



European Economic and Social Committee

# EUROPE III

the voice of **Group III** Various Interests

June 2011



Interview



**Yves SOMVILLE (BE)**  
Spokesperson for the Farmers Category



**Reine-Claude MADER (FR)**  
Spokesperson for the Consumers & Environment Category

## Encouraging a structured dialogue between Consumers and Farmers

On 16 May 2011, the "Farmers" and "Consumers and the Environment" Categories held a joint meeting to discuss issues related to the theme "The future of the CAP: the benefit of consumers and producers". Europe III asked both spokespersons for their views and reflections on the relationship between consumers and farmers.

EUROPE III: Just a decade ago, it would have been unthinkable that consumers and farmers could express common concerns on certain aspects of the CAP. What contributed to this change in attitude and meeting of minds?

YS: In my view there are three reasons for this: a) the development of agriculture, b) globalization, and c) the strengthening civil society. Farmers are becoming fewer and fewer, while continuing to occupy a major part of the territory, they need to adapt and engage with the world around them. Faced with an irreversible globalization, we must explain our preoccupations concerning imports from third countries, whose standards are different from ours, and this must be acknowledged. Finally, citizens are demanding more and more involvement in everything related to the environment and food quality in general.

RCM: In recent years, agricultural issues have assumed a global dimension and agriculture has become a social issue in itself. Thus, the impact of agriculture on our environment (water, biodiversity, climate) is an issue that concerns the citizens and

society as a whole and no longer limited solely to agriculture. Similarly, food security and the ability of agriculture to feed the world once again has become a crucial issue. In 2008, tensions between supply and demand led to a surge in agricultural prices and price increases which have directly affected households in their daily lives.

EUROPE III: What are the main points of agreement and disagreement between the two parties?

YS: I think we should speak rather of misunderstanding; and this especially seeing as the number of farmers has declined sharply over the past thirty years. In a number of European regions, villages have become "commuter dormitories" and subsequently contact between villagers and farmers have progressively weakened.

RCM: Agriculture responds to needs that everyone agrees to be essential. The most obvious is of course the provision of nourishment: to produce quality food at affordable prices. Agriculture also contributes to the life of rural areas and diversity of our food models. So there is an unquestionable consensus on the strategic role of agriculture and the need for a strong policy in this area. However, on the other hand, the priorities and the means of this policy area are subject to much disagreement. Citizens no longer understand the logic of a CAP that mainly

benefits large farms, but does not give enough support to smaller crop farmers and establishes rent situations that are unfavourable to new member states. Giving legitimacy to the CAP presupposes reintroducing fairness in the management of aid.

EUROPE III: The question of the impact of costs related to the food chain on the end price of products is often referred to by both farmers and consumers. Do you foresee a scenario that could satisfy everyone involved?

YS: Since the milk crisis in 2008, all those involved agree that there is a real problem of distribution of added value, and a weakening of the bargaining power of the producers within the chain of the agribusiness sector. The way out is to balance these deficiencies. According to DG AGRI itself the fact that since 2006, increasing productivity has no longer been able to offset the growing gap between the prices paid and prices received by leading farmers, emphasizes this reality.

RCM: Consumers find that reduced prices at the stage of agricultural production are rarely reflected in the prices on the supermarket shelves. Today, intermediaries such as industry and the distribution sector monopolize the added value and squeeze for themselves the maximum share of the profits destined for the producer. This imbalance reflects the power struggles between producers, processors and distributors. Greater competition

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## A new powerful era for persons with disabilities

Editorial



**Ioannis VARDAKASTANIS (EL)**  
President of the European Disability Forum (EDF)  
Member of Group III

The fight of people with disabilities in Europe for the recognition of their rights as **equal European citizens** has counted on the loyal commitment of the EESC. There is a long list of opinions adopted by the EESC and we should pay today **a tribute to all colleagues** and members of the EESC, for their effort.

Last November, the EU presented the **European Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020** and concluded the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (CRPD) immediately afterwards. These are major landmark achievements that set a new agenda for the EU. This new paradigm impacts on all EU institutions and advisory bodies: from the EESC this demands a strong engagement. I am therefore delighted that my first assignment as a rapporteur concerns the drafting the EESC opinion on the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (SOC/403). Even though it does

not propose more recognition through non-discrimination legislation, it presents necessary legal proposals such as the **European Accessibility Act** and **web accessibility legislation**.

