions). Other WTO members however did not support that idea.</p> <p>Also, WTO rules do also cover energy and raw materials. In this regard, while there may not necessarily be a need to introduce a specific "competence" the EU has been arguing in favour of the need to look for specific rules under the</p>

	<p>WTO umbrella for the energy sector. However, this requires also the support of other WTO members, notably the WTO members that have substantial resources.</p>
<p>1.9.The EU currently tackles barriers to such imports, such as export bans, new restrictions, extra export duties or dual pricing, through its trade negotiations (FTAs, EPAs, PCAs and WTO accession negotiations), with ultimate resort to a Disputes Mechanism.</p> <p>1.9.1 However, the Committee expresses deep concern that these are tactical trade policy instruments and do not amount to an overall strategy, nor would they be effective in a crisis.</p>	<p>The Commission does not share the concern of the Committee.</p> <p>The bilateral and multilateral trade agreements are not "tactical" trade policy instruments but rather binding legal commitments to which parties decide to adhere. In case parties do not implement their commitments, these commitments can be enforced through a dispute settlement procedure.</p> <p>Trade policy is used as a tool of the more general EU energy or raw material policy, governing trade and investment aspects of energy and raw materials. This is precisely because trade policy offers additional features which make those EU policies stronger. Securing disciplines on raw materials in trade negotiations has been identified as the first pillar of the EU Trade strategy for raw materials.[see also comment ref point 1.7]</p>
<p>1.9.1 Dispute mechanisms take time to operate and, as seen over rare earths, are subject to prolongation. We call for a clear EU emergency or crisis response procedure in the event that an important import suddenly becomes unavailable, for whatever reason.</p> <p>3.2.1 Most of the remedies available to the Commission deal with the long-term. The Commission has indeed recognised the issue over many years. It tackles barriers through its trade negotiations and, whilst the Committee is assured that provision is included in each case, there appears to be little emphasis on securing essential</p>	<p>The Commission is also working on securing essential imports in an emergency situation.</p> <p>In the area of energy, the EU concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with Russia on the (potential) disruption of supply of energy goods (e.g. natural gas). This so-called Early Warning Mechanism (EWM) allows for rapid intervention in case of an upcoming supply crisis. The same EWM mechanism is also enshrined in the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement negotiated with Ukraine.</p>

imports in an emergency.	
<p>1.10 Turning specifically to energy matters, Russia, Norway and Algeria between them account for 85% of EU natural gas imports and almost 50% of crude oil. Until recently major energy producers have been slow to join the WTO, which as a rules based organisation emphasises greater stability and predictability. The Committee therefore urges the EU to seize the opportunity offered by Russia's 2012 WTO accession to inject urgent new dynamism into the negotiations for a new EU-Russia trade and investment agreement and develop a deeper, more workmanlike relationship.</p>	<p>In line with the statement of the Heads of State of Government on Ukraine of 6.03.2014, the bilateral talks on a New Agreement with Russia are suspended.</p>
<p>2.2.5 In terms of securing essential imports, the Committee has called for a comprehensive EU external energy strategy and for a common EU foreign policy on energy to be rapidly and progressively stepped up. These concerns remain. However, from a specific trade policy viewpoint, the key is both in identifying potential supply and infrastructure bottlenecks and in widening WTO membership amongst our key energy suppliers, not least to encourage greater stability and predictability.</p>	<p>The EU continues to implement an external energy policy and issued a progress report on 13.09.2013. (COM(2013) 638 final).</p> <p>The EU is also currently negotiating the accession of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan to the WTO. These are important energy countries. Accession to the WTO is however wider than just about energy and raw materials and is also a multilateral process rather than a process just between the EU and the acceding country. These countries are also relevant in order to improve security of supply of the EU and its Member States. As to infrastructure, this is generally addressed through the EU's energy policy rather than trade policy.</p>
<p>1.8 The role of the private sector is also critically important: most mineral and energy extraction is now a market transaction</p>	<p>The exploration and production of energy is still mostly controlled by State Owned Enterprises, in particular so for the last 5 to 10 years. More than 70% of all reserves are currently controlled by State Owned Enterprises. The EU therefore negotiates international disciplines on state owned enterprises as</p>

	part of its free trade agreements.
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N°73	Mesures d'intégration des Roms COM (2013)460 final - CESE 5155/2013 fin – SOC/489 493^{ième} session plénière du mois d'octobre 2013 Rapporteur: M. Ákos Topolánszky (GRUU-HU) DG JUST – Vice-présidente REDING.
Points de l'avis du CESE estimés essentiels	Position de la Commission
Commentaires générales	La Commission estime qu'il n'est pas approprié de donner une suite à ce supplément d'avis, notamment en raison du plein accord entre les deux Institutions (EESC/ Commission).