I am expecting the EESC position on the Commission ~Communication to be **strong**. Despite its ex post nature, it is needed more than ever, especially when we consider the new verve acquired by the Strategy after the conclusion of the CRPD. This Convention lays out a framework and guidelines to all the members of the study group on the SOC/403 opinion, including myself as a Rapporteur, that facilitate the right interpretation of the disability strategy. There is also something really important we all have to remember. During this time of crisis, social expenditure has been cut in most EU countries. Due to **austerity measures** persons with disabilities are now in a very alarming situation. If adopted, the future EESC

opinion has **to highlight the importance of guaranteeing financial support** to persons with disabilities. At the same time, the EU response to the crisis through Europe 2020 as well as the revision of the Multiannual Financial Perspectives and the Cohesion Policy after 2013, should take the Disability Strategy and the Convention as frameworks.

The EESC has to be firm in its compromise on **the rights of people with disabilities**. Its opinion has to be **an instrument that reinforces social Europe**. The EU Institutions now have the legal and policy instruments. If the EESC shows a political commitment, this is a **winning combination** that can only bring **success** for the rights of **80 million** disabled people in the EU.

We recommend that you also visit the website of the EDF:  
[http://www.edf-feph.org/Page\\_Generale.asp?DocID=8859&langue=EN&namePage=home](http://www.edf-feph.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=8859&langue=EN&namePage=home)

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among actors associated with better organisation of producers might rebalance this situation. Why don't producers organise themselves into cooperatives to get their brands to better compete with the supermarkets and beat them at their own game?

EUROPE III: The high quality of products on the EU market is a top priority for European farmers and is vital for the protection of consumers. In the marketing of products from third countries guaranteeing such quality can be difficult. Do you think that EU legislation is fit to meet this challenge?

YS: International trade is of course necessary. However, consistency is essential. Products from third countries should not be allowed to be in competition with ours, if they do not comply with exactly the same norms and quality standards in social, economic or environmental terms. In my opinion, it would be a huge mistake, if we were to add to our current energy dependence from abroad, food dependence, in the future.

RCM: When foodstuffs are imported from third countries, there is no guarantee that the conditions of production meet environmental standards set by the CAP, or the regulations on animal welfare. Some pesticides banned from use in Europe are

being used by countries exporting to the EU. From the perspective of consumers, such distortions of competition, of which they are not informed when they choose products, are shocking.

EUROPE III: What is the impact of the actions of organisations representing the interests of farmers and consumers in the context of defining the future of the CAP? Do you think there might be a common purpose of work?

YS: Everyone occupied their home turf in the various consultations that both the Commission and policy makers held before and after the publication of the Communication in November 2010. As a good example of a common approach, I would cite the latest opinion of the EESC on "The Future of the CAP", which was the result of a consensus between the representatives of European Civil Society. From this point of view, this opinion is, frankly, a very good document.

RCM: Today, the voice of consumers is not sufficiently taken into account in the debate on the CAP and the consumer organisations are seen rather as adversaries by the farming sector. But remember that the point of view of consumers on the CAP is important for several reasons: consumers buy food from the agri-food sector and, as taxpayers, they fund the CAP.

EUROPE III: Given that food security is a priority in the agenda of the G20 and that the price increases affect, or have an impact on, both farmers and consumers, how should the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU address, or approach, the subject of global food security?

YS: The CAP alone cannot solve the overall question of food security. I recall the word already mentioned above: "consistency." It was indeed mentioned by Commissioner Ciolos at the conference organised by the EESC on Food Security on 23 May last. Coherence between different areas of policy: agricultural, environmental, social, commercial and development is absolutely fundamental!

RCM: We consider that tools to regulate the market should be included in the CAP. One can think of mechanisms for public storage in case of overproduction and a regulatory reduction of fallow in cases of under-supply. In addition, you must manage the speculative practices which increase and inflate agricultural prices. Finally, it is essential to create conditions for real competition at the industry and the wide distribution levels so that any reductions in agricultural prices are finally passed on to consumers.

## Group III members in the spotlight playing a key role



### Congratulations Senator Jillian

We were delighted to hear the exciting news that our member for the past twelve years, **Jillian van TURNHOUT**, has been appointed to the Irish Upper House, **Seanad Éireann** as a Senator, by the Irish

Government: a well-deserved honour and accolade.

Jillian was elected and served as Vice-President of Group III, on two occasions. She was also Vice-President of the Committee, with responsibility for Communications, from 2006-2008. An extremely active, enthusiastic and popular member, she sat in the SOC and

REX sections and was the Rapporteur for some fairly tricky and controversial opinions such as "Alcohol related Harm" (EESC opinion 1473/2009 – SOC/340), where her negotiating skills and ability to broker a workable compromise, were the hallmarks of her character and work attitude. Her warm personality and friendliness will be missed in the corridors and meeting rooms of the Committee. We wish her every success in her new career in Irish politics, where we are sure that she will use all her personal and professional expertise to the benefit of her compatriots on many issues concerning children's rights, youth and family policy, to name but a few of her areas of competence and passionate interest.

Onwards and upwards Jillian



### Quote of the month...



"A truly great book should be read in youth, again in maturity and once more in old age, as a fine building should be seen by morning light, at noon and by moonlight."

Robertson Davies  
(1913-1995)

Canadian novelist, playwright, actor, critic, journalist, librettist and professor of literature

## Other news that matters

### A tribute to János TÓTH (HU): "Gone too soon"



Both the current and the former Hungarian members of the European Economic and Social Committee are filled with deep sorrow having heard that Dr. János Tóth, former member of EESC and president of the TEN section, co-chair of the Hungarian Economic and Social Council, had passed away so suddenly, at such a painfully young

age. At the time of his death, when the colours of hope and feelings of solidarity were evident in our minds, as we were celebrating Easter,

we, in Hungary are profoundly grateful for the compassion expressed by the Presidency and different bodies and personalities of the Committee, on this very sad occasion. In his home of Budapest, we all have wonderful and very pleasant recollections of János and we also know that the EESC has too a wealth of fond memories of him. He was a very active, committed, highly responsible and devoted member of the Committee. His entire professional life was dedicated to the representation of civil advocacy. He always believed in the strengths of participatory democracy and represented those values which are, among others, the most important founding principles of the EESC and of the EU itself. Our dear friend was a master of formulating

balanced and well grounded views and compromises, always, in a respectful and elegant manner. Even though we all represent different interest groups, however, we are unified in the belief that his passing has left a painful void and that his personal commitments and values should somehow be followed-up and mirrored in some special way.

#### Current and former Hungarian members of the EESC

The President of Group III, Luca Jahier, and the staff of the Group III secretariat join all members and colleagues in sending their sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of János, who, like us all are trying to come to terms with his tragic and unexpected loss.

## News from Group III



Mónika LEHÖCZ, Director of Home Start Hungary, giving her presentation during the panel on "The role of family and youth in building a sustainable European Society"

### BUILDING A STRONGER EUROPE FOR ITS CITIZENS

On Friday 13 May 2011, the Bureau of Group III met in Budapest, Hungary, to consult and listen to the views and opinions of local Hungarian civil society organisations on a series of issues, under the above global theme. The keynote speaker was Dr Tamás Ivan Kovacs, State Secretary and Ministry for Development, who set out the various priorities for the Hungarian Presidency. There then followed three thematic workshops involving debates between the Group III members and the assembly of almost sixty local organisations representing a wide-range of Hungarian civil society, who were in attendance. In particular, the third workshop on the "Integration of Roma and other vulnerable minorities" provoked some very lively discussions and exchanges, during which issues raised touched on the questions of respect for Roma as citizens and heritage-bearers, their integration at European level and the entrepreneurial aspect of that integration, their different situations across Europe and the pros and cons of the current European Union's initiatives in this area.

A more detailed report of the meeting and the full programme may be consulted here: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-building-stronger-europe>

### THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE: "EMPOWERING THE CITIZENS' RIGHTS"

Group III is organising an **Orientation Seminar** on Monday, 27 June 2011 at the EESC headquarters in Brussels. The President of Group III, **Luca Jahier (IT)**, launched and promoted the idea to debate on the stakes of the biggest democratic innovation of the Lisbon Treaty: the **European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)**. This Orientation Seminar aims to highlight the historical, procedural and infrastructural aspects of the European Citizens' Initiative and to tackle the future challenges which lie ahead by involving a wide range of representatives of the EU Institutions and of national civil society organisations from the Member States. More precisely, it intends to brief and instruct these representatives of the national civil society organisations about the ECI, in order to give them all the necessary information with the aims of firstly, bringing about an efficient European Citizens Initiative and, secondly to open the communication channels with other organisations on a national level.