<p>N°74 European Framework for Collective Redress COM(2013) 401 final - EESC 5155/2013 – INT/708 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Jörg Freiherr Frank von Fürstenwerth (GRI-DE) DG JUST – Vice President REDING</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
General comments	With regard to all the comments of the EESC, which are a very useful contribution to the discussion on shaping the EU model of collective redress, the Commission points out, that the Recommendation adopted on 11 June 2013 contains an evaluation and revision clause and that it intends to revisit the question in the light of future practices in the MS. Therefore even if the Commission does not consider it appropriate to launch immediate action, but will take into account the EESC opinion in the course of the evaluation exercise and in the light of future developments regarding collective actions in Europe.
EESC, while welcoming initiative of the Commission, regrets that it has the form of a recommendation and communication only, and not of a directive.	Taking into account in particular the proportionality principle, the Commission is of the opinion that in the light of limited practical experience in the Member States with collective actions, it is appropriate to take at this stage a more flexible and cautious approach than that of a binding legal instrument.
EESC agrees with the rejection of the US style class-action by the Commission and with the safeguards that it proposed. However it demands re-writing the rules on the certification of claimants, in particular through the removal of the requirements of sufficient resources and legal expertise and payment of costs.	The requirements set in the Recommendation for designated representative entities serve protection of members of a claimant party, by ensuring that their claims will be pursued in a competent and professional manner, and that they will not lose the case due to a poor

	<p>representation. Designated representative entities may be approached by those who suffered harm in the confidence that they will get appropriate support. The Commission however retained certain flexibility on this, by allowing "ad hoc certification". Ad hoc certified entities for concrete cases need not meet all the requirements set for designated entities. It will therefore be for the national administrations or courts to assess, whether the entity applying for an ad hoc certification guarantees appropriate representation of the claimants.</p>
<p>EESC calls on the Commission to clarify its position regarding the opt-out system of constituting the claimant party in particular for numerous very minor harms. In particular the EESC finds that the Recommendation is unclear when it allows the application of opt-out for reasons of "sound administration of justice".</p>	<p>The Commission recommended the opt-in principle as generally applicable in collective actions, including very minor harms. Any exceptions to this principle should be evaluated on a case by case basis.</p>
<p>EESC regrets that the Commission has not made a specific proposal concerning jurisdiction and applicable law in collective cases.</p>	<p>Jurisdiction and applicable law in the EU are regulated by several Regulations. With respect to collective actions, particularly relevant are Brussels I, Rome I and Rome II Regulations. It is not possible to alter or depart from the provisions of these Regulations by means of a recommendation. In addition the current rules of the EU international private law may already apply in collective cases. With regard to jurisdiction, the basic rule is that the court of the defendant's domicile has jurisdiction. This allows claimants from different Member States to pursue single collective action. With regard to the applicable law, the Commission is fully aware, that in one collective action different substantive laws may</p>

	<p>apply to the claims based on a same infringement to different groups of claimants. Nevertheless the collective action is a procedural mechanism only. It should be very carefully analysed to what extent it would be appropriate to have different conflict rules apply depending on whether or not the claim was brought individually or collectively.</p>
<p>The Commission should take into account also other forms of collective redress, like declaratory relief.</p>	<p>In the consultations carried out in 2011, where numerous replies were received, no respondent raised this point, but the Commission will bear it in mind in its later actions.</p>
<p>The Commission should allow for initiation of a private action also before public authority seised on the matter delivered its decision.</p>	<p>Decisions of public authorities finding an infringement by the (potential) defendant make a collective action shorter, easier and less burdensome. Often, such decisions create a binding effect as regards the fact that an infringement occurred. Therefore, claimants benefit from them and costs of proceedings will typically be largely reduced. With regard to situations where proceedings by a public authority have already been launched, the Recommendation provides that collective actions should "as a general rule", take the form of follow-on actions. Exceptions are possible, however. One of them could be unreasonable delay in delivering a decision.</p>
<p>EESC regrets that the Recommendation did not establish EU-wide register of collective actions.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the idea of EU-wide register, and to this end recommended MS that their national registers should be interoperable.</p>
<p>EESC calls on the Commission to consider cost-capping in relation to the non-profit organisation and use of illicit profits of the defendant to finance the former.</p>	<p>The "loser pays" principle is commonly acknowledged as a basic guarantee against abusive litigation. If the future evaluation brings satisfying evidence</p>