A full report of the proceeding and conclusions of this important and ground-breaking event will be published in our next edition in July.



## News from civil society organisations close to Group III



### A SINGLE MARKET FOR CONSUMERS HOW TO MAKE IT A REALITY IN ALL MEMBER STATES

On 19 May 2001, BEUC organised a large conference in Warsaw in collaboration with some Polish counterparts and issued a press release outlining the main topics discussed.

To read the full text of the PR, click here: <http://docshare.beuc.org/docs/1/CEAAKJFBOAFAEELFNKAFBIDKPDWY9DBKAY9DW3571KM/BEUC/docs/DLS/2011-00432-01-E.pdf>

### BUILDING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH COOPERATIVES



On 27 May 2011, CECOP published an article, penned by Leire Luengo for Work Together, under the above title on its website.

To read the full text of the article click here: <http://www.cecop.coop/Building-gender-equality-through>

### THE ROLE OF FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD POVERTY AND THE REALISATION OF CHILD WELLBEING



On 16 May 2011, the Administrative Council of COFACE adopted a 14-page position paper on child poverty, prepared by the COFACE Working Group Family and Social Policies.

You can read the full text of the paper here: [http://coface-eu.org/en/upload/2011%20WG1/WG1\\_Position\\_Child%20poverty%20and%20wellbeing\\_EN.pdf](http://coface-eu.org/en/upload/2011%20WG1/WG1_Position_Child%20poverty%20and%20wellbeing_EN.pdf)

### COPA-COGECA WELCOMES MEPS CALL FOR STRONG CAP AND A STRONG EU BUDGET IN FUTURE



In a press release issued on 25 May 2011, Copa-Cogeca welcomed MEPs demands for

the continuation of a strong sustainable Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and the maintenance of its budget in the EU Commission plans for the future of the CAP.

To read the relevant press release, please go to: <http://www.copa-cogeca.eu/Main.aspx?page=HomePage>



### OECD GREEN GROWTH STRATEGY TURNS BLIND EYE TO ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS

In a press release issued on 25 May 2011, the EEB highlighted a joint statement it and Greenpeace International sent to EU Economic Ministers, in which they call on the OECD to take braver steps and heed the calls for changes to the existing economic growth model.

To full text of the statement can be found here: <http://www.eeb.org/EEB/index.cfm/news-events/news/oecd-green-growth-strategy-turns-blind-eye-to-environmental-threats/>



### EURO COOP'S COMMENTS ON THE CONSUMER POLICY POST-2013

In a statement published on their website on 29 April, Euro Coop welcomed the priorities set out by the European Commission in the consultation document for the preparation of the next (post-2013) Consumer Policy Strategy. Euro Coop indeed believes that, in spite of financial constraints, European Consumer Policy should remain a key priority for the EU.

To read the full text of the article, please go to: [http://www.eurocoop.coop/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=404&catid=44&Itemid=191&lang=en](http://www.eurocoop.coop/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=404&catid=44&Itemid=191&lang=en)



### GENERAL ASSEMBLY SAYS "WE WANT FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT"

On 29 May 2011, the 15th Annual General Assembly of the European Disability Forum gathered the whole disability movement in Budapest. Among all the important topics on the table for

discussion, the 200 participants focused on how to make sure that the European Union will guarantee freedom of movement for all persons with disabilities.

To read more about the discussion that took place at the event, please go to: [http://www.edf-feph.org/Page\\_Generale.asp?DocID=13855&thebloc=27454](http://www.edf-feph.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=13855&thebloc=27454)



### SMALL BUSINESS ACT: MORE EFFORTS ARE NEEDED AT EU AND NATIONAL LEVEL, WARN SMES

In a press release issued on 24 May 2011, UEAPME called for steps to be taken on governance and for the adequate financial resources to be allocated to secure the proper implementation of the SBA.

To read the full text of the press release, follow: [http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/110524\\_pr\\_godollo.pdf](http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/110524_pr_godollo.pdf)

### SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE ON SEA FISHERIES



In a press release issued on 10 May 2011, EUROPÊCHE stated that the social partners from the fisheries sector should demand immediate consultation on the socio-economic consequences of the future CFP.

To read the full text of the press release, follow: [http://www.europeche.org/images/stories/downdoc/CdP/EP\\_11\\_76\\_EN.doc](http://www.europeche.org/images/stories/downdoc/CdP/EP_11_76_EN.doc)

### INTERNET GOVERNANCE: THE WEB OF TOMORROW IS YOURS!



EYF has published on its website details about the fourth European Dialogue on Internet Governance, EuroDIG 2011, which took place on 30 and 31 May in Belgrade.

To read more about the meeting and consult the programme, please go to: <http://www.eurodig.org/>

## OUR GROUP'S STRENGTH

The **Social Economy Category** held a meeting on 11 May 2011 to discuss their Work Plan for 2010-2011. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Tilman Lueder, Head of Unit, Asset Management Unit of DG Internal Market; Mr. Jerome Faure, Head of Innovation, Social Experimentation and Social Economy Mission, and Mr. Janusk Galezia, Minister Counsellor of the Polish Permanent Representation. Following a lively discussion, it was agreed to arrange a specific category meeting on Structural Funds and on Women's employment and Cooperatives. It was also decided to update the CIRIEC study on the situation of the social economy in the European Union including the 27 Member States. Aiming to interact with other European Institutions, a delegation of the Social Economy Category will meet the European Parliament Social Economy Intergroup next June. It was also decided that the Category could put forward proposals for own-initiative opinions on themes such as on knowledge cooperatives, cooperatives and restructuring, social economy in Latin-America and social investment funds would be elaborated upon during this period. The overall Work Plan aims to defend and promote the social economy's interests and gain recognition for the social economy as a sector that produces both economic and social wealth and that is therefore key to the success of the European integration process and of the EU2020 strategy.

For further detail of the discussion on the Work Programme, please consult the press release at: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.social-economy-category-public-agenda.18682>

On 16 May 2011, the **"Farmers"** and **"Consumers and Environment"** Categories held a joint meeting to debate **"The future of the CAP: benefiting consumers and producers"**. Representatives of the European Commission, of COPA-COGECA, Via Campesina and members of the EESC presented their activities and points of view on the future of the CAP, quality and labelling information and the state of the market and monitoring of consumer prices. The debate raised important issues such as food security, farmers' income, fluctuation of prices and the sustainability of farming, the fight against farm abandonment, resulting in young people leaving the countryside.

Please also see the joint interview with the two Category spokespersons on pages I & II

The **SMEs, Crafts and Professions Category** held a meeting on the theme: **"European Day of the Liberal Professions"** on 6 June 2011. The participants discussed the **"Perspectives for regulated and non-regulated Liberal Professions in the internal market 2010"**. Other topics for panel discussion in the morning were, **"Transparency, Independence and Qualification: European core values of Liberal Professions and their monitoring"** and, in the afternoon, **"Orders, colleges and Professional Associations as Players under the single market and professional qualification directive"**.

More information on the work of the categories can be found on our website (<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.group-3>), by contacting the spokespersons of the categories, or the Secretariat of Group III at: [gr3@eesc.europa.eu](mailto:gr3@eesc.europa.eu).



# Overview of our Members' Work in the EESC

**At its plenary session on 4-5 May 2011 the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) adopted the following opinions for which Group III members were Rapporteurs or Co-Rapporteurs.**



**Cristian PÎRVULESCU (RO) - SOC/388**  
"The EU Counter-Terrorism Policy: main achievements and future challenges" (EESC opinion 800/2011)

In view of the effects of the current economic crisis, the EESC draws attention to the growing danger of radicalisation, as regards both religiously and ideologically motivated terrorism. Protection of fundamental rights must be a key criterion for evaluation when planning and implementing counter-terrorism policy. The EESC believes that the prevention aspect should be reviewed, and a new dimension added further upstream, involving the development of cooperation and the timely resolution of tensions. Amongst its five key recommendations the EESC requests that: the term "religiously motivated terrorism" is used in official documents of the EU and its agencies instead of "Islamist terrorism". Finally, the EESC warns that unlawful or inappropriate use of (sometimes sensitive) personal information, coupled with the broad powers held by authorities, may lead to discrimination and stigmatisation of specific persons and/or groups of people.