	that certain exemptions will not create the threat of abusive litigation, this point may be revisited. Member States should provide for appropriate solutions that will ensure that collective actions are not prohibitively expensive, as required by the Recommendation.
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<p>N°75</p> <p>European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO)</p> <p>COM (2013)534 final - EESC 6311/2013 fin – SOC/491</p> <p>494th Plenary Session of December 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr Eugen Lucan (GRIII-RO)</p> <p>DG JUST – Vice President REDING</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The Committee welcomes the Commission's initiative (1.1).</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the view of the Committee that the establishment of a European Public Prosecutor's Office is an important step to protect both the EU's financial interests and Europeans' financial contributions to the EU budget.</p>
<p>The consistency of EU's criminal law system would be better ensured if the offences in question were defined in the regulation or in an appendix attached to the regulation (1.2).</p>	<p>The Commission has proposed to define the offences in another legislative act (Directive on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law, COM (2012) 363 of 11 July 2012), on the basis of Article 325 (4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union following the ordinary legislative procedure. This is considered to be the appropriate legal basis by the Commission. The Regulation hence makes reference to the offences as defined in the proposed Directive. The question whether these offences should be defined in the Regulation itself is under discussion in the on-going legislative process.</p>
<p>The Committee recommends applying procedural safeguards in line with the relevant standards under the regulation, in particular the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (especially the right to a fair trial and the rights of defence), (1.4).</p>	<p>The Regulation stipulates that the European Public Prosecutor's Office ensures that its activities respect the rights enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and foresees a comprehensive set of procedural rights available to suspects and accused persons, in addition to the rights available under national law.</p>
<p>The Committee points out that the</p>	<p>The Commission would like to emphasize</p>

<p>admissibility of evidence in trial courts may lead to situations of inequality and violate the "equality of arms" principle, in the event that the suspect has no possibility to make use of his procedural rights to contest such evidence (1.9).</p>	<p>that the Regulation provides for a comprehensive set of procedural rights in addition to the rights available under national law, enabling the defendant to make use of his/her procedural rights.</p> <p>The Commission agrees that evidence presented to the trial court must have been collected lawfully in the respective Member State and the trial court has a duty to check its compliance with the defence rights set out in the Charter. Views diverge whether this is sufficient to exclude illegally obtained foreign evidence and this point is actively discussed in the legislative procedure. The Commission is open to consider alternative suggestions on this complex issue.</p>
<p>The collection and processing of personal data should be limited to people in respect of whom there are serious grounds for suspecting that a criminal offence affecting the EU's financial interests has been committed (1.10).</p>	<p>The Commission concurs with the Committee. The protection of personal data is considered to be fundamental and the Regulation foresees detailed provisions on the collection and processing of personal data.</p>
<p>The Committee believes that the competences of the Office should not include ancillary cases pursuant to Article 13 of the Regulation as this would lead to unpredictable results in the absence of clear definitions (4.2.6).</p>	<p>Fraud offences are seldom committed exclusively against the Union's financial interest and usually affect national budgets as well. Ancillary competence is foreseen to ensure procedural efficiency of the prosecution and to prevent a second prosecution in accordance with the "ne bis in idem" principle. The European Public Prosecutor's Office would only be competent, if strict criteria are met, including the requirement that offences be based "on the same facts" and could only proceed in agreement with the national authorities. Where agreement cannot be reached the national judicial authorities remain competent to decide on the attribution of competences at national level. The Commission considers that sufficient safeguards are put in place to</p>

	avoid that the competence of the European Public Prosecutor's Office goes beyond Article 86 (1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.
The Committee recommends to further clarify the conditions for transactions pursuant to Article 29 of the Regulation (4.3.3)	The Commission takes due note of the concerns raised with regard to the provision on the transaction in the proposed Regulation and will carefully consider the matter during the legislative process.

N°76	<p>Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on package travel and assisted travel arrangements, amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004, Directive 2011/83/EU and repealing Council Directive 90/314/EEC</p> <p>COM(2013) 512 final – EESC 5087/2013 fin – INT/710</p> <p>494th Plenary session of December 2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: Ms Anna Maria Darmanin (GRIT-MT)</p> <p>DG JUST – Vice President REDING</p>
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>3.2 The scope of the directive does not cover independent travel arrangements or business travel arrangements and defines other areas excluded in Article 2. In this regard the EESC emphasises that the exclusion under Article 2(2)(c) should in no way effect the entrepreneur or one of their employees who takes up an assisted travel arrangement or package travel for the purpose of work, or a combination of work and pleasure, which do not fall under a framework contract. Hence, to all intents and purposes such travel would fall within the definition of travel package and/or assisted travel arrangements.</p>	<p>It is understood that the EESC supports the Commission proposal to cover in the proposed Package Travel Directive only business travel purchased on the basis of a framework agreement with a trader specialising in the arrangement of such travel.</p>
<p>3.5 The definition of package under Article 3(2) defines a wide range of aspects of package travel. The EESC is satisfied with the definition but points out that "particulars" as stipulated in point 2(b)(v) of this article should be any booking particulars of the client that are transferred and not merely credit card information as pointed out in the Explanatory Memorandum (point 18) of the directive. The EESC therefore recommends that the last two</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of the position of the EESC to extend the notion of package also to situations where other booking particulars than credit card information and the name of the traveller are transferred between traders.</p> <p>In order for a travel combination to be considered as a package or an assisted travel arrangement, it must either display features which travellers typically associate with packages or be</p>