**Corrado ROSSITTO (IT) - CCMI/082** "Third country state-owned enterprises in EU public procurement markets" (EESC 807/2011)

In this own-initiative opinion, the EESC states that opening-up of the public procurement systems of all countries to international trade under the Agreement on Government Procurement (WTO GPA) is beneficial. It strongly urges the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission to ensure more effective, strategic defence of the EU's interests in the area of access to public markets both internally and internationally. Moreover, the Committee believes that there should be a level playing field for contracting enterprises, based on reciprocity with third country enterprises that respect the key principles of international public procurement. In conclusion, the EESC calls for the approach based on prevention and an "early warning" system for projects and/or new third country regulations which are restrictive in the area of procurement to be beefed up, with a view to identifying potential barriers and condemning them internationally right from the start.



**Dilyana SLAVOVA (BG) - NAT/503** "Contractual relations in the milk sector" (EESC 810/2011)

The EESC welcomes the work of the Commission, whilst also highlighting the fact that the proposal will not solve all the problems in the dairy sector. The EESC considers that all four elements (contractual relations, bargaining power of producers, inter-professional/inter-branch organisations and transparency) are closely linked and interdependent. Thus these elements should be tackled jointly. The EESC notes the imbalances along the supply chain, especially the disequilibrium between retailers on the one hand and farmers and processors on the other, which stands in the way of a fairer distribution of the added value of products to milk producers. Therefore, the Committee recommends to the Commission that measures be taken to ensure that transparency is applied equally throughout the dairy chain (producers – processors – distributors – retailers). In conclusion, the EESC stresses that increased transparency can help the dairy chain function more smoothly, to the benefit of

all actors, and in this context welcomes the recommendations of the HLG to the Commission ensuring that transparency does not distort competition in the internal market.



**Richard ADAMS (UK) - NAT/506** "Organic production and labelling of organic products" (EESC 813/2011)

The EESC welcomes the fact that the Commission is taking advantage of the revision of those regulations affected by the Lisbon Treaty in order to include simplifying measures. Nevertheless, these simplification points mainly concern administration whereas there remains a need to make regulations in general simpler for organic farmers and producers.

**Richard ADAMS (UK) - TEN/444** "Management of spent fuel and radioactive waste" (EESC 817/2011)

This Directive is welcomed by the Committee as a clear step forward in requiring the planned management of the existing large volume of radioactive waste across the EU to minimum standards. The Committee has put forward a series of comments, suggestions and recommendations and welcomes the unequivocal approach to both manage radioactive waste generated by member states exclusively within the EU and the opportunity to develop shared facilities. It was noted that this does not exclude the repatriation of reprocessed waste arising from the reprocessing of spent fuel to countries of origin outside the EU. However, for the avoidance of doubt, it is suggested this point is made explicit in either the Explanatory Memorandum or the Recitals. In conclusion, the Committee believes that, in due course, a Review Board should be established with a remit to oversee the management of radioactive waste in the EU.



**Seppo KALLIO (FI) - NAT/507** "Financing of the CAP" (EESC 814/2011)

The EESC stresses that the European Common Agricultural Policy and its sound management are important for the whole food supply chain and for farmers and considers the proposal to reform and streamline the CAP justified as long as it leads to increased administrative efficiency, streamlined financing, improved authorities' scope for action, simplified procedures, and the reduction of red tape. The Committee believes that clearer distinction should be made between implementing and delegating acts, and further explanations should be provided on the extent of the powers to be granted to the Commission to adopt delegated acts. It is important for the basic regulation to include all of the key rules which give concrete shape to the agricultural policy. Powers can in other respects be transferred to the Commission. The scope of implementing powers in agricultural policy must be quite broad so that it can be managed effectively. The EESC further calls for provisions ensuring a broad scope for consultation of Member States' experts in the adoption of delegated acts. In conclusion, the opinion states that farmers are very often burdened by the CAP's cumbersome administrative procedures and notes with regret that the financing regulations concerned continue to be very complex and calls for stepped up simplification efforts to facilitate their understanding and interpretation by farmers.



**Gerd WOLF (DE) - INT/575** "Response to the report of the expert group on the interim evaluation of the Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities and to the report of the expert group on the interim evaluation of the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility" (EESC 797/2011)

The Committee welcomes the report of the Expert Group and fully supports its recommendations; it also supports the Commission's response to the report. With reference to the report of the Expert Group, the Committee recommends, amongst other things, that the budget for supporting research and innovation be increased to a proportion of the overall budget which definitely reflects the stated importance and weight of this area in the 2020 strategy and feels that greater emphasis be given to "key enabling technologies", without which we can neither meet the challenge of global competition nor address the major societal themes. The Committee appeals to the Member States to definitely fulfil their "3% obligation" and to clearly exceed this goal if economically possible. With regard to the terminology used for the three research categories in the report of the Expert Group, the Committee has reservations about the concept "science for science". Instead it suggests using the concept "science for knowledge".



**Bernardo HERNÁNDEZ BATALLER (ES) - INT/561** "Cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws" (EESC 793/2011)

The EESC supports the Commission's proposal and welcomes its intention to introduce greater legal security, certainty and clarity into EU legislation. However, the EESC regrets that the proposed revision is so short on content and does not deal with all of the aspects of the regulation that need to be amended in light of experience since the entry into force of Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004. The EESC calls upon the Commission, in its revision of Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004, to take account of the recommendations contained in this document aimed at improving the workings of the current cooperation between authorities responsible for consumer affairs.

**HERNÁNDEZ BATALLER Bernardo (ES) - INT/566** "Jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters" (EESC 795/2011)

The Committee supports the Commission's proposal, considering that it should enable the goal of removing legal barriers to be achieved: this will make life easier for people and businesses, improving effective remedies. Moreover, it urges the Commission to pursue its initiative to remove legal barriers in the European Union, to achieve a genuine European judicial area, taking into consideration all the comments the EESC has made on the matter in its various opinions.



**Evelyne PICHENOT (FR) - REX/313** "Sustainability Impact Assessments (SIA) and EU Trade Policy" (EESC 818/2011)

The EESC believes that it is crucial that all trade agreements henceforth include a monitoring mechanism which involves civil society, as the only way to guarantee that honouring of commitments and the risks and opportunities presented by the opening-up of trade in terms of sustainable development are monitored. In order to organise a renewed participatory process, the EESC recommends in particular that the EESC be able to participate upstream by means of an opinion on the choice of indicators, the identification of consultants and the consultation methods, that an EESC opinion be sought on the "analysis of consequences" submitted to the European Parliament and the Council and that the EESC be recognised as an important partner for organising consultations and follow up with the civil societies of the partner countries, in cooperation with the EU delegations. In conclusion the EESC should act as a facilitator to ensure that the consultation with civil society regarding the impact assessment is coordinated with the future implementation of the follow-up mechanisms laid down in agreements.

NOTE: The complete texts of all EESC opinions are available in various language versions on the Committee's website: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.opinions-search>

## Highlights of the May 2011 EESC Plenary Session

### Group III members co-ordinating the work on new opinions

**Mrs Reine-Claude MADER (FR)** is the Rapporteur for the opinion on: "Credit agreements relating to residential property" – INT/577.

**Mr Miguel Ángel CABRA DE LUNA (ES)** will chair the study group for the opinion on: "On on-line gambling in the Internal Market" – INT/579.

**Mr Thomas PALMGREN (FI)** will chair the study group for the opinion on: "The EU corporate governance framework" – INT/581

**Mrs Benedicte FEDERSPIEL (DK)** is the Rapporteur for the opinion on: "Single Market Act - twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence: working together to create new growth" – INT/SMO/582.

**Mr Viliam PÁLENÍK (SK)** will chair the study group for the opinion on: "Recognition and enforcement of decisions in matters of matrimonial property regimes/Recognition and enforcement of decisions regarding the property consequences of registered partnerships" – SOC/416-417.

**Mr Carlos PEREIRA MARTINS (PT)** will chair the study group for the opinion on: "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area" – TEN/454.

**Mr Seppo KALLIO (FI)** will chair the study group for the own-initiative opinion on: "Revision of the EIB's lending policy in the transport sector" – TEN/456.



**Mr Jorge PEGADO LIZ (PT)** is the Rapporteur for the opinion on: "The open internet and net neutrality in Europe" – TEN/457.

The full listing of membership of the study groups for the new work may be consulted here: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.group-3-new-study-groups>