<p>sentences of point 18 of the recital be deleted. Furthermore, the EESC stresses that such transfers of particulars should not be tied to a specific moment in time and therefore recommends that the wording in recital 18 and Article 3(2) (b) (v) "at</p>	<p>facilitated by the trader in a targeted manner. Only packages or assisted travel arrangements which are combined together within a certain</p>
<p>the latest when the booking of the first service is confirmed" be deleted altogether.</p>	<p>timeframe would satisfy these criteria. The wording of Article 3(2) (b) (v) should therefore be retained.</p>
<p>3.6 The EESC points out that the directive should also apply to occasional organisers of travel packages, whose responsibilities and obligations should also be covered. This would ensure that a consumer is protected irrespective of the organiser of the travel and also ensure a level playing field for organisers of travel packages. Hence, the EESC recommends that the phrase "occasionally organised packages" should be deleted from point 19 of the Explanatory Memorandum to the directive.</p>	<p>The proposed Directive covers also occasionally organised packages since such packages are not excluded in Article 2(2). The Commission agrees that the reference to occasionally organised packages in recital 19 should therefore be deleted in the text agreed between the institutions.</p>
<p>4.3 Responsibility should lie with both the organiser and the retailer, not just the organiser. Consumers are often confused as to who is who in the contractual chain and very often identify the retailer as the contractual counterpart. Furthermore, consumers should not be left to rely on the retailer's goodwill to transfer complaints, hence the proper implementation of article 13 is paramount.</p>	<p>The Commission believes that imposing joint liability of the organiser and retailer on those Member States which currently provide for the sole liability of the organiser would be burdensome and costly for traders. The possibility for consumers to make claims in relation to the performance of the package directly to the retailer laid down in Article 13 provides sufficient safeguards and facility for consumers.</p>
<p>5.2 The EESC welcomes the savings for the industry, and strongly advocates that this saving be channelled into innovation, employment and growth. However, the EESC believes that</p>	<p>The provisions in the draft Directive on pre-contractual information to be provided to consumers apply equally to packages concluded online or offline in</p>

	consumers who refrain from using the Internet, out of choice or lack of resources, should not be disadvantaged in terms of access to correct information.	a bricks- and mortar shop.
6.3	Significant changes to the contract should only be possible if they do not entail inconvenience for the passenger. Moreover, the acceptance of the changes by the consumer should be explicit, not tacit as is being proposed in Article 9.2 (b).	The Commission believes that a distinction should be made between insignificant changes, which could be done unilaterally by the organiser, and significant to the main characteristics of the travel services, which should give the right to the consumer to terminate the contract if he does not accept the changes.
6.4	The right of the organiser to cancel the package if the minimum number of persons required is not reached should be deleted. Although this possibility already exists in the current directive it can no longer be justified, as technology now allows traders to easily foresee and manage the risks involved in their offers and operations.	The difficulties for traders to foresee the potential interest among consumers for a specific package tour, which is perhaps being sold more than six months before it actually takes place, remain unaffected by technological developments. The possibility for traders to cancel the contract without compensation in case of insufficient number of persons enrolled should therefore be maintained.
7.2	The EESC supports the extension of the consumer's right to cancel before departure. However, it questions the real value of "reasonable" fees in case of termination by the consumer. The directive should set up general principles or rules on how to calculate the compensation due by the consumer. The fees should not be disproportionate or excessive.	The Commission is open to consider constructive proposals to better ring fence the notion of reasonableness, whilst considering that the proposed rule in Article 10 (1) according to which compensation paid by the consumer may depend on <i>"reasonable standardised termination fees based on the time of the termination and the customary cost savings and income from alternative deployment of the travel services"</i> provides sufficient details on the calculation of the compensation.
7.3	Moreover, the consumer should be able to cancel the contract for reasons that are unforeseen and beyond one's control, such as illness or a death in	Consumers normally have the possibility to take out travel insurance covering the cost of compensation to the trader in case of cancellation for

	<p>the family, without paying compensation, this being a corollary of the proposed right of the organiser to cancel in cases of force majeure without paying compensation.</p>	<p>reasons such as illness or death in family.</p>
8.1	<p>The compensation of up to EUR 100 and three nights per traveller is completely unacceptable to the EESC. It contradicts the general liability of the organiser to perform the package as agreed with the consumer. Furthermore it is against the principle of "full compensation" for damages, which is a general principle of law in all EU Member States. The price limit should never be applied for persons with reduced mobility (PRMs).</p>	<p>Experience from the ash cloud crisis showed that an unlimited right to compensation to the consumer for continued stay at destination due to unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances generated disproportionate costs for organisers and airlines. A cap on the compensation should therefore be introduced along the same lines as in the pending proposal for a revision of Regulation 261/2004 on air passenger rights.</p> <p>Article 11 (6) of the proposal explicitly provides that the limitation of the compensation shall not apply to persons with reduced mobility provided that they have notified their particular needs at least 48 hours before the start of the package.</p>
8.4	<p>The EESC agrees that the principle of placing responsibility on the traveller to notify the organiser of "their (the traveller's) particular needs at least 48 hours before the start of the package" should also apply to people with disabilities. However, the Committee points out that often the traveller would like to do this but cannot find a way of communicating this information to the organiser. Hence, it is important that the methods for communicating such information be made clear to the traveller (these might, for instance, include a specific field in the online application form).</p>	<p>It should be noted that the pre-contractual requirements in Article 4 (1) include contact details of the organiser such as the geographical address, telephone number and e-mail address (point b). This should guarantee that people with disabilities have the possibility to communicate their particular needs to the organiser.</p>

<p>10.3 Furthermore, although individual travel arrangements are not covered by this directive, they should not involve any lesser degree of consumer protection.</p> <p>11.1 The EESC notes that there is a problem with legal fragmentation in travel and holiday rights and that a more harmonised approach is required. Travel and holidays are not covered under General Consumer Rights legislation, as from the Consumers Rights Directive 2011/83. This exclusion gives rise to the fragmentation and weak protection for European consumers when travelling. Furthermore, whereas individual travel is covered in a different way under other directives and is accorded specific by these directives, the variety and range of rights in the different directives do create further confusion for the traveller.</p>	<p>General consumer legislation provides protection for consumers making individual travel arrangements. Directive 2005/29/EC protects travellers against unfair commercial practices such as incomplete price information, and Directive 1993/13/EEC ensures that unfair terms in contracts cannot be invoked against travellers. While only certain aspects of Directive 2011/83/EU on consumer rights apply to transport contracts (such as the ban on excessive fees for means of payment or on pre-ticked boxes), it does apply to other travel services such as accommodation or car rental (with the exception of the right of withdrawal). As regards transport contracts, additional protection is provided by the comprehensive legislation on passenger rights covering all transport modes: air, rail, maritime, and bus and coach.¹</p> <p>The Package Travel Directive is based on the principle that traders who offer assistance to consumers in putting together their travel arrangements should also be required to assume more extensive liability. This is the reason why the protection provided by the Directive should apply only to packages, and, to a lesser degree, to assisted travel arrangements.</p>
<p>14.1 The full harmonisation proposed by the Commission should not lead to a fall in the current level of consumer protection. Member States should have the freedom to supplement the rules of the directive and maintain existing rules at national level.</p>	<p>The proposed Directive aims to attain a high level of consumer protection.</p>

¹ Regulations (EC) No 2004/261, (EC) No 1371/2007, (EC) No 1177/2010 and (EC) No 181/2011.

N°77	Statistical tools for measuring volunteering (own initiative opinion) EESC 1979/2013 – ECO/343 494th Plenary Session of December 2013 Rapporteur: Mr Krzysztof Pater (GRIII-PL) DG ESTAT – Commissioner ŠEMETA
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
Put in place the conditions to start methodological work and pilot research using ILO manual on measurement of Volunteer Work.	<p>Currently, business surveys cannot capture volunteering. The EU LFS (Labour Force Survey) does not presently have specific questions to measure volunteer work.</p> <p>The 2013 resolution of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians creates a conceptual framework for the measurement of volunteer work. This resolution addresses possible data sources and suggests less-than-annual periodicity for collecting data on volunteer work. Eurostat closely follows this work.</p>
Work on standardised methodology, gather and make available consistent information, introduce legal measures	This is not in the Eurostat Work Programme for the 2013-2017 period.